

KEY NOTES

NEWS FROM
THE PERDIDO KEY ASSOCIATION



July 2024

Meet the Candidates on July 31

The Perdido Key Area Chamber of Commerce is hosting a “Meet the Candidates Night” with the opportunity of hear from candidates running for Escambia County District 1 elected office. The event will be held at The Point Church, 13891 Innerarity Point Road, beginning at 6 PM with doors opening at 5:30 PM. Candidates for the ECUA District 1 Board Seat are Vicki Campbell and James Faxlanger; for District 1 County Commissioner are Tyler Aulger, Jeffrey Bergosh, Jess Casey, Justin Smith and Steven Stroberger.

Lives Lost to Rip Currents at Panama City Beach

Three young men lost their lives to rip currents at Panama City Beach on June 21, 2024 shortly after their arrival from Montgomery, Alabama; a fourth young man died the day before on Panama City Beach and a woman drowned there on June 23. “In 2023, Panama City rip currents claimed more lives than anywhere else in the United States, according to National Weather Service data.” For more on this issue, see the June 22, 2024 *USA Today Network* article “Rip currents kill 4 in 48 hours: Panama City Beach on pace to be deadliest in US” by Jeanine Santucci and Jim Ross at <https://eu.usatoday.com/story/news/nation/2024/06/22/panama-city-deadliest-beach-rip-current-drownings/74179475007/>.

Shark Attacks

An adult woman and two teenage girls were attacked by sharks in Ft. Walton County beaches on June 7, 2024. The woman was in critical condition losing her lower left arm; one teen was in critical condition with severe injuries to upper and lower extremities and other girl in stable condition with wounds to her lower extremities. For more on this issue, see the June 10, 2024 *Pensacola News Journal* article “Florida beaches open after shark attacks injure woman, 2 teens. What we know” by C.A. Bridges, Collin Bestor, Dan Rorabaugh, and Cheryl McCloud at <https://www.pnj.com/story/news/local/2024/06/10/florida-shark-attacks-walton-county-beaches-after-woman-loses-hand-injured/74042072007/>.

Perdido Key Multi-Use Path Just About Done!

On or about June 7, 2024, workers laid down the final segment of the Perdido Key Multi-Use Path. This was at the west end of Perdido Key State Park connecting the east portion being constructed with the west portion that was completed over two years ago. The path connects

to the River Road and Johnson Beach Road paths and numerous commercial and visit opportunities along the way. What a fantastic opportunity for Perdido Key residents and visitors to be able to ride a bicycle or run/walk on the six miles path from the Theo Baars Bridge to the Alabama border completely separate from the often busy Perdido Key Drive! A ribbon-cutting ceremony will likely occur in late-July 2024 and be announced by Escambia County press release.

World Ocean Day 2024

World Ocean Day was held on June 8, 2024 at Escambia County Beach Access #4. Beginning with beach yoga, the event featured presentations by Escambia County's Sea Turtle Ambassadors, Friends of Pensacola State Parks, Southwest Public Library and the Perdido Key Association as well as offerings from several vendors. While enjoying a beautiful day at the beach, the Perdido Key Area Chamber of Commerce sponsored event provided those attending with a great opportunity to learn more about the importance of the ocean and the fascinating sea life it supports.

New Perdido Bay Boat Ramp Opened

A good crowd attended the grand opening of the Perdido Bay Boat Ramp on June 18, 2024. The facility includes a "tow-lane ramp, 62 parking spaces for vehicles with trailers and 22 for vehicles without." Escambia County District 1 Commissioner Jeff Bergosh said "it's a big win for the county and people who live and work in the area." For more on the issue, see the June 19, 2024 *Pensacola News Journal* article "People are amped about Escambia County's new big boat ramp. Why it's making waves." by Mollye Barrows at <https://www.pnj.com/story/news/local/escambia-county/2024/06/19/escambia-county-celebrates-launch-of-new-perdido-bay-boat-ramp/74144420007/>.

Muscogee Nation of NWFL Museum Reopened

The Grand Re-Opening of the Muscogee Nation of NWFL Museum took place on June 29. The ribbon-cutting ceremony was highlighted by appropriate ceremony and representatives in traditional attire. It also featured native vendors and various demonstrations while visitors could tour the updated museum exhibits. The museum is located at 3300 Beloved Path a few blocks from the Gulf Beach Highway/Fairfield Drive intersection.

