

KEY NOTES

NEWS FROM
THE PERDIDO KEY ASSOCIATION



May 2025

Commissioner Stroberger Town Hall

A good turnout attended District 1 Commissioner Steve Stroberger's April 28, 2025 Town Hall at Liberty Church. Public discussion with the Commissioner covered topics such as the 75 foot public beach access easement affecting many Perdido Key beachfront properties, possible Florida legislative action concerning SB 1622 on customary use-public access through private beachfront property (see following article on "Walton County Beach Access"), restroom options for Escambia County public beach access locations on Perdido Key, maintenance for the Perdido Key Multi-Use Path, needed repairs to Bauer Road and Sorrento Road, as well as Perdido tax and funding issues. District 1 ECUA Board Representative Vicky Campbell also spoke on issues relevant to the area.

Walton County Beach Access

The Florida Senate Judiciary Committee recently voted to repeal SB 1622 that overturned a 2016 Walton County ordinance allowing "customary use" for beach access to all Walton County beaches; i.e., "The county had declared the public had recreational use rights to the county's 26 miles of dry sand beach" even if privately owned – but SB 1622 reversed the ordinance. "The 2018 law [SB 1622] blocked any city or county from approving a customary use ordinance until it notifies affected homeowners, holds a public hearing and goes before a judge who determines whether a private beach has historically been open to visitors." Some who favor repeal believe blocking beach access hurts the region's economy, but it is not clear if SB 1622 will be repealed in the current Florida legislative session. For more on this issue, see the March 31, 2025 *Tallahassee Democrat/USA Today Network – Florida* article "Florida lawmakers wade into 'War at the Shore' over beach access" by John Kennedy at <https://www.tallahassee.com/story/news/state/2025/03/31/florida-lawmakers-wade-into-war-at-the-shore-with-beach-access-fight/82710508007/>.

PPBEP Living Shoreline May 1 Open House

Don't forget the Pensacola and Perdido Bays Estuary Program (PPBEP) "Living Shoreline Assistance Program" to help area residents and groups combat shoreline erosion. The open house on the program will be from 2 to 8 PM on May 1, 2025 at the Perdido Key Community Center (Visitors Center) at 15500 Perdido Key Drive. For more information, go to the PPBEP

article “Living Shoreline Assistance Program” at <https://www.ppbeb.org/articles/2577-living-shoreline-assistance-program-helps-coastal-residents-combat-erosion>. Note also the April 2025 *Pelican Post* PPBEP newsletter offers a number of articles including discussion a fish habitat community survey and Carpenter Creek and Mardi Gras Bead cleanups. The *Post* is available at <https://myemail.constantcontact.com/Pelican-Post-April-Newsletter.html?soid=1134175614329&aid=aFtCjProl78>.

Rosamond Johnson Ceremony May 3

The Perdido Key Chamber of Commerce and Gulf Islands National Seashore are hosting the annual Private Rosamond Johnson Memorial Ceremony on Saturday, May 3, 2025 at 10 AM on Johnson Beach at the Perdido Key Area of Gulf Islands National Seashore. Admission fees for the Seashore will be waived from 8 AM until Noon on May 3.

Friends Yard Sale on May 3

Friends of Pensacola State Parks are having a yard sale for Saturday May 3, 2025 at the Grand Lagoon subdivision. This is a great opportunity to clean out those closets and garages as well as support Friends’ Pensacola State Parks initiatives!

Multiple Beach Rescues

Perdido Key and Pensacola Beach beaches can be dangerous as highlighted by multiple recent rescues from rip currents. “While enjoying the beach, we always strongly encourage our visitors to swim in a lifeguarded area,” said Water Safety Chief Dave Greenwood. “Staying near a lifeguard greatly increases your chances of achieving a fun, safe day at the beach. If you do find yourself in a rip current, do not panic. Conserve your energy by floating on your back until you are out of the current. When out of the current, swim sideways into shore.” For more on this issue, see the May 1, 2025 *Pensacola News Journal* article “Visiting Pensacola Beach this summer? Protect yourself from the beach’s ‘greatest danger’” by Edward Bunch III at <https://www.pnj.com/story/news/local/cantonment/2025/05/01/rip-currents-water-safety-incidents-pensacola-beach-perdido-key-escambia-county/83341666007/>.

