



## August 2025

### **RESTORE and the Gulf**

The Escambia County Board of County Commissioners (BCC) July 10, 2025 meeting covered a number of important topics and drew significant public participation. Among the items discussed was a change to the County's proposed Multi-Year Implementation Plan Amendment 4 (MYIP 4) for use of RESTORE funds. MYIP 4 had previously rescinded the request made in MYIP 3 for \$3.6 million to acquire Perdido Key beachfront property for public access – specifically targeted for the vacant lot just west of Beach Access #3. It was rescinded apparently because the owner of the land wanted more than the County was willing to pay for the property. The deletion is not in the revised version of MYIP 4, so the MYIP 3 proposal for beachfront land acquisition remains relevant. Some of those speaking in favor of purchasing the beachfront land recommended adding \$1 million of County funds to the RESTORE grant, presumably to address the property owner's asking price. Also deleted from the new version of the MYIP 4 proposal was the request for \$5 million to upgrade the Galvez Landing boat launch, perhaps a consequence of public opposition to the proposal expressed at the June 30, 2025 Commissioner Stroberger Town Hall. The revised MYIP 4 proposal was unanimously approved by the BCC. In addition, Commissioners approved by a 3 to 2 margin a proposal to change references in the Escambia County Code of Ordinances from the "Gulf of Mexico" to the "Gulf of America." Most of the public comments were against the change, including Christian Wagley who added environmental concerns over proposed oil and gas exploration in Florida's Gulf. For commentary on MYIP 4, see the July 25, 2025 *Pensacola News Journal* article "Escambia postpones Galvez Landing project, opts to fund Perdido Key beach access instead" by Mollye Barrows at <https://www.pnj.com/story/news/local/escambia-county/2025/07/25/escambia-explores-buying-gulf-property-on-perdido-key-for-beach-access/85345582007/>.

### **Fatal Crash at Perdido Key Drive and River Road**

As reported in the *Pensacola News Journal*, "an off-duty Escambia County Sheriff's deputy was the driver who struck and killed two pedestrians in a crash Independence Day weekend." The crash took place on Perdido Key Drive near the River Road intersection and remains under investigation. For more on this issue, see the July 7, 2024 *Pensacola News Journal* article "FHP: Off-duty ECSO deputy was driver who struck, killed two pedestrians in July 5 crash" by Benjamin Johnson at <https://www.pnj.com/story/news/local/2025/07/07/escambia-deputy-killed-pedestrians-with-car-while-off-duty/84496393007/>.

### **Bauer Road Fire Station**

Escambia County Commissioners approved a land exchange with the US Navy to reestablish Fire Station #20 – Paradise Beach on Bauer Road. 31.15 acres of county-owned land at O'Conner-Colling Community Park will be exchanged for 5.26 acres of property owned by the US Navy off Bauer Road. For more on this issue, see the July 25, 2025 *Escambia County Press Release* “Escambia County, U.S. Navy to Hold Signing Ceremony July 31” at <https://ebs.publicnow.com/view/720ABDCF4B1A1E28013640E76A5A7B2458084606>.

### **Flesh-eating Bacteria**

A total of two people have contracted “flesh-eating bacteria” (*Vibrio vulnificus*) in Escambia and Santa Rosa Counties so far in 2025, with a total of 13 state-wide as of July 28. Four have died from the infection. The bacteria is found in “warm saltwater and brackish water, which is a mixture of saltwater and freshwater” and can be contracted through open cuts and wounds and by eating raw or undercooked seafood. For more on this issue, see the July 18, 2025 *Pensacola News Journal* article “Florida currently leads the nation in *Vibrio vulnificus* infections, but how common is it?” by Brandon Girod at <https://www.pnj.com/story/news/local/2025/07/18/is-flesh-eating-bacteria-common-in-the-pensacola-area/85276561007/>.

### **High Bacteria Levels at Navarre Beach**

The Florida Department of Health – Santa Rosa found that samples taken at two Navarre Beach locations did not meet the “recreational water quality criteria for *Enterococcus* bacteria recommended by the Florida Department of Health” and “advises against any water-related activities at this location due to an increased risk of illness in swimmers.” For more on this issue, see the July 25, 2025 *Pensacola News Journal* article “Health Department: High bacteria levels at Navarre Beach pose health risk” at <https://www.pnj.com/story/news/local/2025/07/25/navarre-beach-water-quality-advisory-issued-by-health-department/85372467007/>.

