

KEY NOTES

NEWS FROM
THE PERDIDO KEY ASSOCIATION



FEBRUARY 2025

PKA Annual Membership Meeting

Just another reminder of the 2025 PKA Annual Membership Meeting to be held on Saturday, February 22, 2025, from 10 AM until Noon at the Eden Condominium. The guest speaker will be Escambia County District 1 Commissioner Steve Stroberger. It's a busy time in the County and will be good to hear what the Commissioner has to say.

Snow on the Beach!

A historic amount of snow fell on the Gulf Coast in the period January 21-23, 2025 leaving up to 10 inches in Pensacola and even snow down to the Gulf of Mexico waterline. Low temperatures kept the white stuff around long enough to close roads, cancel schools and slow down many private enterprises. Government Emergency Management personnel worked tirelessly to keep citizens safe and restore normal activities as quickly as possible. The young of course made the most of the unique weather with snowball fights, snowmen, snow angels and sledding adventures. For reporting on the snowstorm, see the *Pensacola News Journal* January 23, 2025 article "Escambia, Pensacola first responders work around the clock in historic snowstorm" by Mollye Barrows at <https://www.pnj.com/story/news/local/escambia-county/2025/01/23/escambia-emergency-crews-answer-hundreds-of-calls-during-snowstorm/77906039007/> and the January 23, 2025 *Pensacola News Journal* article "Pensacola snow photos: The Pensacola area saw historic snow. Here's what it looked like" by Brandon Girod, Tony Giberson and Gregg Pachkowski at <https://www.pnj.com/story/weather/2025/01/23/florida-snow-photos-sledding-snowboarding-snowmen-and-more/77907047007/>.

75 Ft Easement Decision Accepted by BOCC

On January 9, 2025 the Escambia County Board of County Commissioners affirmed the Honorable Jan Shackelford's decision to grant the County's motions "to dismiss for failure to join indispensable parties..." in the litigation by six affected Perdido Key condominium Boards of Directors to invalidate the 75 ft public access easement on beach property from the Perdido Sky Condominium to Perdido Key State Park. A discussion of the case is available in the January 2, 2025 *Rick's Blog* entry "Escambia County wins dismissal of Perdido Key lawsuits" at <https://ricksblog.biz/escambia-county-wins-dismissal-of-perdido-key-lawsuits/> noting the

opinion that all affected lot owners must participate in litigation “challenging shared easement rights.”

PPBEP part of National Estuary Program

The Pensacola and Perdido Bays Estuary Program (PPBEP) achieved an honor and key objective when on December 9, 2024 the US House of Representatives passed the “Pensacola and Perdido Bays Estuary of National Significance Act” and directed the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to enroll PPBEP into the National Estuary Program as an “Estuary of National Significance.” The bill was signed into law by President Biden on December 17, 2024. According to PPBEP Executive Director Matt Posner, the designation allows the organization to receive “a direct annual federal allocation and be eligible for millions in grant funding from such entities as the Environmental Protection Agency, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration and the Department of the Interior” and be eligible for funding “in some cases from agencies like FEMA or the Federal Department of Transportation.” For more on this issue, see the December 11, 2024 *Pensacola News Journal* article “National Estuary Program status could open floodgate of funds for Pensacola-area waters” by Tim McLaughlin at <https://www.pnj.com/story/news/local/pensacola/2024/12/11/national-estuary-program-designation-pensacola-and-perdido-bays-estuary-program/76888465007/>.

Rice’s Whales Retain Protection

Former Congressman Matt Gaetz left the US House of Representatives on November 14, 2024. “Legislation championed by Gaetz that could have put the highly endangered whale species [Rice’s whale] at risk of being killed by live fire during military exercises hung around a little longer this year than the congressman did, but was eliminated from consideration when the National Defense Authorization Act passed Congress Dec. 19 without its inclusion.” Rice’s whales live primarily in the Gulf of Mexico’s DeSoto Canyon running from near Pensacola to Fort Myers. Gaetz’s proposal would have allowing weapons testing from Eglin AFB and elsewhere in the whale’s habitat. For more on this issue, go to the January 5, 2025 *Pensacola News Journal* article “Rice’s whales escapes Matt Gaetz’s weapons testing plan” by Tom McLaughlin at <https://www.yahoo.com/news/rices-whales-again-escape-matt-100913900.html>.

Gulf Shore’s Little Lagoon becomes Natural Sanctuary

Gulf Shores has received a total of \$6.4 million to complete the “Laguna Cove Little Lagoon Natural Resource Protection Project” to “transform 53 acres of coastal habitat on Little Lagoon’s south shore into a protected natural sanctuary. “It will feature 6,100 feet of shoreline and contain “vital wetlands and critical habitat areas.” For more on this issue, see the January 21, 2025 *Mullet Wrapper* article “Gulf Shores receives another \$2 M for Laguna Cove Project” at <https://mulletwrapper.net/gulf-shores-receives-another-2m-for-laguna-cove-project/>.