Hurricane Season 2025

Hurricane prediction season is underway with Colorado State University (CSU) issuing its first 2025 forecast. Florida is at the top of the CSU list for possible landfalls with a “65% probability of seeing a hurricane and a 35% chance of seeing a major hurricane (Category 3+).” The Gulf Coast from “the Florida Panhandle toward Brownsville, Texas, has a 33% probability, up 6% from the average.” Overall, the expectation is for a “slightly above-normal number of storms.” For more on this issue, see the April 10, 2025 *Pensacola News Journal* article “CSU’s 2025 hurricane season prediction shows how likely Florida is to see hurricane” by Brandon Girod at <https://www.yahoo.com/news/csus-2025-hurricane-season-prediction-144429128.html>.

Lawsuit to Stop SS United States Project

The “New York Coalition to Save the Steam Ship United States” has appealed to the Federal Courts as well as high US officials including President Donald Trump to prevent the historic ocean liner SS United States from being sunk off the northwest Florida Gulf Coast as an artificial reef for recreational diving. Okaloosa County owns the vessel which was towed from

Philadelphia to Mobile where it is undergoing preparations to become the dive site. For more on this issue, go to the April 30, 2025 *Pensacola News Journal* article “Group files lawsuit, appeals to President Trump to stop SS United States from being sunk” by Tom McLaughlin at <https://www.pnj.com/story/news/local/pensacola/2025/04/29/donald-trump-pam-bondi-asked-to-stop-ss-united-states-sinking/83326137007/>.

A Good Long Red Snapper Season

Florida Governor DeSantis announced a 126 day red snapper season for 2025 beginning Memorial Day weekend (May 24-26) and reopening June 1 to July 31, with other dates approved for later in the year. For more on this issue, see the *Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Department Newsletter* entry “ICYMI: Governor Ron DeSantis Announces Record 126-Day Red Snapper Recreational Season for 2025” at <https://myfwc.com/news/all-news/snapper-expanded-season-425/>.

Alabama Waters to Close for Shrimping

The Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources announced that “as of 6 a.m., Thursday, May 1, 2025, all inside waters will be close for commercial and recreational shrimp harvesting. All inside waters, not permanently closed by law or regulations, will reopen to shrimp harvest at 6 a.m., on Sunday, June 1, 2025.” For more on this issue, see the April 23, 2025 *Outdoor Alabama* article “Alabama State Waters Temporarily Close for Shrimping” at <https://www.outdooralabama.com/articles/alabama-state-waters-temporarily-close-shrimping-2>.

Pensacola Beach Renourishment

Renourishment of an eight-mile stretch of beaches on Pensacola Beach will begin as early as November 1, 2025 and conclude by Memorial Day 2026. With sand priced at \$20 per cubic yard, the project will cost an estimated \$36 million. For more on this issue, see the April 22, 2025 *Pensacola News Journal* article “Renourishment of 8 miles of Pensacola Beach should start this fall at a cost \$36 million” by Edward Bunch III at <https://www.yahoo.com/news/renourishment-8-miles-pensacola-beach-090547395.html>.

Commercial Service at Gulf Shores International Airport

Allegiant Airlines will begin commercial service from Gulf Shores International Airport on May 31, 2025. It will offer non-stop flights twice weekly to “Knoxville, Houston, Cincinnati, Fayetteville, Belleville (30 miles from St. Louis) and Kansas City.” Hertz and Dollar rental cars will be offered at the airport. For more on this issue, see the April 2, 2025 *Mullet Wrapper* article “Hertz will rent cars from Gulf Shores International Airport” by Fran Thompson at <https://mulletwrapper.net/hertz-will-rent-cars-from-gulf-shores-international-airport/>.

More Paths for Pensacola and Orange Beach

Construction of a multi-use path along Bayfront Parkway in Pensacola should begin next year. Pensacola City Council is also looking at segments through downtown all the way to Pace Boulevard. The new trails will be part of the Florida SUN (Shared-Use Non-motorized) path system. For more on this issue, see the April 25, 2025 *Pensacola News Journal* article “More funding coming for waterfront multi-use trail downtown” by Jim Little at <https://www.pnj.com/story/news/local/pensacola/2025/04/23/more-sun-trail-funding-coming-to->

[downtown-pensacola-waterfront/83208528007/](https://www.pensacola.com/news/downtown-pensacola-waterfront/83208528007/). In Orange Beach, construction in on-going or planned for a number of multi-use paths and sidewalks on Canal Road, Bear Point and elsewhere. For more on this issue, see the April 16, 2025 *Mullet Wrapper* article “Multi-use trail, sidewalk and paving projects in O.B.” at [Mullet Wrapper: Multi-use trail, sidewalk and paving projects in O.B. in Gulf Shores & Orange Beach](https://www.pensacola.com/news/mullet-wrapper: Multi-use trail, sidewalk and paving projects in O.B. in Gulf Shores & Orange Beach).

