

# KEY NOTES

NEWS FROM  
THE PERDIDO KEY ASSOCIATION



## December 2023

### **PKA Holiday Party on Monday, December 11!**

The PKA Board of Directors wishes you and yours the very best of Holiday Seasons! We hope to see you at the PKA Holiday Party from 6 to 9 PM on Monday, December 11, 2023, at the Palacio Resort-Perdido Key (13661 Perdido Key Drive). Please plan to join us!

### **“We Are Perdido” Incorporation Setback**

Pensacola area State Representative Alex Andrade has decided not to place the “We Are Perdido” initiative to create a separate municipality out of four voting districts in southwest Escambia County (including Perdido Key) on the 2024 ballot. He seemed primarily concerned with apparent errors in the feasibility study budget analysis that, when corrected, would result in insufficient revenue to “run a city.” He further stated: “I just don’t have confidence in the feasibility study at this point to show that it could be a viable city, the way that it’s being proposed in the feasibility study.” In October 2023, Representative Andrade – along with Representative Michelle Salzman and Senator Doug Broxson – voted in favor of putting the incorporation proposal on the 2024 ballot. For more on this issue, go to the November 28, 2023 *Pensacola News Journal* article “Effort to incorporate Perdido Key area stalls. Here’s why” by Mollye Barrows at

<https://www.pnj.com/story/news/local/escambia-county/2023/11/28/rep-andrade-wont-put-plan-to-incorporate-perdido-on-2024-ballot-heres-why/71719861007/#:~:text=Here's%20why&text=An%20effort%20to%20incorporate%20a,the%20issue%20on%20the%20ballot.>

### **Discussion of Perdido Key Shift to District 1**

Among the more than 50,000 text messages from a backup of District 1 Commissioner Jeff Bergosh’s phone that have entered portions of the public domain are exchanges between the Commissioner and Lewis Bear Company CEO David Bear discussing the Escambia County redistricting made necessary by the 2020 Census – a redistricting that resulted in Perdido Key and Innerarity shifting from District 2 to District 1. The source and release of the text messages remains controversial. For more on this issue, see the November 29, 2023 *Pensacola News Journal* article “Bergosh texts illustrate behind the scenes plotting to redistrict Perdido” at

<https://www.pnj.com/story/news/local/escambia-county/2023/11/29/commissioner-jeff-bergosh-texts-show-plotting-to-redistrict-perdido/71435610007/#:~:text=Buried%20in%20the%20spreadsheet%20of,Bear%20not%20to%20let%20him.>

### **Alabama Beach Renourishment**

Renourishment of nearby Alabama beaches began on October 30, 2023 and will continue until February 2024. Beginning in the west beach area of Gulf Shores and shifting to Orange Beach (including its Perdido Key portion) in January 2023, the project will help repair sand lost from recent hurricanes. With much of the funding to be provided by FEMA, \$17 million will be used “to add and enhance the shore, dunes and turtle protections.” For more on this issue, see the November 2, 2023 *Gulf Coast Media* article “Beach renourishment project officially begins in Gulf Shores” by Kara Mautz at <https://gulfcoastmedia.com/stories/beach-renourishment-project-officially-begins-in-gulf-shores,192339>.

### **New Perdido Townhomes Approved**

Escambia County has approved plans for 12 townhomes to be built on a three-acre beachfront lot not far west of the Crab Trap Restaurant. The townhomes range from 2,700 to 3,200 square feet and are listed between \$2.5 and \$3.5 million. For more information, see the November 29, 2023 to December 13, 2023 *Mullet Wrapper* article “12 luxury Perdido Key townhomes approved” at [Nov-29-Dec-13-2023.pdf \(mulletwrapper.net\)](#).

### **Pensacola Considers Waterfront Path**

The Pensacola City Council may seek a \$6.4 million Sun Trail grant to create a pedestrian and bicycle path on or near the waterfront from the Gen. Daniel “Chappie” James Jr. Bridge (Three Mile Bridge) to Pace Blvd. For more on the issue, see the November 8, 2023 *Pensacola News Journal* article “Pensacola seeks \$6.4M SUN Trail grant for ‘generational’ waterfront walkability project” by Jim Little at <https://www.pnj.com/story/news/local/pensacola/2023/11/08/pensacola-seeks-6-4-million-sun-trail-grant-for-waterfront-project/71472166007/>.

### **Baptist Hospital Demolition Proposal**

Pensacola is hoping to obtain Florida State funding to assist in the demolition of the now-vacant Baptist Hospital buildings off E Street. Baptist Hospital has offered to donate the old campus to Pensacola if the city takes on the cost of demolition. After demolition, the location area will be redeveloped as a residential area. For more on the issue, see the October 30, 2023 *Pensacola News Journal* article “Funding Baptist Hospital demolition may be too big a lift for Florida Legislature” by Jim Little at <https://www.pnj.com/story/news/local/pensacola/2023/10/30/baptist-hospital-demolition-is-a-big-ask-for-florida-legislature/71341862007/>.

