

KEY NOTES

NEWS FROM
THE PERDIDO KEY ASSOCIATION



AUGUST 2024

Perdido Key Multi-Use Path and HCP in the News!

On a very sunny Tuesday July 23, 2024 morning, Escambia County District 1 Commissioner Jeff Bergosh presided over a ribbon-cutting ceremony near the Perdido Key Visitors Center and formally opened the Perdido Key Multi-Use Path. Construction of the east portion was just completed taking about a year and joined the west portion completed more than two years ago. On the same day, County officials held a briefing attended by State, Federal and local officials and residents to commemorate the 10th anniversary of the Perdido Key Habitat Conservation Plan (PKHCP). According to Escambia County Natural Resources Management Deputy Director Tim Day: "With limits on how and when development may occur and established conservation measures, the PKHCP balances the needs of the environment with those of the economy." For more on the ribbon-cutting, go to the July 23, 2024 *Escambia County News Article* "Escambia County Celebrates Completion of the Perdido Key Multi-Use Path" at <https://myescambia.com/news/news-article/2024/07/23/escambia-county-celebrates-completion-of-the-perdido-key-multi-use-path>; for information on the PKHCP event, go to the July 24, 2024 *Escambia County News Article* "Perdido Key Habitat Conservation Plan Celebrates 10 Years" at <https://myescambia.com/news/news-article/2024/07/24/perdido-key-habitat-conservation-plan-celebrates-10-years>.

Meet the Candidates Night

The Perdido Key Area Chamber of Commerce's "Meet the Candidates Night" on July 31, 2024 at The Point Church on Innerarity Point Road was a good opportunity for the many local residents who attended to become more familiar with those running for Escambia County political office. ECUA District 1 Board Seat candidate Vicki Campbell was joined by District 1 County Commissioner candidates Jeffrey Bergosh, Jess Casey and Steven Stroberger at the event. Each candidate provided opening and closing remarks in addition to responding to questions from the audience and comments by other candidates. Among topics covered were concerns about the Perdido Key roundabout, appropriate speed limit and number of lanes for Perdido Key Drive and the approval process for various construction projects. The candidates also discussed their qualifications and endorsements for office they had received.

Hotel and More Proposed for Perdido Key

Developers have proposed a significant commercial and residential addition to Perdido Key. "Valencia Square" would be located at 13585 Perdido Key Drive on a 50 acre site between the

Perdido Key Sports Bar & Restaurant and Pointe South Rentals & Real Estate Office. It would have a five-story hotel, a seven-story condominium, 49 single-family townhomes, three restaurants plus over 3,000 square feet of office space. According to the *Pensacola News Journal* article: “The project was submitted to Escambia County on June 21 and has not been reviewed by the county’s Development Review Committee yet.” For more on this issue, go to the July 5, 2024 *Pensacola News Journal* article “Three restaurants, 1 hotel, over 100 residential units and more proposed for Perdido Key” by Edward Bunch III at <https://www.pnj.com/story/news/local/2024/07/05/perdido-key-valencia-square-project-plans-restaurants-hotel-homes/74283325007/>.

SS United States Potential Pensacola Dive Site

Some may remember when the SS United States set world speed records for a passenger ship crossing the Atlantic Ocean. Local interests hope to bring the 990 foot vessel currently berthed in Philadelphia to Pensacola as a diving attraction like the USS Oriskany. For more on this issue, see the July 22, 2024 *Pensacola News Journal* article “USS Oriskany could be getting some company. Escambia considers sinking SS United States” by Mollye Barrows at <https://www.pnj.com/story/news/local/escambia-county/2024/07/22/ship-ss-united-states-could-be-escambias-next-big-artificial-reef/74470160007/>.

Governor Vetoes Latest Vacation Rental Regulation

The Florida legislature over the last several years has pursued changes to laws governing vacation rentals that, some would argue, would reduce the ability of local government to regulate vacation rentals in their communities. At its 2024 session, the legislature passed SB280 that contained policies opposed by both local communities and the vacation rental industry. According to the cited article: “Many of those policies relate to how local governments deal with violations like having too many people at a party or noise complaints ...” Governor DeSantis vetoed the bill and said it would have prevented “virtually all local regulation of vacation rentals even though the vacation rental markets are far from uniform across the various regions of the state.” Vacation rental regulation will almost certainly be addressed again in the 2025 Florida legislative session. For more on this issue, see the June 28, 2024 *Tampa Bay Times* article “DeSantis vetoes bill over vacation rental regulation” by Alexandra Glorioso at <https://www.tampabay.com/news/florida-politics/2024/06/27/desantis-vetoes-bill-over-vacation-rental-regulation/>.