### **Pensacola a “Top Mid-Size Metro”**

The Pensacola metro area was “one of the fastest-growing metropolitan areas” on the LinkedIn (a business/employment social network) list of “cities on the rise” – citing employment opportunities and “professional migration in recent years” for the ranking. Pensacola was the only Florida city on the list while some were not included because of LinkedIn membership criteria. For more on this issue, see the July 18, 2025 *Pensacola News Journal* article “LinkedIn ranks Pensacola metro area as one of the top mid-size U.S. cities on the rise” by Edward Bunch III at <https://www.pnj.com/story/news/local/2025/07/17/pensacola-rankings-linkedin-us-cities-on-the-rise-new-jobs/85234091007/>.

### **Escambia Road Improvements**

In early July 2025 Escambia County released a list of completed road improvement projects, including repairs to Bauer Road and Siquenza Cove. To access the list, go to “Escambia County Engineering Highlights Road Resurfacing and Improvement Projects” at <https://ebs.publicnow.com/view/15735AA7D3D068B1ABD7A4BC2CE0D6871479E78D>.

### **FEMA Concerns**

Because of recent FEMA staffing and budget cuts: “Experts worry there simply is not enough funding and personnel to go around when the next disaster hits.” For more on this issue, see the July 19, 2025 *Florida Times-Union* article “FEMA’s funds are dwindling rapidly” by David

Sherfinski at [https://www.pressreader.com/usa/the-florida-times-union/20250719/281492167350122?srltid=AfmBOorel5u8ASOh5y3\\_qqPmrWp9CAblVC7Md0Dfv88A9YiCdqX-HPN6](https://www.pressreader.com/usa/the-florida-times-union/20250719/281492167350122?srltid=AfmBOorel5u8ASOh5y3_qqPmrWp9CAblVC7Md0Dfv88A9YiCdqX-HPN6).

### **Young Sea Turtles and Least Terns**

The first Perdido Key sea turtle hatch of the season (May to October) occurred on July 16, 2025 with the loggerhead hatchlings making their way to the Gulf despite distractive lighting. With area shore birds, three colonies of least terns (a threatened species in Florida) have nested on Perdido Key State Park beaches this summer. There have been “multiple successful fledges (young birds with their flight feathers)” already with the nesting season still underway. Beach goers are encouraged to continue respecting nesting zones and keeping our beaches “bird-friendly.” For more information on sea turtle hatches, go to the *Escambia County Newscenter* article “Perdido Key Celebrates First Sea Turtle Hatch of the Season” at <https://myescambia.com/news/news-article/2025/07/18/perdido-key-celebrates-first-sea-turtle-hatch-of-the-season>; to report sea turtle sightings call 866 732-8878; for dead or injured sea turtles, contact Escambia County Marine Resources at 850-281-5904 or FWC Wildlife Alert line at 1-888-404-3922; least tern commentary was drawn from the July 29, 2025 *Friends of Pensacola State Parks Newsletter* article “Nesting Least Terns at Perdido Key State Park” by Paton Glaze.

### **Sea Turtle Fun Facts**

How do female sea turtles find their way back to where they were born to lay their eggs? They detect small changes in the earth’s magnetic field that help them find their way. For more cool information about sea turtles, see the October 15, 2016 *UF/IFAS* article “5 Weird Facts about Sea Turtles” by Erin Spencer at [https://oceanconservancy.org/blog/2016/10/21/5-weird-facts-about-sea-turtles/?ea.tracking.id=25LPGABNXX&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_source=engagingnetworks&utm\\_campaign=202507\\_EmojiDay&utm\\_content=20250717-WorldEmojiDay-Prospects-Email1A-25LPGABNXX](https://oceanconservancy.org/blog/2016/10/21/5-weird-facts-about-sea-turtles/?ea.tracking.id=25LPGABNXX&utm_medium=email&utm_source=engagingnetworks&utm_campaign=202507_EmojiDay&utm_content=20250717-WorldEmojiDay-Prospects-Email1A-25LPGABNXX).