### **More on Rice’s Whale**

Conservation groups are concerned about the future of Rice’s whale, a species that frequents areas of the Gulf of Mexico not too far south of Northwest Florida. Groups like Healthy Gulf hope for designation of critical habitat for the whales and vessel speed restrictions to improve its chances of survival, but opposition by other groups may delay or inhibit such protections.

For more on this issue, see the November 16, 2023 *NPR Morning Edition* broadcast article “Only 51 of these U.S. whales remain. Little has been done to prevent their extinction” by Chiara Eiser and Nick McMillan at <https://www.npr.org/2023/11/16/1212690111/only-51-of-these-u-s-whales-remain-little-has-been-done-to-prevent-their-extinct>.

### **Manatee Update**

November was Manatee Awareness Month so it is a good time to consider the welfare of these gentle giants. While 2021 was a terrible year for manatee, the first nine months of 2023 have seen 61% fewer deaths than the same period of 2022. “This could be because of more seagrass, milder winter temperatures or more effective feeding efforts.” Despite the improvement, the Ocean Conservancy and other groups and individuals believe the manatee and their habitat require more protection. With the mass starvation of the last few years, “...the federal government will decide within a year whether to restore the sea cow’s status to ‘endangered,’ just six years after having ‘down-listed’ them to the less serious ‘threatened’ status.” Information drawn from a November 6, 2023 *Ocean Conservancy* e-mail by Jon Paul “J.P.” Brooker and the November 20, 2023 *Florida Today* article “Famine sends Florida manatees back to the brink” by Jim Waymer at <https://www.pnj.com/story/news/state/2023/11/20/florida-manatees-starving-endangered-species-act/71230597007/>.

### **Why a “Comb” Jellyfish?**

We see them on local beaches all the time but what do we know about them? The comb jelly does not sting and gets its name from the cilia along its body (a comb-like attribute) that allows it to move in the water column, unlike the undulating movement associated with many other jellyfish. For more on this aquatic neighbor, see the November 10, 2023 *UF/IFAS Panhandle Outdoors* article “The Magical Comb Jelly” by Rick O’Connor at <https://nwdistrict.ifas.ufl.edu/nat/2023/11/10/the-magical-comb-jelly/>.

### **Research on Snake Mortality**

The “snake lungworm” has spread from South Florida, where it may have been introduced by Burmese pythons into the Everglades, to Central Florida and is killing domestic snakes. Escambia County Sea Grant Representative Rick O’Connor is working with researchers from the University of Florida and the University to Central Florida as part of the *Snake Lungworm Alliance Monitoring Program (SLAM)* to determine if the invasive species has spread to the Florida Panhandle. Researchers are seeking roadkill snakes to examine for lungworms. If interested in participating with this unusual and potentially hazardous volunteer effort, go to the News page of the PKA website (<https://perdidokeyassociation.org/>) and the last entry titled “Dead Snakes for Lungworm Research” for precautions, instructions, and further information on participating in the project. Drawn from Rick O’Connor November 7, 2023 e-mail.

### **December Calendar**

Dec 01-02 – Christmas Messiah at Cathedral of the Sacred Heart Pensacola

Dec 01-03 – Snowball Derby at Five Flags Speedway

Dec 01,02,23,26,30 – Pensacola Ice Flyers at Pensacola Bay Center

Dec 01-24 – Pensacola Winterfest various dates and events

Dec 01-31 – Ice skating at The Wharf  
Dec 02 – Lighted Boat Parade at Pensacola Beach  
Dec 02 – USO Runway 5K at Pensacola International Airport  
Dec 02 – Holiday Market at Community Maritime Park in downtown Pensacola  
Dec 02 – Foley Christmas Parade  
Dec 02-03,09-10,16-17 – Christmas at OWA  
Dec 08 – Chamber of Commerce Tacky Tinseltown Holiday Party at the Flora-Bama  
Dec 09 – Pensacola Christmas Parade in downtown Pensacola  
Dec 09 – Pensacola Camellia Flower Show and Plant Sale on College Blvd. in Pensacola  
Dec 09 – Flora-Bama Christmas Drop  
Dec 09 – Christmas Lighted Boat Parade from Lulu’s in Gulf Shores to The Wharf  
Dec 09 – Lillian Christmas Parade in Lillian, Alabama  
Dec 08-09 – Holly Days on Main Festival at The Wharf  
Dec 15-17 – The Nutcracker at the Saenger Theater in downtown Pensacola  
Dec 16 – Wreaths Across America at Barrancas National Cemetery  
Dec 16-17 – Sugar Plum Festival at OWA  
Dec 23 – Ventrues Bowl at Hancock Whitney Stadium at the University of South Alabama  
Dec 25 – Christmas  
Dec 31 – New Year’s Eve Fireworks at Pensacola Beach

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