Living Shoreline in Santa Rosa County

Santa Rosa’s first “living shoreline” will be established off Floridatown Park on Escambia Bay following a five year effort to complete permitting and acquire funding for the project. According to Milton resident Ken Johnson, the shoreline at the park had “probably eroded a good 10 feet in the last decade or so.” Because of the project’s size, it will use limestone rip rap instead of oyster shells for construction. For more on this issue, see the April 11, 2025 *Pensacola News Journal* article “Floridatown chosen for Santa Rosa County’s first living shoreline project” by Tom McLaughlin at <https://www.pnj.com/story/news/local/pace/2025/04/11/floridatown-park-getting-living-shoreline-in-santa-rosa/82995658007/>.

Mobile Bay Jubilees

In Coastal Alabama a jubilee is more than a celebration – it is a seafood bonanza! According to an *Outdoor Alabama* press release: “A jubilee is a naturally occurring phenomenon that happens in only two locations in the world, Mobile Bay and Tokyo Bay, during which large numbers of fish and crustaceans are forced into shallow water due to low dissolved oxygen in the water.” “... the events bring sea life right to the shore where they can be seen and harvested.” “Although still required to remain within size and creel limits, persons can use a handheld net or can pick up flounder, crabs, shrimp, and other marine life by hand without having to first obtain a saltwater fishing license during jubilees.” For more on jubilees, go to the April 10, 2025 *Outdoor Alabama* press release “Joint Statement of Conservation Commissioner Chris Blankenship and Representative Matt Simpson Concerning Jubilees” at <https://www.outdooralabama.com/articles/joint-statement-conservation-commissioner-chris-blankenship-and-representative-matt-simpson>.

More Pitcher Plants at Sports Complex

Escambia County is improving the nature trail at the Southwest Escambia Sports Complex “including ongoing conservation efforts, trail maintenance, plant species monitoring and more.” This includes recently planting ten endangered White-Topped Pitcher Plants along the trail. For more on this issue, see the *Escambia County Newscenter* release “Escambia County Continues Nature Trail Improvements at Southwest Sports Complex” at <https://myescambia.com/news/news-article/2025/04/29/escambia-county-continues-nature-trail-improvements-at-southwest-sports-complex>.

What’s a Sponge?

Perhaps surprisingly, sponges are primitive animals that feed on plankton and provide valuable ocean water quality functions. For more on sponges, see the April 25, 2025 *Panhandle Outdoors* article “Marine Creatures of the Northern Gulf – Sponges” by Rick O’Connor at <https://nwdistrict.ifas.ufl.edu/nat/2025/04/25/marine-creatures-of-the-northern-gulf-sponges/#:~:text=They%20are%20%E2%80%9Cblob%E2%80%9D%20looking%20creatures,>

[A vase sponge.&text=What%20makes%20them%20animals%20is%20the%20lack%20of%20cell%20walls%20and%20chlorophyll.](#)

Blue Angels practice at NAS Pensacola on May 6,7,13,14,27,28

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

May 2025 Calendar

May 1 – PPBEP Living Shoreline Open House at Perdido Key Community Center

May 1-3 – Gulf Coast Hot Air Balloon Festival in Gulf Shores

May 2 – Jimmy Buffett “Changes In Latitudes, Changes in Attitudes” Saenger Theatre Mobile

May 2-4 – Pensacola Beach Crawfish Festival

May 3 – Pvt Rosamond Johnson Memorial Ceremony at Johnson Beach on Perdido Key

May 3 – Yancy Spencer Memorial Surf Contest

May 5 – Cinco de Mayo

May 9-10 – Destin Open Martial Arts Championships in Ft. Walton Beach

May 10 – Open House at UWF Historic Trust downtown Pensacola

May 10 – Pensacola Beach Art & Wine Festival

May 10 – Big Fish 5K & 1-Mile Fun Run at OWA

May 11 – Mother’s Day

May 13-18,20-25 – Blue Wahoos at Blue Wahoo Stadium Pensacola in downtown Pensacola

May 15 – Military Appreciation Luncheon at Grand Lagoon Yacht Club

May 17-18 – Asian/Pacific American Festival at Fil-Am Cultural Center in Pensacola

May 25 – Memorial Day Program 25’ at Veterans Memorial Park of Pensacola

May 25 – Exotic Car Show at O’Riley’s Irish Pub in downtown Pensacola

May 30 – Grand Fiesta Parade in downtown Pensacola

May 31 – Gulf Coast Culture Fest at Seville Square in downtown Pensacola

May 31 – Fiesta Boat Parade on Pensacola Bay

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