

# KEY NOTES

NEWS FROM  
THE PERDIDO KEY ASSOCIATION



## June 2022

### Joe Gilchrist

Perdido Key and the entire Gulf Coast lost a good friend on May 26, 2022 when Joe Gilchrist passed away. Mr. Gilchrist was a co-owner of the Flora-Bama and tireless advocate for local musicians. PKA was privileged when he attended its December 2022 Holiday Party at the Seafarer Condominium. Here is a portion of a tribute to Joe from the Perdido Key Area Chamber of Commerce: “In addition to putting Perdido Key on the map by making the Flora-Bama ‘World Famous’ – Joe was the founder of the Frank Brown International Songwriters Festival, the original and longest-running songwriter’s festival in the nation. Joe was a visionary who believed in dreaming big and then doing whatever it took to bring a dream to reality. Joe’s long record of philanthropic generosity benefitted countless non-profit organizations and he was always willing to give anyone a hand up. His support for the military was heartfelt and boundless.”

### World Oceans Day Wednesday June 8

World Oceans Day 2022 will be celebrated at the Perdido Key Visitors Center from 10 AM until 2 PM on Wednesday, June 8. Many environmentally focused organizations will be participating with exhibits and demonstrations, including representatives from Niuhi Dive Charters and Ocean Strike Team to discuss lionfish removal efforts. The event will feature the Grand Opening of the Perdido Key Coastal Demonstration Garden created by Escambia County’s Natural Resources Management department with assistance from local volunteers. For a short video on the Garden go to <https://fb.watch/dgGRKkXjPf/>. In addition to participation in the event, PKA will feature several days of ocean-related slide presentations on its website beginning on June 2. See you at World Oceans Day!

### Rosamond Johnson Day Celebration

Rosamond Johnson Day was celebrated on Saturday, May 7, 2022 along Johnson Beach – the beach named for Private Johnson at the Perdido Key Area of Gulf Islands National Seashore. The event featured compelling deliveries by speakers Eugene Franklin of the Florida Black Chamber of Commerce, Darrel Echols Superintendent of Gulf Islands National

Seashore, David Alexander Retired Police Chief of the Pensacola Police Department, reflections on past celebrations by Alison Davenport and Eugene Franklin, plus Private Johnson's niece Pam Johnson-Green. It also had a wonderful rendition of the Star-Spangled Banner by Mary Lou Sanford Tolbert, inspirational performance of "The Watch" by Steve Wilmer and wreath placement at the Rosamond Johnson Memorial.

### **Sorrento Road and Bauer Intersection Upgrade**

Construction crews have begun a \$4.4 million project to "mill and resurface a 2.4 mile segment of Sorrento Road" south of the Bauer Road intersection as well as resurfacing and improving the intersection itself. 5-foot paved shoulders, drainage and sidewalk improvements plus other work are also scheduled. Completion of the project is likely in early 2023. For more information, go to the May 26, 2022 Escambia County/FDOT news release "Sorrento Road Resurfacing and Bauer Road Intersection Improvement Projects Set to Begin" at <https://patch.com/florida/pensacola/escambia-county-government-fdot-sorrento-road-resurfacing-bauer-r-nodx-20220526>.

### **Weather Station at Visitors Center**

A remote weather monitoring station was recently installed just east of the Perdido Key Visitors Center as part of the Escambia County Weather Stem System. The state-of-the-art equipment provides real time weather information 24/7 and can be accessed at <https://escambia.weatherstem.com/fswnperdidokey>.

### **Hurricane Prep Workshop**

On May 10, 2022 at the Perdido Key Visitors Center, Escambia County Emergency Management personnel provided an informative brief on preparations for the coming hurricane season. A new "Disaster Guide" was being prepared and will be ready for distribution in the coming weeks. Because of the deteriorated world situation, a disturbing addition to County emergency management preparations was renewed concerns for radioactive fallout.

### **Visitors Center Windmill**

A solar and wind powered rest area are part of the Perdido Key Coastal Demonstration Garden complex taking shape next to the Perdido Key Visitors Center. Cyclists and others can charge their mobile phones while taking a break on the windmill's benches. Unlike large wind turbines, the Primo Energy Wind System windmill is designed to appear as a solid surface when operating so birds and other flying animals will not fly into the fan assembly. The unit was purchased primarily with District 2 Discretionary Funds and at a significant discount to provide a positive environmental impact for Perdido Key residents and visitors.