Offshore Drilling

The US Interior Department received no bids from energy companies to acquire leases for gas and oil drilling in Alaska’s Arctic National Wildlife Refuge. Acting Deputy Interior Secretary Laura Daniel-Davis said “Arctic wildlife refuge reflects what we and they have known all along – there are some places too special and sacred to put at risk with oil and gas drilling.” In a related matter, Christian Wagley of *Healthy Gulf* stated in a January 6, 2025 e-mail that the Biden administration had withdrawn the eastern Gulf of Mexico from future offshore oil and gas leasing but the western Gulf remains without protections. He noted “offshore drilling continues to pose severe risks to communities, ecosystems, and economies across the region.” For more on Alaska drilling, see the January 8, 2025 *Reuters* article “Alaska wildlife refuge drilling auction yields no bids, US says” by Richard Valdmanis and Timothy

Gardner at <https://www.reuters.com/world/us/alaska-wildlife-refuge-drilling-auction-yields-no-bids-us-says-2025-01-08/>.

Manatee Update

Despite the wintry weather, 17 Manatees were observed along the northern Gulf Coast from December 6, 2024 to January 9, 2025. Some of the manatees required care, however, and at least one may have succumbed to the cold. Drawn from “Dauphin Island Sea Lab Manatee Update” provided in January 10, 2025 e-mail by Rick O’Connor.

Protection for Monarch Butterflies

As proposed by the US Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS), the iconic monarch butterfly will receive protection under the Endangered Species Act (ESA) as a threatened species. The number of butterflies wintering over in Mexico habitat is a common measure of the health of the species and has been in decline. In addition, “... monarchs across North America face significant challenges, including habitat destruction, pesticide exposure, and extreme weather exacerbated by climate change.” For more on this issue, see the December 10, 2024 *Xerces Society* article “Monarch Butterflies Have Been Proposed for ESA Protection. What Does This Mean?” by Deborah Seiler and Emma Pelton at <https://xerces.org/blog/monarch-butterflies-have-been-proposed-for-esa-protection-what-does-this-mean>.

Copepods

In his January 17, 2025 *UF/IFAS* article “Marine Creatures of the Northern Gulf of Mexico – Copepods,” Rick O’Connor discusses the copepod – a multicellular but mostly “too small to see” creature. Copepods are an important part of the ocean food chain and feed on phytoplankton; they may then be consumed by the ocean’s many plankton feeders. They are mobile and can swim at a comparative speed of 50 mph if human in size while their total biomass may be among the largest of all the creatures of the sea. For more information on these bug-like inhabitants of the Gulf, go to <https://nwdistrict.ifas.ufl.edu/nat/2025/01/17/marine-creatures-of-the-northern-gulf-of-mexico-copepods/>.

February 2025

- Feb 01 – Reese’s Senior Bowl at University of South Alabama Hancock Whitney Stadium
- Feb 01 – Double Bridge Run 15K and 5K beginning in downtown Pensacola
- Feb 01,7,8,21,22,23 – Pensacola Ice Flyers at Pensacola Bay Center
- Feb 04 – Riverdance 30-The New Generation at the Saenger Theatre downtown Pensacola
- Feb 04 – Snowbird Fest at the Orange Beach Event Center
- Feb 05,06 – Scheduled prescribed burn for Jones Swamp Wetland Preserve
- Feb 06,20 – Snowbird Hootenanny at the Flora-Bama
- Feb 07,14,21,25,28 – Morning at the Museum at Naval Aviation Museum NAS Pensacola
- Feb 08 – Pensacola Symphony presents Mozart Madness at First Baptist Church of Pensacola
- Feb 08 – Liverpool Legends: the Premier Beatles Tribute at OWA
- Feb 13 – Mania the Abba Tribute at the Saenger Theatre downtown Pensacola
- Feb 14 – Valentine’s Day events at various restaurants
- Feb 14-17 – Cirque Italia Water Circus Destin-Ft. Walton Beach Fairgrounds and Event Center
- Feb 15 – Mardi Gras Flotilla boat parade along the Old River and Intracoastal Canal

Feb 15,16 – Pensacon at the Pensacola Bay Center
Feb 16 – Pensacola Chocolate and Cheese Fest at Community Maritime Park in Pensacola
Feb 22 – Shrimp & Grits Festival on Harbor Boulevard in Destin
Feb 22 – Orange Beach Seafood Festival & Car Show at The Wharf
Feb 22 – Ft. Morgan Oyster Fest in Gulf Shores
Feb 28 – Krewe of Lafitte Mardi Gras (night) Parade in downtown Pensacola

Blue Angels practice schedule will be available in February 2025

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