



June 2023

Beach Sign Ordinance Approved

An ordinance changing beach signage requirements was approved by the Escambia County Board of County Commissioners (BOCC) on May 4, 2023 and became effective when filed with the Florida Department of State on May 8, 2023. Signage is now limited to one sign per shore-perpendicular boundary line and must be placed within ten feet of the seaward edge of the dune vegetation line. Sign dimensions shall not exceed 24" x 24" with a maximum sign post height of six (6) feet. A letter is being sent to beachfront property owners informing them of the change. A copy of the ordinance is available on the Archive page of the PKA website at <https://perdidokeyassociation.org>.

River Road Closure Delayed

Closure of River Road for replacement of the bridge and culvert scheduled to begin May 16, 2023 has been delayed because of contractor commitments. Construction will likely not begin until after July 4, 2023 although temporary one lane closures of River Road may occur earlier while utilities are rerouted to conform to the new installation.

Perdido Key Multi-Use Path Construction

Following correction of an administrative issue, construction on the east portion of the Perdido Key Multi-Use Path will begin on June 12, 2023. It will take about one year to complete.

It's Sea Turtle Nesting Season!

Sea turtle nesting season for our region is from May 1 through October 31, 2023. The first turtle nest of the season was identified at Pensacola Beach on May 20, 2023 from a loggerhead, the species accounting for 90% of the nests in Escambia County. Greens, leatherbacks, and Kemp's Ridley turtles may also nest in our region. Sea turtles face many preventable hazards, such as improper beach area lighting and obstructions left overnight on beaches – including chairs, enclosures and holes dug in the sand. For more on sea turtle nesting and how we can help, see the Escambia County article "First Loggerhead Nest Recorded on Pensacola Beach May 20" at <https://myescambia.com/news/news-article/2023/05/22/first-loggerhead-nest-recorded-on-pensacola-beach-may-20>.

It's Hurricane Season, too!

According to recent estimates, the 2023 Atlantic hurricane season from June 01 to November 30 will be "slightly below average" although uncertainties remain in the forecast. For more on the coming season, see the May 5, 2023 *Pensacola News Journal* article "Hurricane season 2023 starts June 1. Here's the latest predictions and how to prepare:" by Brandon Girod at <https://www.pnj.com/story/weather/hurricanes/2023/05/05/hurricane-season-2023-starts-june-1-predictions-names-and-more/70183694007/> and the May 26, 2023 *AP* article "How busy will Atlantic hurricane season be? Depends on who wins unusual battle of climatic titans" by Seth Borenstein at <https://apnews.com/article/hurricanes-atlantic-el-nino-climate-change-warm-dfe5ac53a4c2c1805f0e70e9e99009cf>; for local tropical storm information and preparation guidance, go Escambia County's "Tropical Storms & Hurricanes" article at <https://myescambia.com/our-services/public-safety/beready/natural-disasters/tropical-storms-hurricanes>.

Update on Perdido Incorporation Initiative

The "We Are Perdido" group held its second large community meeting on May 16, 2023 at Liberty Church on Blue Angel Parkway. Among issues discussed, the meeting covered completion of Phase 1 of the feasibility study on the financial issues involved if the several Escambia County voting districts in the incorporation proposal become a municipality. Consultant Joe Mazurkiewicz (his firm BJM Consulting, Inc. of Coral Gables is conducted the study) concluded that the incorporated area was financially viable. Additional work on financial and community issues will be accomplished by the in-progress Phase 2 of the study. The May 16 meeting can be viewed on YouTube at <https://weareperdido.org/>.

World Oceans Day Wednesday June 8

World Oceans Day 2023 will be celebrated at the Perdido Key Visitors Center from 10 AM until 2 PM on Thursday, June 8. Many organizations will be participating with "environmentally focused games, activities, and art projects designed to educate on the importance of protecting and preserving native plants and species that call Perdido Key home." Those attending can also visit the native plant garden adjacent to the Visitors Center. For more on the event, see the May 17, 2023 *Mullet Wrapper* article "Perdido Chamber Hosts World Oceans Day event June 8" at <https://mulletwrapper.net/perdido-chamber-hosts-world-ocean-day-event-june-8/>.

