

# KEY NOTES

NEWS FROM  
THE PERDIDO KEY ASSOCIATION



## May 2024

### **River Road Reopened!**

Replacement of the culverts under River Road and related construction at the bridge area are nearly completed. Vehicular traffic and the bicycle/pedestrian path have been fully restored!

### **Search for Invasive Cogongrass**

Cogongrass is a destructive invasive species that has been found on Perdido Key and other locations in Northwest Florida and Coastal Alabama. Cogongrass is relatively easy to identify at the present time as a tall grass with a fluffy top. Once established it is difficult to remove without spreading it further so following proper procedures is important. Guidance on identifying and removing cogongrass can be found in the *UF/IFAS* April 20, 2024 article “Now is the Time to Search for Invasive Cogongrass” by Rick O’Connor at

<https://nwdistrict.ifas.ufl.edu/nat/2024/04/20/now-is-the-time-to-search-for-invasive-cogongrass/>; the article was republished in the April 17-May 01, 2024 *Mullet Wrapper* article “Invasive cogongrass has reached Perdido Key” at [Mullet Wrapper: Invasive cogongrass has reached Perdido Key in Gulf Shores & Orange Beach](#).

### **Rosamond Johnson Beach Day on May 4**

Rosamond Johnson Beach Day will be celebrated on Saturday, May 4, 2022, beginning at 10 AM at Johnson Beach, the beach named for Private Johnson at the Perdido Key Area of Gulf Islands National Seashore. He was a 17 year old African American soldier who saved two other soldiers and died trying to save a third during the Korean War. Please consider attending and honoring him for his heroism and sacrifice. Entrance fees for the park are waived for the event. For more on Private Johnson, see the April 21, 2024 *Pensacola News Journal* article “Rosamond Johnson died a war hero at 17. How he’s still being honored 73 years later” by Edward Bunch III at <https://www.pnj.com/story/news/local/2024/04/21/rosamond-johnson-beach-day-event-in-perdido-key-korean-war-hero/73334288007/>.

### **Chamber Military Appreciation Luncheon on May 23**

Continuing a patriotic theme, also consider attending the Perdido Key Area Chamber of Commerce’s first ever Military Appreciation Luncheon on May 23, 2024 at the Grand Lagoon Yacht Club on Gulf Beach Hwy. The event will recognize veterans in our community and have Rear Admiral Kyle Cozad (USN) Retired as the featured speaker. Any proceeds from the event will support the Chamber Foundation’s Military Appreciation initiatives. For more information,

go to <https://business.visitperdido.com/events/details/2024-military-appreciation-luncheon-35702?calendarMonth=2024-05-01>.

### **Fish Farm**

The fish farm proposed for the Gulf of Mexico about 26 miles south of Pensacola is in the permit approval process. US agencies including NOAA and important interest groups support its creation while some environmental and other groups are opposed. It would be the first major finfish farm in US federal waters though a small scale operation is approved for the Sarasota area but delayed by legal challenges. Concerns about off shore finfish farms include likely increase in nutrient levels in surrounding waters, possibility of disease spreading from fish farms to native species and dangers to whales and other sea life from the apparatus. The Perdido Key Association has joined the “Don’t Cage Our Oceans” coalition that opposes the fish farm. For information on the opposing initiative, go to [Don't Cage Our Oceans | STOP INDUSTRIAL OCEAN FISH FARMING \(dontcageouroceans.org\)](https://dontcageouroceans.org); for the website of the group proposing the fish farm, go to [Florida Offshore - Manna Fish Farms](https://floridashore.com); for an early report on the proposed fish farm, go to the July 20, 2023 *Pensacola News Journal* article “Pensacola may get one of Florida's first offshore fish farms, and some are already worried” by Colin Warren-Hicks at [Manna Fish Farms seeking to open Gulf of Mexico farm near Pensacola \(pnj.com\)](https://www.pnj.com).

### **Sea Turtle Nesting Season Begins May 1**

Sea turtle nesting season runs from May 1 through Oct. 31, 2024 with local nesting activity peaking in July and hatching in August and September. For more on sea turtles and how we can protect them, go to Escambia County’s article “Sea Turtle Nesting Season Starts May 1” at <https://myescambia.com/our-services/natural-resources-management/marine-resources/sea-turtles/sea-turtles-on-the-beach>.

### **Casino Beach Fishing Pier Reopened**

The Pensacola Beach fishing pier was heavily damaged by Hurricane Sally in 2020. Repairs began in December 2023 and the pier reopened for public use in late-April 2024 though some work remains. The \$3.3 million project was funded by Escambia County but will be reimbursed by FEMA. For more on this issue, go to the April 25, 2024 *Pensacola News Journal* article “Casino Beach Fishing Pier repairs complete, will reopen Friday” at <https://www.pnj.com/story/news/local/pensacola/beaches/2024/04/25/casino-beach-fishing-pier-open-after-hurricane-sally-repairs/73455392007/>.

### **Threats from Development**

Two recent articles highlighted concerns from the rapid development being experienced in Florida, including the Pensacola area. The first speaks to a need for “better growth planning” in Escambia and Santa Rosa Counties while the second details how habitat protection promises sometimes fall short of expectations where – deals between developers and government or non-profit agencies “can fall short of promises.” For growth planning, go to the April 21, 2024 *Pensacola News Journal* article “Escambia, Santa Rosa future at risk without better growth planning” by Paul Owens at <https://www.pnj.com/story/opinion/contributors/2024/04/21/escambia-santa-rosa-future-at-risk-without-better-growth-planning/73342434007/>; the March 25, 2024 *Florida Today* article

“Protection for habitats encounter challenges: data shows deals can fall short of promises” by Jim Waymer is available only to “*Florida Today*” subscribers.

