

KEY NOTES

NEWS FROM
THE PERDIDO KEY ASSOCIATION



February 2024

PKA Annual Membership Meeting on February 24

Please plan to attend the PKA Annual Membership Meeting to be held on Saturday, February 24, 2024 from 10 AM until Noon at the Eden Condominium, 16281 Perdido Key Drive. The featured speaker will be Christian Wagley, the coastal organizer for Healthy Gulf – an organization that follows water quality, energy, climate, and endangered species issues on the NW Florida and South Alabama coasts. Mr. Wagley has been active on issues such as restoration of oysters and seagrass in local bays, threats from a proposed industrial fish farm offshore from Pensacola, conservation of the rare Rice’s whale, offshore drilling and beach nourishment. Mr. Wagley holds a master’s degree in biology/coastal zone studies from the University of West Florida. The meeting will also provide updates on Perdido Key issues as well as your Perdido Key Association. We look forward to seeing you there!

PKA Membership Drive

The PKA Annual Membership Meeting coincides with our 2024 PKA membership drive. We hope all members will complete their membership renewals as forwarded in the Annual Meeting mailout, either by mail or online. We also ask you to encourage your friends and associates to join PKA in this period of change and controversy on our beautiful island. With more members, the views of Perdido Key owners and residents will be better understood by decision-makers. As our purpose states: “The Association operates exclusively for charitable and educational purposes in providing information needed to promote the welfare and orderly development, combat deterioration, lessen neighborhood tension, and maintain the natural beauty of the community known as Perdido Key, Florida.” Our great thanks for your support.

RESTORE Amendment 3 Approved by BOCC

Escambia County’s proposed “Restore Act Multi-Year Implementation Plan Amendment 3” includes a request for “Perdido Key Public Beach Access - Property Acquisition and Construction” where \$3.6 million would be used to acquire Perdido Key property for public beach access and parking among other “potential amenities.” At its January 23, 2024 meeting, the Escambia County Board of County Commissioner voted in favor of the Amendment that will now pass to the US Treasury Department for review and action. To view RESTORE

Amendment 3, go to https://myescambia.com/docs/default-source/default-document-library/myip-3-flyer-draft-final-3.pdf?sfvrsn=8ab1b668_2.

River Road Closed until April 2024

River Road is currently closed to through traffic because of repairs to the culverts running under the road and walking path. The revised Escambia County “Project Details” anticipates project completion in April 2024. For “Project Details,” go to <https://myescambia.com/open-government/projects/project-details/river-road-culvert-walking-path-repair>.

Escambia County News Article on Perdido Key Multi-Use Path

Escambia County’s January 30, 2024 *News Article* “Perdido Key Multi-Use Path Providing Better Connectivity through Perdido Key” provides information on the path’s development and current construction progress; it also states path completion is expected in fall 2024. To access the article, go to <https://myescambia.com/news/news-article/2024/01/30/perdido-key-multi-use-path-providing-better-connectivity-through-perdido-key>.

Barrier Island Lighting Workshops

Escambia County January 30, 2024 *News Article* “Free Barrier Island Lighting Workshops Feb 27, 29” states in part “Escambia County’s Natural Resources Management department will host two free workshops Feb. 27 and 29 to help educate the public and answer questions about the newly updated Barrier Island Lighting Ordinance. Workshop topics will include an overview of ordinance requirements, the basics of wildlife friendly lighting, and lighting retrofit tips and tricks. Workshops are designed for property owners and managers and are open to the public. Attendees are asked to register in advance.” The Perdido Key workshop will be Thursday, February 29, 2024, from 5:30 to 6:30 PM at the Perdido Key Community Center (15500 Perdido Key Drive) – register at <https://forms.gle/j7iqXgksHCE52jWF7>; the Pensacola Beach workshop will be on Tuesday, February 27, 2024 from 5:30 to 6:30 PM at the Santa Rosa Island Authority Chambers (1 Via De Luna Dr on Pensacola Beach) – register at <https://forms.gle/EkVWsJM3nynpqyXV8>. To access the *News Article*, go to <https://myescambia.com/news/news-article/2024/01/30/free-barrier-island-lighting-workshops-feb.-27-29>.