Updated Beach Flags

To remain consistent with state and local beach agencies, Pensacola Beach Lifeguards have revised the beach flag system for Pensacola Beach and Perdido Key measuring surf risks as follows:

- Green flag - Low Hazard: Generally calms surf and currents
- Yellow flag - Medium Hazard: Moderate surf and/or currents
- Red flag - High Hazard: High surf and/or dangerous currents; beach patrons encouraged to remain out of the water
- Double red flag - Water Closed: No swimming or wading
- Purple flag - Stinging Marine Life: Flown when jellyfish, Portuguese man o'war or other stinging marine life are present

For more on this issue, go to the June 4, 2024 Escambia County *News Article* "Updated beach flag system" at <https://myescambia.com/news/news-article/2024/06/04/pensacola-beach-lifeguards-update-flag-system>.

No Probably Cause of Sunshine State Law Violations

As published in the *Pensacola News Journal*: “An Escambia County Grand Jury has returned a No True Bill over [concerns about Sunshine State law violations](#) involving leaked text messages from Escambia County Commissioner Jeff Bergosh's cell phone. The State Attorney's Office said the grand jury found that probable cause did not exist that any crime had been committed. The No True Bill was returned on May 21.” For more on this issue, go to May 30, 2024 *Pensacola News Journal* article “Grand Jury finds no probably cause county commissioners violate Florida Sunshine laws” by Mollye Barrows at <https://www.pnj.com/story/news/local/escambia-county/2024/05/30/escambia-county-grand-jury-found-no-probable-cause-commissioners-broke-law/73882586007/>.

Florida Property Insurance Market

According to a recent *USA Today* article, insurance industry experts say Florida’s property insurance companies “are on solid footing” and “the insurance market is much stronger than we’ve seen in recent years.” This is apparently because 2023 saw only one hurricane strike in the state and a “handful of new insurance companies” have enhanced competition. Another article, however, spoke to likely increases in the cost for Citizens Insurance policies, the State of Florida program created as a last resort for property owners. For more on this issue, see the May 29, 2024 *Tallahassee Democrat/USA Today Network* article “With worst hurricane season forecast, insurance industry supplies some rare good news” by John Kennedy at <https://www.tallahassee.com/story/news/local/state/2024/05/29/with-a-record-hurricane-season-forecast-insurers-are-ready-maybe/73836287007/> and the June 20, 2024 *Associated Press* article “Florida’s Citizens insurance board OKs rate hikes” at <https://www.jacksonville.com/story/news/state/2017/06/21/floridas-citizens-insurance-oks-rate-hikes/20486788007/>.

2025 Perdido Key Property Owner Survey Questions

PKA is beginning work on the “2025 Perdido Key Property Owner Survey” to follow its recent practice of five year interval between surveys. The survey will be updated to address changes made or anticipated on our wonderful island. If you have suggestions for the upcoming survey please send them to charles.krupnick@gmail.com. The “2020 Perdido Key Property Owner Survey” is posted on the PKA website at <https://perdidokeyassociation.org>.

Pensacola Area State Parks Article

The *Pensacola News Journal* published an informative article on our area’s Florida State Parks noting that each (i.e., Big Lagoon State Park, Perdido Key State Park and Tarkiln Bayou Preserve State Park) has “a unique identity” and offer activities from stargazing to rare plants. For more on this issue, go to the April 16, 2024 *Pensacola News Journal* article “Looking for things to do in Pensacola? Try one of our three state parks” by Brandon Girod at <https://www.pnj.com/story/life/2024/04/16/florida-state-parks-big-lagoon-perdido-key-tarkiln-bayou-preserve/73333768007/>.

Grant Opportunities from PPBEP

The Pensacola and Perdido Bays Estuary Program (PPBEP) has announced its 2024-2025 Community Grant Program. It will award \$200,000 in total funding with amounts from \$10,000 to \$50,000 in seven eligible categories: Water Quality, Sedimentation, Habitat Restoration, Fish and Wildlife Conservation, Watershed Awareness and Education, Resilience, and Community Science. Local governments and non-governmental entities such as educational

institutions and 501(c)3s) are eligible to apply. For more information, go to <https://myemail-api.constantcontact.com/Community-Grant-Applications-Now-Open.html?soid=1134175614329&aid=GuDrE4IFrxQ>.

