

# KEY NOTES

NEWS FROM  
THE PERDIDO KEY ASSOCIATION



## February 2022

### **Commissioner Bergosh Town Meeting**

District 1 Commissioner Jeff Bergosh, along with other Escambia County elected officials and staff, held a Town Hall meeting on January 31, 2022 at the Perdido Bay United Methodist Church where 150 or more people crowd into the meeting room. Many issues were covered by planned presentations and in response to questions from the audience. Escambia County officials in virtually every branch and department indicated personnel shortages and their aggressive efforts at recruitment. Considerable attention was also given to planned improvements to Sorrento Road and efforts to reduce flooding experienced in Innerarity and other District 1 neighborhoods. Also announced was possible RESTORE funding for “Septic to Sewer” conversion on a Gulf Coast regional level. Significantly, Commissioner Bergosh indicated he continues to support the Perdido Key Drive/Johnson Beach Road roundabout to be constructed in the next few months, noting the \$850,000 transfer of District 2 Discretionary Programmed Funds to District 1 to construct a roundabout. He also favors maximizing public access to Perdido Key beaches. The meeting was recorded and is available at [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=At2eFet\\_0Mk](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=At2eFet_0Mk).

### **PKA Membership Meeting**

Another reminder that the PKA Annual Membership Meeting at the Eden Condominium is on Saturday, February 19, 2022 from 10 AM until Noon. Escambia County Senior Resources Manager Tim Day has confirmed his attendance as guest speaker. Please submit the meeting proxy and hopefully your membership renewal as soon as possible. If unable to attend the Meeting in person, guidance for remote viewing will be posted on the News page of the PKA website <https://perdidokeyassociation.org> and forward by a PKA Blast closer to the meeting date.

### **New PKA Administrator**

Suzanne Kenworthy has joined the Perdido Key Association as its new Administrator. She brings substantial experience to the Association having helped nonprofits and businesses organize meetings, manage budgets, provide customer service, and accomplish other personnel and administrative requirements. Prior to coming to the Pensacola area in 2019, Suzanne lived and worked in central Virginia. Welcome to PKA Suzanne!

### **Visitors Center Garden Workday**

About 30 people, including Commissioner Bergosh and Scout Troop 626, spent two hours removing unwanted scrubs and other plants from open areas at the Perdido Key Visitors/Community Center. The work was organized by Escambia County Natural Resources Management official Samantha Bolduc and is preliminary to plantings and other efforts to create the planned Perdido Key Coastal Demonstration Garden.

### **River Road Wooden Bridge to be Replaced**

A FEMA/Escambia County project will replace the wooden bridge on River Road (located a half mile from Perdido Key Drive) with an asphalt path. The project will also repair/replace the concrete bag headwalls on the opposite side of River Road and the pipes/culverts running under the road that direct the small stream running from the interior of Perdido Key to the Old River. The current bridge required repair following September 2020's Hurricane Sally that lifted it 6 to 8 inches above the surrounding path.

### **Vacation Rental Legislation Again**

As expected, debate on vacation rental legislation is beginning again in the Florida Senate and House where identical bills have been filed. The bills would remove much of local control over online vacation rental platforms such as Airbnb and VRBO and reserve authority with the state. Local communities sometimes respond to neighborhood complaint about "party houses" and traffic congestion with regulations; other homeowners argue they should have the right to use their property as they see fit and large rental platform companies would prefer not to work through differing local regulations. The most severe past discussion on this issue would remove the ability of homeowner and condominium associations from restricting property use, such as the minimum length of time a house or condo unit can be rented – an outcome that would affect several condominiums on Perdido Key. For more on this issue, go to the January 7, 2022 *The Capitolist* article "Vacation rental fight back on the menu when 2022 Session starts next week" by Brian Burgess at <https://thecapitolist.com/vacation-rental-fight-back-on-the-menu-when-2022-session-starts-next-week/>.

### **Urgent Care available at Perdido Sacred Heart**

Ascension Sacred Heart Health Center at Perdido located at 13137 Sorrento Road near the Winn-Dixie plaza now offers "Urgent Care" from 8 AM to 5 PM Monday through Friday and 9 AM to 3 PM Saturday and Sunday.

## **More Football – including the Senior Bowl!**

The February 13, 2022 Super Bowl is one of the premier sports events in the United States, but don't forget an important local football attraction. The Senior Bowl will take place in Mobile on Saturday, February 5, 2022 at Hancock Whitney Stadium on the University of South Alabama campus beginning at 1:30 PM. For more information, go to <https://www.seniorbowl.com/>.

## **E-Scooters in Pensacola**

Electric scooters have been operating for about six months in downtown Pensacola on a trial program, but city officials are considering new rules to improve safety. Proposals include limiting the number of e-scooters available, hours of operation, and prohibiting their use on sidewalks and inside parking garages. For more on this issue, see the January 12, 2022 *Pensacola News Journal* article “Rule changes coming next week for e-scooters in downtown Pensacola” by Jim Little at <https://www.pnj.com/story/news/local/2022/01/12/pensacola-e-scooters-could-see-stricter-rules-downtown/9169407002/>.