### **How to Help Florida State Parks**

The Friends of Pensacola State Parks is a terrific non-profit organization pursuing multiple projects to enhance our local Florida State Parks, including recent acquisition of new playground equipment at Big Lagoon State Park. Projects like this need funding so here is a great opportunity to help out and have a good meal: The *Texas Roadhouse* on Davis Hwy is hosting a Friends’ fundraiser on August 19, 2024 from 3:30 PM to 9 PM where 10% of your meal expense will go to the Friends of Pensacola State Park. There will be flyers at the restaurant explaining the procedure which should only involve placing the paper receipt for your meal in a container near the exit. Thanks!!

### **First Panhandle Landowner Assistance Expo**

Several Florida state agencies along with the University of Florida’s UF/IFAS have organized the “2025 Panhandle Landowner Assistance Expo” for area landowners to be held on August 23, 2025 at the Walton County Fairgrounds. According to advertisement: “Whether you own land for timber investment, agricultural or other rural use, homestead and lifestyle, or are involved in outdoor recreation through hunting clubs or similar activities; you will find great

information and connections at the Expo!" For more information, go to [2025 Panhandle Landowner Assistance Expo! | Panhandle Outdoors](#).

### **Ghost Snails**

An invasive species knocking at the door of the Florida Panhandle is the small conical shelled ghost snail from South America. It is light brown and may typically be found near gardening areas. It poses a threat to agriculture and possibly humans because it can carry harmful parasites. For more on the ghost snail (*Bulimulus bonariensis*), go to the July 31, 2024 *UF/IFAS Blog* entry "Bulimulus Snails: Ghoulish New Florida Resident" by Yvette Goodiel at <https://blogs.ifas.ufl.edu/martinco/2024/07/31/bulimulus-snails-ghoulish-new-florida-residents/>.

### **An Ocean of Plastic?**

An estimated 11 million metric tons of plastics that should go to landfill or recycling efforts ends up in the ocean – equal to a garbage truck of plastic every minute. This is in addition to enormous amounts of plastic fishing gear and microplastic particles and fibers. Millions of tons of plastic fibers have entered the environment from fabrics and other sources, with some consumed by humans as well. Note that Congress is considering a "Fighting Fibers Act" to require new washing machines to have microfiber filters. For more on plastics and the oceans, see the October 23, 2023 *Ocean Conservancy* article "How Much Trash is in the Ocean?" by Britta Baechler at [https://oceanconservancy.org/blog/2023/10/23/how-much-trash-is-in-the-ocean/?ea.tracking.id=25LPGATNXX&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_source=engagingnetworks&utm\\_campaign=202507 PlasticsC&utm\\_content=20250709-PlasticsCultivation-Prospects-Email1A-25LPGATNXX](https://oceanconservancy.org/blog/2023/10/23/how-much-trash-is-in-the-ocean/?ea.tracking.id=25LPGATNXX&utm_medium=email&utm_source=engagingnetworks&utm_campaign=202507%20PlasticsC&utm_content=20250709-PlasticsCultivation-Prospects-Email1A-25LPGATNXX); microfiber information drawn from July 26, 2025 *Ocean Conservancy* e-mail "The connection between your washing machine and our ocean" by Angela Noakes.

### **Expanding Human Footprint**

In his July 25, 2025 *UF/IFAS* article "Our Environment: Part 13 – We Need Space," Escambia County's Sea Grant Representative Rick O'Connor discusses human population growth and how it "is cramping everyone's style, including Mother Nature." To access the article, go to [Our Environment: Part 13 – We Need Space | Panhandle Outdoors](#).

Blue Angels practice at NAS Pensacola on August 20,26,27

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

### **August 2025 Calendar**

Aug 1 – Guided Pier Walk at Gulf State Park Pier

Aug 1-30 – SS United States Port of Mobile River Tour

Aug 2 – Commemorative of Battle of Mobile Bay on Dauphin Island, AL

Aug 2 – EF Barrel Horse Race at Baker, Florida

Aug 1,2 – Jennifer Claire Moore Foundation Rodeo in Robertsedale, AL

Aug 1-3,12-13,26-31 – Blue Wahoos at Blue Wahoo Stadium in downtown Pensacola

Aug 8 – Demolition Derby at Five Flags Speedway in Pensacola

Aug 14 – Perdido Palozza at Warrior Beer Company on Sorrento Road Pensacola

Aug 16 – Maxfit Classic fitness convention on Okaloosa Island

Aug 23 – Coastal Tailgate Cookoff Challenge at The Wharf

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