Tough Week for Sea Turtle Nests

The 2024 sea turtle nesting season on the beaches of Perdido Key and Pensacola Beach was interrupted by high tides that destroyed some of the nests already laid. Since the tides were predicted, some volunteers wanted to move the nests but were prevented by current rulings. For more on this issue, see the June 21, 2024 *Pensacola News Journal* article “Sea turtles nests in Escambia hit hard by storm surge. FWC wouldn't let them be moved.” by Mollye Barrows at <https://www.pnj.com/story/news/local/escambia-county/2024/06/21/escambia-beaches-sea-turtle-nests-hit-hard-by-storm-surge/74155106007/>.

More on Rice's Whale

The status and protection of the endangered Rice's whale have been in the news the last year or two. Most recently northwest Florida's US Representative Matt Gaetz has introduced legislation “to support Air Force exemptions to the Endangered Species Act and the Marine Mammals Protection Act” that would allow testing and training activities that “may result in the incidental take [harming or killing] of the Rice's Whale.” According to Michael Jasny of the National Resources Defense Council (a nonprofit organization focused on environmental issues), passage of the Gaetz amendment “would just be setting a terrible precedent.” For more on this issue, go to the May 31, 2024 *Pensacola News Journal* article “Congressman Matt Gaetz again tries to remove protections for severely endangered Rice's Whale” by Tom McLaughlin at <https://www.pnj.com/story/news/local/navarre/2024/05/31/congressman-matt-gaetz-seeks-to-remove-eqlin-protections-for-rices-whale/73891931007/>.

Lionfish Tournaments

The Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) has announced its 2024 Lionfish Tournament which will take place from May 24 until September 2, 2024. Participants can compete in either the commercial or recreational divisions and compete for top competitor grand prizes. For the full tournament announcement, go to <https://fwcreefrangers.com/lionfish-challenge/>.

Cuban Treefrog

The Cuban treefrog is an invasive species and predator of south Florida's native treefrogs. They have been making their way north with numerous sightings in the Panhandle. Identifying and removing them before they become more established is a priority. To find out how to identify Cuban treefrogs and what to do when found, go to the February 24, 2023 *UF/IFAS* article “The Cuban Treefrog in Florida” by Stephen A. Johnson at <https://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/publication/UW259>.

Shark Research Base Planned for Mayport

With funding approved in the latest Florida state budget, Oearch – a global shark-tracking organization – expects to construct a new headquarters in Mayport FL. The facility will offer student tours as well as residential buildings for those learning about Oearch's research. For

more on this issue, see the June 22, 2024 *Jacksonville Florida Times-Union* article “Ocearch planning shark research base in Florida” by David Bauerlein at <https://www.pressreader.com/usa/times-herald-record/20240622/281865828649187>.

Blue Angels practice at NAS Pensacola on July 16,17,23
Bands on the Beach at Pensacola Beach every Tuesday 7-9 PM April to October

July 2024 Calendar

July 01-03,19-21,23-28 – Pensacola Blue Wahoos at Blue Wahoo Stadium in Pensacola
July 03 – Pensacola Habitat for Humanity night at Blue Wahoos Stadium in Pensacola
July 03 – Watermelon Festival at Grand Bay, Alabama
July 03 – Independence Day Street Party at The Wharf
July 04 – July 4th events Flora-Bama, Pensacola Beach, downtown Pensacola,
July 04-06 – July 4th Weekend at OWA
July 06 – Flora-Bama Freedom Run with 4 mile and 1 mile run/walk
July 11-13 – Blue Angels Pensacola Beach Air Show
July 14 – Pensacola Vintage Fest at Pensacola Interstate Fairgrounds
July 19 – Gallery Night in downtown Pensacola
July 19-21 – Perdido Key Fishing Rodeo
July 19-21 – Alabama Fishing Rodeo at Dauphin Island
July 27 – Bands on the Bayou at Bayview Community Center
July 27 – Home Sweet Home Block Party Museum Plaza downtown Pensacola
July 31 – Meet Escambia County District 1 Candidates at The Point Church

<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