### **Plastic Pollution Treaty Negotiations**

In March 2022 the UN Environment Assembly committed to developing an “international legally binding instrument on plastic pollution, including in the marine environment.” The fourth session discussing the initiative was held April 23-29, 2024 in Ottawa, Canada with a fifth scheduled for December 2024 in Busan, Republic of Korea. Organizations such as Ocean Conservancy are urging the US government to support a “comprehensive approach to combat plastic pollution” because, for example, “over 11 million metric tons of plastic end up in our oceans every year.” Information provided in an April 25, 2024 e-mail by Ocean Conservancy’s Anja Brandon who attended the conference. Other information is available at Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee on Plastic Pollution at <https://www.unep.org/inc-plastic-pollution> and the Ocean Conservancy’s “Fighting for Trash Free Seas” webpage at [https://oceanconservancy.org/trash-free-seas/plastics-in-the-ocean/?ea.tracking.id=24LPDNTAXX&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_source=engagingnetworks&utm\\_campaign=202404\\_PlasticC&utm\\_content=20240416-PlasticsCultivation-Prospects-Email1A-24LPDNTAXX](https://oceanconservancy.org/trash-free-seas/plastics-in-the-ocean/?ea.tracking.id=24LPDNTAXX&utm_medium=email&utm_source=engagingnetworks&utm_campaign=202404_PlasticC&utm_content=20240416-PlasticsCultivation-Prospects-Email1A-24LPDNTAXX).

### **Other items of Environmental Interest**

With Earth Day observed on April 24, 2024, a number of recent articles reminded us of the environmental challenges facing our area and planet and efforts being made to address them.

- a. "We still have a lot of work to do to make meaningful progress in reducing the amount of greenhouse gases accumulating in the atmosphere," said Vanda Grubišić, director of NOAA's Global Monitoring Laboratory that released a recent report on greenhouse gases. For more on the issue, go to the April 9, 2024 *USA Today* article “Greenhouse gases are rocketing to record levels – highest in at least 800,000 years by Doyle Rice at <https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/nation/2024/04/10/greenhouse-gases-climbing-2023/73264870007/>.
- b. For a story on how plastic straws became an environmental issue, go to the April 9, 2024 *BBC* article “The bloody turtle video that sparked a plastic straw revolution by Carla Rosch at <https://www.bbc.com/future/article/20240402-the-turtle-video-that-sparked-a-plastic-straw-revolution>.
- c. The Pensacola & Perdido Bay’s Estuary Program (PPBEP) looks to improve the health of our areas inland waterways. Legislation has been introduced to designate PPBEP a national estuary program and hence become eligible for substantial federal funding. For more on this issue, see the April 29, 2024 *Pensacola News Journal* article “Pensacola & Perdido Bays have long dealt with pollution. How a federal designation can help” by Mollye Barrows at <https://www.pnj.com/story/news/local/escambia-county/2024/04/29/pensacola-and-perdido-bays-get-federal-funding-to-stop-pollution/73188182007/>.

### **Charging E-bicycles**

With electric bicycles growing in popularity and likely to be ridden extensively on Perdido Key in the coming years, users are encouraged to exercise caution when charging their e-bikes

since excessive heat, fire and even explosive danger could arise. For more on this issue, go to the April 28, 2024 *BBC* article “E-bike users warned of indoor charging dangers at <https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/cv20vzpm123o>.”

### **Beach Volleyball in Gulf Shores!!**

The women’s NCAA Beach Volleyball Championship will be held on the beach in Gulf Shores May 3-5 this year as it has been for the past seven years since its founding. It is an exciting tournament and good for our area. Though moving to Huntington Beach, California for 2025 and 2026, local organizers hope the tournament will return to Gulf Shores in 2027 and after. For more on this issue, see the April 16, 2024 *Mullet Wrapper* article “NCAA Beach Volleyball Championship will hopefully be back in 2027” by Fran Thompson at [Mullet Wrapper: NCAA Beach Volleyball Championship will hopefully be back in 2027 in Gulf Shores & Orange Beach.](#)

Blue Angels practice at NAS Pensacola on May 1,7,8,14,15,28,29

Bands on the Beach at Pensacola Beach every Tuesday 7-9 PM April to October

### **May 2024 Calendar**

May 1 – Rum Runners 5K in downtown Pensacola

May 2-4 – Gulf Coast Hot Air Balloon Festival in Foley

May 7-12,21,22,24-26 – Pensacola Blue Wahoos at Blue Wahoo Stadium

May 4 – Rosamond Johnson Beach Day at Johnson Beach (National Seashore Perdido Key)

May 4 – C.A.R.E. on the Coast sea turtle fundraiser at Gulfarium in Ft. Walton Beach

May 5 – Beach Ecology Walk at Pensacola Beach by Healthy Gulf

May 5 – Cinco de Mayo celebrations various venues

May 11 – Gulf Coast Culture Fest Seville Square downtown Pensacola

May 11 – Pensacola Symphony Orchestra at Big Lagoon State Park

May 12 – Mother’s Day celebrations various venues

May 17-19 – Pensacola Navy Days in downtown Pensacola

May 17-19 – Hangout Music Festival in Gulf Shores

May 17-19 – Emerald Coast Open lionfish tournament in Destin

May 19 – Emancipation Day Celebration Ella Jordan African American Museum in Pensacola

May 19 – Blues on the Bay at Community Maritime Park downtown Pensacola

May 27 – Memorial Day

May 31 – Grand Fiesta Parade downtown Pensacola

<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