NAS Pensacola Public Access Allowed

As of May 17, 2023, non-military citizens are allowed on NAS Pensacola to visit the Naval Air Museum, Pensacola Lighthouse and Fort Barrancas every day of the week from 9 AM until 3 PM, including during Blue Angels practice flights. Public access is only available through the West Gate on Blue Angel Parkway. Other restrictions apply so visitors should check the guidance provided at "NAS Pensacola Seven-day Public Access Beginning May 17" available at <https://cnrse.cnrc.navy.mil/Installations/NAS-Pensacola/>.

State of the Bays Report

The Pensacola and Perdido Bays Estuary Program released its "State of the Bays Report" as a "snapshot of key ecosystem health metrics for the Pensacola and Perdido Bay Systems." A significant conclusion was oysters in our waterways have "all but vanished" due to "poor water

quality and overfishing.” Developed lands have also dramatically increased in recent decades while the many septic tanks remaining can allow nutrients to enter waters by storm water runoff. A positive development has been the return of seagrasses. For more on this issue, see the May 22, 2023 *Pensacola News Journal* article “Pensacola and Perdido Bays Estuary Program releases its first ‘State of the Bays’ report” by Tom McLaughlin at <https://www.pnj.com/story/news/local/2023/05/22/pensacola-and-perdido-bays-estuary-program-releases-waterways-report-card/70220912007/>.

Free Downtown Pensacola Marina Opens

Boaters can dock at a new marina at Community Maritime Park in downtown Pensacola. It has 48 boat slips with most limited to boats 27 ft. or smaller. Built with financial help from a Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commissioner grant, permitted by the US Corps of Engineers and operated under the Port of Pensacola, the marina can be used free of charge. Kayak launch docks, storage racks and a fishing weigh station are also available. For more on the new facility, see the May 26, 2023 *Pensacola News Journal* article “Pensacola opens free downtown day marina just ahead of Memorial Day weekend” by Jim Little at https://news.yahoo.com/pensacola-opens-free-downtown-day-091819192.html?guce_referrer=aHR0cHM6Ly93d3cuZ29vZ2xlLmNvbS8&guce_referrer_sig=AQAAAjMHIpOLPhBVfGf65_Cygrd5_nFn4vxsMd2E_sqglVDdwf1PjkXCA5oWxAdCqdAnjh7cWTwxNf7Bq5ZimUdln65cBOVGPjTmFyNJaQRqs0g-Xok3hcP8Xd2-knxl5CQm_jWZCdzd3pHKSJFqjOHURsWsKOIhNOTAA2NCJmy7uSCW.

OLF-8 Update

Escambia County Commissioners agreed in April 2023 to begin negotiating a \$42 million agreement with D.R. Horton to develop 540 acres of OLF-8 (the former Navy landing field on the north side of 9 Mile Drive adjacent to the Navy Federal Credit Union complex) for mixed-use including industrial, residential, greenspaces plus commercial and medical facilities. Some Beulah residents believe the Horton and Sterling Properties proposal does not conform to the master plan developed by DPZ CoDesign and approved by Commissioners in 2021. District 1 Commissioner Jeff Bergosh will hold a townhall meeting on the development and other issues from 6 to 8 PM on June 5, 2023 at the Beulah Middle School, 6001 W. Nine Mile Road. For more on this issue, see the May 23, 2023 *Pensacola News Journal* article “Escambia commissioner to hold townhall on controversial OLF-8 development project” by Mollye Barrows at <https://www.pnj.com/story/news/local/escambia-county/2023/05/23/townhall-in-beulah-escambia-commissioner-plans-meeting-on-olf-8/70235155007/>.