### **Oysters, Shrimp, Sea Grass and Nesting Turtles**

As part of its historical ecology lecture series, the University of West Florida presented the topic "Uncovering the Lost History of Oysters in Perdido Bay" on May 3, 2022 at the Perdido Bay United Methodist Church. While research continues, a conclusion seems to be that oysters were in Perdido Bay in years past but can no longer be found there. The audience participation portion of the program featured comments by Jackie Lane of the Friends of Perdido Bay who spoke of the continuing damage from paper mill effluent making its way into

Perdido Bay. For an earlier look at water quality in Perdido Bay, go to the December 3, 2019 *Pensacola News Journal* article “Is Perdido Bay in peril? Is it too late to protect it?” by Kevin Robinson at <https://www.pnj.com/story/news/2019/11/18/perdido-bay-water-quality-issues-spark-debate-but-what-does-data-say/2470708001/>.

Escambia County’s Sea Turtle Patrol volunteers identified the season’s first sea turtle nest in the County. The nest was on Pensacola Beach and from a loggerhead turtle, the specie that makes up about 90% of sea turtle nests found in Escambia County. The nest was identified a day after one was reported on Gulf Islands National Seashore. The turtle had to crawl over abandoned tent frames to its nesting area – a reminder “to leave no trace” on our beautiful beaches. For more on the issue, see the May 28, 2022 *Pensacola News Journal* article “It’s sea turtle season! Loggerhead nest is first of the season at Pensacola Beach” at <https://www.pnj.com/story/news/2021/05/28/first-sea-turtle-nest-season-reported-pensacola-beach/5247353001/>.

Escambia County’s Sea Grant Representative Rick O’Connor recently released two interesting and informative articles. One concerned the decline of shrimping in the Pensacola area and other Gulf Coast regions. No single factor seemed responsible, but lower priced imported shrimp and disinterest among younger members of families engaged in shrimping likely played a role. His article “Where did all the Shrimpers Go?” is available at <https://blogs.ifas.ufl.edu/escambiaco/2022/04/28/where-did-all-of-the-shrimpers-go/>.

Mr. O’Connor also released an article on the importance of seagrass, its decline in our region over the past several decades and what can be done to improve seagrass survival. His May 20, 2022 article “Seagrass Solutions” is available at <https://nwdistrict.ifas.ufl.edu/nat/2022/05/20/seagrass-situation/>.

### **Gulf State Park Pier Repair Delayed**

Because Alabama’s Gulf State Park Pier repair will cost \$12 million – much higher than anticipated – repairs to the pier’s damaged pilings and 210-foot breach from Hurricane Sally in 2020 are on hold while State Park officials look for options to move forward. The serviceable portion of the pier will remain open to the public pending decisions on repair work. For more on the issue, see the May 09, 2022 *OBA Website* article “Gulf State Park Pier repair is on hold due to cost increases” at <https://www.obawebsite.com/gulf-state-park-pier-repair-is-on-hold-due-to-cost-increases>.

### **NCAA Beach Volleyball Tournament at Gulf Shores**

Spectators at the women’s NCAA Beach Volleyball Championship from May 4-8 in Gulf Shores were treated to several days a great competition. In the end, teams from the University of Southern California bested a strong Florida State University contingent in the final matches for the title. For more on the tournament, see the May 17, 2022 *Mullet Wrapper* article “Southern Cal claims NCAA beach volleyball title at Gulf Place” at <https://mulletwrapper.net/southern-cal-claims-ncaa-beach-volleyball-title-at-gulf-place/>.

## June Calendar

June 01,22 – Pepsi Treasure Hunt for Hunger at The Wharf  
June 03 – Grand Fiesta Parade in downtown Pensacola  
June 04 – Fiesta Boat Parade seen at Sanders Beach or Plaza de Luna downtown Pensacola  
June 04,05 – Florabama Dressage Schooling Show at Escambia County Equestrian Center  
June 04,05 – Spring Fling at OWA (every weekend in June)  
June 01-05,14-19,28-30 – Pensacola Blue Wahoos at Blue Wahoo Stadium  
June 02-05 – Coast Guard Barque (tall ship) Eagle at Port of Pensacola  
June 08 – World Oceans Day Celebration at Perdido Key Visitors Center  
June 09-12,16-19 – Elite Show Jumping at Escambia County Equestrian Center  
June 10 – Flora-Bama Fishing Rodeo  
June 13 – NAS Joint Land Use Study Open House  
June 16 – Hot Rod Power Tour at Pensacola Interstate Fairgrounds  
June 17 – Gallery Night in Downtown Pensacola  
June 24 – Bud Light Fishing Rodeo in Pensacola Beach

Blue Angels practice at NAS Pensacola June 01,08,14,15,21,22,23,24,28,29  
Bands on the Beach at Pensacola Beach every Tuesday, 7-9 PM from April to October

The following websites provide additional information about events 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