HOA Rule Changes

Changes to Florida home owner association (HOA) authority became law on July 01, 2024 and could affect some Perdido Key residents and owners. The legislation was apparently “in response to a lot of resident complaints about the lack of [HOA] accountability, legislators said.” The changes are numerous and include removing bans on some types of vehicles allowed to park in HOA spaces, reducing HOA imposed fines for violations, and requiring more transparency in HOA operations. For more on this issue, see the July 02, 2024 *USA Today Network* article “Here’s what your HOA can’t do anymore” by C. A. Bridges at <https://www.tallahassee.com/story/news/local/state/2024/07/01/florida-hoa-new-law-july/74265853007/>.

Margaritaville License Plates

The Florida government is honoring Jimmy Buffett by designating State Road A1A as “Jimmy Buffett Memorial Highway” and making available “Margaritaville” specialty license plates. Fees from the sale of the plates will go to “Singing for Change,” an organization founded by Jimmy

Buffett to “provide grants to nonprofit organizations in communities impacted by natural or manmade disasters for recovery, rebuilding, and future sustainability in those communities and to promote and inspire local grassroots leadership that will work to improve the quality of life in those communities and others in this state.” For more on this issue, see the July 02, 2024 *USA Today Network* article “‘Margaritaville’ license plate to honor Jimmy Buffett coming to Florida. Here’s when” by C. A. Bridges at

<https://eu.heraldtribune.com/story/news/state/2024/07/02/florida-margaritaville-license-plates-new/74270379007/>.

Navarre Incorporation Initiative Stalls

A proposal to gauge support for incorporating Navarre with a straw poll failed at a recent meeting of the Santa Rosa County Board of County Commissioners. Various reasons were given for its rejection including reference to efforts at incorporating a portion of Escambia County, including Perdido Key. For more on this issue, see the July 22, 2024 *Pensacola News Journal* article “‘Integrity’ concerns stop Navarre incorporation referendum before it starts” by Kevin Robinson at <https://www.pnj.com/story/news/local/2024/07/22/preserve-navarre-incorporation-non-binding-referendum-axed-santa-rosa/74499978007/>.

Red White and Birdies Golf Scramble October 11

There is still time to sign up for the 2024 Perdido Key Area Chamber of Commerce’s “Red, White and Birdies Golf Scramble” to be held on October 11 at Lost Key Golf and Beach Club. The Scramble is an annual event to show support for our area’s former and current military families with proceeds going to the Perdido Key Area Chamber Foundation’s military appreciation programs and initiatives. For more information, go to <https://business.visitperdido.com/events/details/2024-red-white-and-birdies-golf-scramble-35828?calendarMonth=2024-10-01>.

More Repairs to Perdido Key State Park

The Florida Park Service has approved funding to complete repairs to the West Use area of Perdido Key State Park, to include restroom renovations and boardwalk repairs.

More Trails for West Escambia

Local sponsors hope to receive several million dollars in EPA funding to complete a “public greenway project that would connect north and west Pensacola with trails, parks, and other common spaces.” The “Bluffline plan” would go from the University of West Florida to Jackson Lakes between Navy Blvd and Jackson Street and could help revitalize Warrington and adjacent areas. For more on this issue, see the July 26, 2024 *Pensacola News Journal* article “‘Bluffline’ plan to connect north and west Pensacola with miles of trails gaining steam” by Mollye Barrows at <https://www.pnj.com/story/news/local/escambia-county/2024/07/26/bluffline-project-aims-to-develop-pensacolas-jackson-lakes/74509306007/>.

Beach Access #2 Lifeguards until August 11

Perdido Key has enjoyed lifeguard services this summer based at Beach Access #2, but they will end on August 11, 2024.

Least Tern Chicks on Perdido Key

A number of least tern chicks have been seen on Perdido Key in recent weeks. The least tern is the smallest tern in North America and listed as “threatened” in Florida. A photo of a chick

and mom taken by Perdido Key State Park volunteer Sandy Williams is available on the PKA website.