## **Non-Stop Flights Pensacola to Boston**

Once weekly non-stop flights between Pensacola and Boston by Northeast Alliance (a partnership of American Airlines and JetBlue) are anticipated beginning in June 2022. The Saturday-only flights will depart Boston at 9 AM EST and Pensacola at 4 PM EST. For more information, see the January 6, 2022 *Pensacola News Journal* article “Pensacola to Boston: American Airlines launches nonstop flight” at <https://www.pnj.com/story/news/local/2022/01/06/american-airlines-launches-nonstop-flight-pensacola-boston/9120840002/>.

## **Invasive Weed Wrangle**

Weed Wrangle is a national event held every February where the public helps remove invasive plants from public areas. With COVID restrictions in place at some locations, property owners are encouraged to remove invasive plants from their own property. In western Florida, organizations such as Sea Grant are highlighting “Chinese tallow” for removal this year. If interested and for more information, contact Escambia County Sea Grass Representative Rick O'Connor at [ric1@ufl.edu](mailto:ric1@ufl.edu).

## **Quick Notes on the Environment**

*Panther Deaths* – Three endangered Florida panthers had died since the beginning of 2022. A total of 27 deaths were reported in 2021 and 22 in 2020 while only 230 Florida panthers may remain in the wild. For more on the issue, see the January 18, 2022 *AP News* article “Officials: Florida panther struck and killed by vehicle” at <https://apnews.com/article/nhl-sports-naples-florida-wildlife-9a5d70fa33ddb7ce28ea2a09b28d2a22>.

*Moving Gopher Tortoises* – Gopher tortoises are a “keystone species” creating deep burrows that become habitat for other animals, such as owls and coyotes. Developers

are required to relocate tortoises and fined if they do not. But relocation can cost thousands of dollars and greatly exceed current fines, so Florida wildlife officials are considering raising the fines; according to FWC Commissioner Steve Hudson “It has to sting.” For more on the issue, see the December 16, 2021 *The News Service of Florida* article “Florida wildlife officials support expanding how far gopher tortoises can be relocated” by Jim Turner at

<https://www.heraldtribune.com/story/news/environment/2021/12/16/florida-officials-support-gopher-tortoise-change-favors-developers/8923938002/>.

*How long can ocean animals live?* – A January 14, 2022 “Ocean Conservancy” article by Michell Frey noted some ocean animals have extraordinarily long lives. Greenland sharks may live 300-500 years; bowhead whales over 200 years; ocean quahogs (a clam) 200 to 500 years; and, black coral 4,000 + years!

*No Red Tide* – A January 7, 2022 report showed no current red tide hazard in Florida.

*Shark Bites* – In 2021 Florida had 28 unprovoked shark attacks, more than any other state; worldwide, there were 73 attacks and 9 fatalities. For more information on shark attacks, go to the Florida Museum of Natural History’s *Yearly Worldwide Summary of Shark Attacks* “ISAF 2021 shark attack report” at

<https://www.floridamuseum.ufl.edu/shark-attacks/yearly-worldwide-summary/>.

## **February Calendar**

Feb 05 – Pensacola Double Bridge Run 15K and 6K races

Feb 05 – Reese’s Senior Bowl 2022 at Hancock-Whitney Stadium in Mobile

Feb 05,06,12,13 – Horse Shows at Escambia County Equestrian Center

Feb 05,11,12, 22 – Pensacola Ice Flyers at Pensacola Bay Center

Feb 07 – Hands-on Habitat with Gulf State Park at Gulf Shores Tacky Jacks

Feb 10,24 – Snowbird Hootenanny’s at the Flora-Bama

Feb 11-14 – Valentine’s Day Horse + Carriage Rides at The Wharf

Feb 14 – Various Valentine’s Day Activities

Feb 15-28 – Wildlife Sanctuary of Northwest Florida Fundraiser at Artworks on Perdido Key and Perdido Artists Gallery and Gifts on Gulf Beach Hwy near new Circle K

Feb 18-20 – Five Flags Dog Training Club Agility Trials at County Equestrian Center

Feb 19 – Orange Beach Seafood Festival and Car Show

Feb 19 – Pirates of Lost Treasure Flotilla Parade on Intracoastal Waterway

Feb 19,26,27 – Mardi Gras at OWA

Feb 19-20 – Pensacon at Pensacola Bay Center

Feb 20 – We Run This Beach Marathon & Half Marathon at Gulf State Park Pavilion

Feb 26 – Mardi Gras Grand Parade Pensacola

Feb 26 – Orange Beach Mardi Gras Parades

Feb 28 – Mardi Gras Parade at The Wharf

The following websites provide additional information about events taking place in our great Gulf Coast region:

<https://www.visitpensacola.com/>  
<http://mygulfcoastchamber.com/>  
<http://www.visitperdido.com/>  
<http://mulletwrapper.net/>  
<https://myescambia.com/>  
<http://www.emeraldcoastfl.com//>  
<http://alabama.travel/festivals-and-events>

Perdido Key Association Board of Directors