Latest on Warrington Middle School

Changing Warrington Middle School to a charter school run by Charter Schools USA has proved difficult with recent disputes over the contract leading to intervention by the State of Florida. For recent published information on this saga, see the May 12, 2023 *Pensacola News Journal* article “Escambia School District won't leave Warrington kids behind, even under state threats” by Brittany Misencik at <https://www.pnj.com/story/news/education/2023/05/12/warrington-middle-school-fate-left-to-state-charter-rejects-contract/70211125007/>.

Lionfish Challenge

The 2023 Lionfish Challenge is a lionfish tournament open to recreational and commercial competitors of all ages running from June 1 to October 1, 2023. Participants will compete in either the commercial or recreational division with grand prizes to the top competitors and an additional grand prize to the top Active Military/Veteran competitor. Tournament rules and registration information are available at FWCreefrangers.com/lionfish-challenge. Drawn from Rick O'Connor Escambia County Sea Grant Representative May 19, 2023 *Sea Grant Notes*.

Eastern Diamondback Rattlesnakes Less Common

The eastern diamondback rattlesnake is becoming less common and the US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) has been petitioned to list it as a threatened or endangered species. NCASI (an organization associated with the forest products industry) is assisting USFWS by conducting a regional survey to understand the diamondback's distribution and habitat preferences. Those encountering an eastern diamondback rattlesnake who wish to participate can access the survey at <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/7NWT2YN>. Contact Ms. Angie Larsen-Gray at alarsen-gray@ncasi.org for more information. Drawn from Rick O'Connor Escambia County Sea Grant Representative April 18, 2023 e-mail.

Alabama Deepwater Horizon Settlement Projects

Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (ADCNR) Commissioner Chris Blankenship recently reported that Alabama projects being funded through the Deepwater Horizon settlement have surpassed \$1 billion. These include restoration of oysters and oyster reefs, increased funding for marine mammal and sea turtle research, construction of the Auburn University Gulf Coast Engineering and Research Center in Orange Beach and Africatown Welcome Center to house a portion of the Clotilda (the last slave ship to transport slaves from Africa to the United States) plus land acquisition such as multiple tracts "along the Perdido River watershed to provide a wildlife corridor from the Perdido River Wildlife Management Area to the Lillian Swamp Forever Wild property." For more on this issue, see the May 26, 2023 *Outdoor Alabama Weekly* article "Deepwater Horizon Settlement Projects Surpass \$1 Billion" by David Rainier at <https://mail.google.com/mail/u/0/?tab=rm&ogbl#inbox/FMfcgzGsmhgmSZCBXSxMQNJjBDBQkFDt>.

June Calendar

June 01-03 – Spanish training ship Elcano visits downtown Pensacola
June 02 – Grand Fiesta Parade downtown Pensacola
June 03 – Sea Turtle Baby Shower (education) at Pensacola Beach
June 03 – Fiesta Boat Parade watch from Sanders Beach Pensacola
June 05 – Commissioner Bergosh Townhall Meeting on OLF-8 at Beulah Middle School
June 06,13,20,27 – Wild Wild Wharf at The Wharf
June 06-11 and 13-18 – Blue Wahoos at Blue Wahoo Stadium in Pensacola
June 08 – World Oceans Day Celebration at Perdido Key Visitors Center
June 09-11 – Flora-Bama Fishing Rodeo
June 16 – Gallery Night downtown Pensacola
June 18 – Father's Day

June 23-26 – Bud Light Fishing Rodeo at Pensacola Beach
June 24 – Pensapride Festival at Cordova Square in Pensacola
June 25 – Blues on the Bay Community Maritime Park in Pensacola
June 28-30 – Pensacola International Billfish Tournament in downtown Pensacola
June 30-31 – Rockabilly Bama Lama Red, White & Boom in Robertsedale

Blue Angels practice at NAS Pensacola June 6,7,13,14,20,21,27,28
Bands on the Beach at Pensacola Beach every Tuesday, 7-9 PM 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