Pensacola Beach Upgrades Budgeted

The Santa Rosa Island Authority's draft budget for Fiscal Year 2025 includes funding for the renovation of the Bob Sikes Toll Plaza, increased spending on beach nourishment, additional bathrooms, and infrastructure improvements including bike path renovations and crosswalk lighting. For more on this issue, go to the July 25, 2024 *Pensacola News Journal* article "SRIA has big plans to improve beach infrastructure. What's planned and what it'll cost." by Edward Bunch III at

<https://www.pnj.com/story/news/local/2024/07/25/santa-rosa-island-authority-drafts-pensacola-beach-budget-for-2025/74350147007/>.

Sharks in These Waters?

For a summary of possible danger from sharks in Pensacola waters, see the *Pensacola News Journal* July 2, 2024 article "How many folks have been bitten by sharks near Pensacola Beach? Here's the brief history." by Troy Moon at

<https://www.pnj.com/story/news/local/2024/07/02/pensacola-beach-shark-attacks-rare-despite-two-walton-shark-bites/74224488007/>.

Perdido Islands Management

The Lower Perdido Islands near Perdido Pass in Orange Beach are popular boating destinations but suffer from considerable environmental degradation. "To address these concerns, the City of Orange Beach, Moffatt & Nichol, Olsen Associates Inc., and The Nature Conservancy have teamed up to develop a management plan which proposes conservation strategies and restoration concepts to support protection of the Lower Perdido Islands and their valuable habitats for the future." For more on this issue, go to the *Nature Conservancy* document "Lower Perdido Islands" at

<https://www.nature.org/en-us/get-involved/how-to-help/places-we-protect/lower-perdido-islands/>.

How have Climate Change Predictions worked out?

Need some facts about Climate Change? See the following *UF/IFAS* Rick O'Connor articles: June 25, 2024, "Another Look at Climate Change – Part 2 How Might the Earth's Temperature and Climate Change in the Future?" at

<https://blogs.ifas.ufl.edu/escambiaco/2024/06/25/another-look-at-climate-change-part-2-how-might-the-earths-temperature-and-climate-change-in-the-future/>; and, July 19, 2024, "Another

Look at Climate Change; Part 4 – What Can Be Done?" at

<https://nwdistrict.ifas.ufl.edu/nat/2024/07/19/another-look-at-climate-change-part-4-what-can-be-done/>.

Plastic Microfibers a Big Problem

Quoting from the *Ocean Conservancy*: "Our clothing is largely plastic-based, and when we wash it, pieces shed off and end up in our washing machines as microfibers. In fact, a single load of laundry can release up to 18 million microfibers, and these tiny pieces of plastic end up in our ocean, open land, farm fields and rivers. In California alone, the number of microfibers released into our environment in a single year is greater than all the stars in our galaxy."

Imagine how many microfibers the entire United States is collectively dumping into our ocean and on land! The good news? There are easy and economical ways to help curb this crisis at the source, such as adding microfiber filters to all new washing machines.” Information drawn from the July 03, 2024 *Ocean Conservancy* e-mail “Microfibers Are a Mega-Problem” by Robyn Stegman.

Blue Angels practice at NAS Pensacola on August 21&27

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

August 2024 Calendar

Aug 01 – S’mores on the Shore on Gulf Shores Public Beach

Aug 03&10 – OWA Live Music Series

Aug 04 – Free Fee Day at Gulf Islands National Seashore (Johnson Beach/Ft. Pickens)

Aug 07 – Free Fee Day at Pensacola Lighthouse on NAS (National Lighthouse Day)

Aug 13-18 & 27-31 – Pensacola Blue Wahoos at Blue Wahoo Stadium in Pensacola

Aug 16 – Gallery Night/Car Show downtown Pensacola

Aug 23 - Gridiron Connections with Crimson Tide Chaplain & Ex-NFL Player Jeremiah Castille at The Wharf

Aug 24 – Coastal Tailgate Cook-Off Challenge at The Wharf

Aug 30 – National Shrimp Festival Golf Challenge for Education at Craft Farms in Gulf Shores

Aug 31 – Living History Crew Drill on USS Alabama and USS Drum on Mobile Bay

<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