Commissioner Bender now Supervisor of Elections

Florida Governor Ron DeSantis appointed Escambia County District 4 Commissioner Robert Bender as Escambia County Supervisor of Elections to fill the position vacated by David Stafford; Mr. Stafford accepted a position as an elections security advisor with the US Department of Homeland Security. Mr. Bender will need to stand for election as Supervisor of Elections in the November 2024 general election; his District 4 Commissioner position will be filled by another Governor DeSantis appointment as well as contested in the November 2024 election. According to the *Pensacola News Journal*, four candidates for the position have so far confirmed they are seeking the position: “Seville Quarter and The District co-owner Charles “Buck” Mitchell, Pensacola City Councilman Jared Moore, attorney Jim Reeves, and Downtown Improvement Board Executive Director Walker Wilson all confirmed to the *News Journal* they are seeking DeSantis’ appointment to the office.” For more on this issue, see the January 26, 2024 *Pensacola News Journal* article “Escambia County Commissioner Robert

Bender appointed to Supervisor of Elections office” by Jim Little at <https://www.pnj.com/story/news/local/escambia-county/2024/01/26/robert-bender-named-new-escambia-county-supervisor-of-elections/72370275007/> and the January 30, 2024 *Pensacola News Journal* article “Four men seeking Robert Bender’s vacated Escambia County Commission seat” by Jim Little at <https://www.pnj.com/story/news/local/escambia-county/2024/01/30/escambia-county-commission-district-4-campaign-already-underway/72394255007/>.

Jimmy Buffett Tributes

Following proposals in both legislative houses, the State of Florida seems likely to honor Jimmy Buffett with a “Margaritaville” or other specialty license plate and by designating Florida State Road A1A on Florida’s east coast as “Jimmy Buffett Memorial Highway.” For more on this issue, see the January 25, 2024 *Tallahassee Democrat* article “‘Margaritaville’ at the Capitol as lawmakers honored Jimmy Buffett” by Elena Barrera at <https://www.tallahassee.com/story/news/local/state/2024/01/25/florida-lawmakers-honor-the-late-musician-jimmy-buffett-at-capitol/72355292007/>.

Camera Monitor for Roundabout

Escambia County and Beach Colony condominium have agreed to mount a video camera on Beach Colony property in the near future to monitor traffic at the Perdido Key Drive/Johnson Beach Road intersection, a response to controversy about the roundabout constructed in 2022. The county will study data provided by the camera as well as other information to determine if any changes at the intersection should be made. For more on the roundabout, see the September 17, 2023 *Pensacola News Journal* article “Traffic study on Perdido Key roundabout is done. Here are the results.” by Mollye Barrows at <https://www.pnj.com/story/news/local/escambia-county/2023/09/14/despite-complaints-perdido-key-roundabout-not-causing-long-delays-study-shows/70830685007/>.

Pensacola Red Light Camera Ordinance

Pensacola City Council has approved a red light ordinance that allows video monitoring of intersections where running red lights and accidents are concerns. The city is withholding implementation of the ordinance pending Florida legislative debate and possible action that could prohibit municipalities from implementing such ordinances. For more on this issue, see the January 24, 2024 *Pensacola News Journal* article “Pensacola passes red light camera ordinance, but hits brakes on installation. Here’s why” by Jim Little at <https://www.pnj.com/story/news/local/pensacola/2024/01/22/pensacola-passes-red-light-traffic-camera-ordinance/72281035007/>.

Possible Vacation Rental Legislation

Florida legislative debate is again anticipated on vacation rentals. SB 714 failed to pass the 2023 legislature, but SB 280 may be considered by the 2024 legislature. According to opponents, the legislation if enacted “would effectively destroy the powers of local elected officials (as well as state officials) from being able to effectively protect the citizens of Florida from the deleterious effects of Vacation Rentals.” For legal analysis on possible impacts go to

https://mcusercontent.com/a5a1d952858a78d90cccc381b/files/eb842465-a6d5-7210-b3d1-6e407bcac910/City_of_Anna_Maria_Opinion_SB_280.02.pdf.

Perdido Key Chamber Meeting and Award Ceremony

The Perdido Key Area Chamber of Commerce held its Annual Meeting and Awards Celebration on January 16, 2024 at the Grand Lagoon Yacht Club. Among the several awards presented were to *Daly Photography* for Small Business of the Year, *Southern Vacation Rentals* for Medium Business of the Year and *Holiday Harbor* for Large Business of the Year.

Friends of Pensacola State Parks Membership and Bird Boxes

The Friends of Pensacola State Parks is a “Citizen Support Organization (CSO)” of volunteers committed to our area’s Florida State Parks, i.e., Big Lagoon, Perdido Key, and Tarkiln Bayou Preserve. The organization’s 2024 membership drive is ongoing and features a unique opportunity to help rebuild and add nesting structures (some damaged by recent storms) for our “flying friends.” A family membership to the Friends is \$30, but contributions of \$100 will build a Bluebird box, \$115 a Bat box, and \$165 a Wood Duck box. For more information on Friends membership and bird boxes go to <https://friendsofpensacolastateparks.org/>.

Artificial Reef/Lionfish Workshops Feb 7-8 and Lionfish Challenge

The Regional Artificial Reef and Lionfish workshops will bring together “managers, scientists, anglers and divers and others to discuss new research, statewide initiatives and regional updates across Florida’s Northwest region.” The Artificial Reef Workshop will take place Wednesday, February 7, 2024 and the Lionfish Workshop on February 8, 2024, both at the Destin-Ft. Walton Beach Convention Center in Ft. Walton Beach. Interested participants can register at <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/2024-artificial-reef-and-lionfish-workshops-in-northwest-florida-tickets-775750660107?aff=oddtcreator> as well as by contacting Rick O’Connor, Escambia County Sea Grant representative at Roc1@ufl.edu or 850 475-5230, ext, 1111. A series of “Lionfish Sweeps” are also planned for the fishing pier at Ft. Pickens with the first scheduled for February 4, 2024. Interested certified SCUBA divers can register with the Ocean Strike Team at <https://oceanstriketeam.org/fort-pickens-lionfish-dives>.

Not Just Pythons in Florida!

Burmese pythons get all the attention and are indeed a significant threat to Florida native wildlife, but other constrictors have made inroads in Florida. Boa constrictors, especially red-tailed boas, can grow to 11 feet in length and have a reproducing population in eastern Miami-Dade County. Scarier but rare are green anacondas seen from Everglades City to Gainesville. These semi-aquatic beasts “can grow over 21 feet long and their mid-body diameter can be over a foot. They are considered the world's heaviest snake, with larger animals reaching more than 400 pounds, the FWC [Florida Wildlife and Conservation Commission] said.” For more on this issue, see the January 11, 2024 *Treasure Coast Newspapers* article “Burmese pythons aren't only constrictors seen in Florida. Say hi to green anacondas, boas” by Cheryl McCloud at <https://www.naplesnews.com/story/news/2024/01/11/florida-snakes-burmese-pythons-green-anacondas-boa-constrictors-what-to-know-where-spotted-prey/72188274007/>.

Winter Wildlife

Wildlife sightings are possible even in our winter weather; we only need to walk outside. Rick O'Connor details a recent winter walk on Pensacola Beach in the January 19, 2024 article "Winter Wildlife Part 1" available at <https://nwdistrict.ifas.ufl.edu/nat/2024/01/19/winter-wildlife-part-1/>. The article is welcome encouragement to leave the condos and explore our barrier island beaches while they are chilly, windswept and empty!

February 2024 Calendar

Feb 2,3,16,17,18 – Pensacola Ice Flyers at Pensacola Bay Center downtown Pensacola
Feb 3 – Reese's Senior Bowl at Hancock Whitney Stadium on the University of South Alabama
Feb 3 – Publix Pensacola Double Bridge Run (5K and 15K) Pensacola & Gulf Breeze
Feb 8 – Snow Bird Hootenanny-Mardi Gras Mambo at the Flora-Bama
Feb 9,10,11 – Mardi Gras parades in downtown Pensacola
Feb 11 – Super Bowl Game Watch Parties at various locations
Feb 11 – Mardi Gras Parade and Afterparty at OWA
Feb 13 – Orange Beach and Gulf Shores Mardi Gras Parades
Feb 14 – Valentine's Day restaurant specials
Feb 17 – Evening Under the Stars (telescope observations) at Big Lagoon State Park
Feb 18 – Chocolate and Cheese Fest at Community Maritime Park downtown Pensacola
Feb 22 – Snow Bird Hootenanny- Hawaiian Hoedown at the Flora-Bama
Feb 24 – Orange Beach Seafood Festival and Car Show at The Wharf
Feb 24 – Shrimp and Grits Festival Harbor Boulevard in Destin
Feb 24, 25 – Pensacon at Pensacola Bay Center
Feb 27 – Celtic Women at the Saenger Theatre downtown Pensacola

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