



January 2026

Best Wishes for a Wonderful 2026!

The PKA Board of Directors thanks you – our members – for your support in 2025 and look forward to working with you for the promise of 2026. All the best in the New Year for you and yours!

Consider Becoming a PKA Director

Just another request for volunteers to become PKA Directors. 2026 promises to be a crucial year for Perdido Key and new voices are very welcome to join the current Board as we work to ensure Perdido Key has a bright future. If interested in being nominated for a Director position, please contact the PKA Administrator at perdidokeyassociation@gmail.com; Charles Krupnick at charles.krupnick@gmail.com; Mae Dean at maehdean492@icloud.com; or, any other PKA Director before January 18, 2026.

County Approves Resolution Opposing Oil Drilling in the Gulf

At its December 11, 2025 meeting, Escambia County Commissioners approved a resolution opposing recently published plans by the federal government to allow oil and gas drilling in the eastern Gulf offshore Florida.

More on SB 180 and Local Control

1000 Friends of Florida and others have been pushing for revision to recently passed Florida law SB 180 that, among other actions, reduces local control over development. “State Sen. Nick DiCeglie, R-St. Petersburg, recently filed SB 840, a bill that aims to clarify and narrow the scope of SB 180 while striking parts of the law entirely.” While the bill could restore more local control, some say it does not go far enough. For more on this issue, see the December 25, 2025 *Tampa Bay Times* article [Florida bill could restore local control over development. Is it enough?](#) by Ryan Ballogg and Alex Harris.

Large River Road Development Approved

On December 10, 2025, the Escambia County Development Review Committee (DRC) approved construction of “River Road Villas,” a multifamily development with 29 multistory buildings on 6.52 acres of open land between River Road, Semmes Road, Garden Glen Drive, and Sweet Retreat Lane (i.e., the Serenity subdivision). Access to the housing will be from River Road.

Change to Free Days at National Parks

According to the National Park Service, the Martin Luther King Jr. Day and Juneteenth holidays have been removed from the 2026 calendar of entrance free days for National Parks, including the Perdido Key Area of Gulf Islands National Seashore (Johnson Beach). June 14 (Flag Day as well as President Donald Trump's birthday) will now be a free admissions day along with August 25 (110th anniversary of the National Park Service), September 17 (Constitution Day) and October 27 (President Teddy Roosevelt's birthday). For more on this issue, see the December 6, 2025 *NPR* article [National parks' fee-free calendar drops MLK Day, Juneteenth and adds Trump's birthday : NPR by Alana Wise.](#)

Volunteer County Tree Planting

Escambia County is providing residents with three opportunities to assist in planting trees in the county. On January 16, 2026, volunteers can meet at the Escambia County Central Office Complex at 3363 W. Park Place (just off Fairfield Drive) "to help transport trees and mulch"; on January 17 they can meet at the "Escambia Extension Office, 3740 Stefani Road, at 8:30 a.m. to watch a short tree planting demonstration before heading out to assigned locations with a team to plant trees"; and, on January 24 they can meet at "Galvez Landing, 5820 Cruzat Way, at 8:30 a.m. to watch a short tree planting demonstration before leaving to assigned locations with a team to plant trees." "Trees will be planted in the right of way or front yards of residents who have applied for trees through the Canopy Restoration Project." For more information on this issue, see Escambia County's December 30, 2025 *County News Center* article [Escambia County to Host Volunteer Tree Planting Days Jan. 16, 17, 24.](#)

Bear Hunt Results

According to the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC), hunters killed 52 black bears during Florida's 2025 black bear hunt. That is considerably fewer than the 172 harvest permits FWC had issued. For more on this issue, see the December 30, 2025 *Pensacola News Journal* article "FWC releases results of 2025 black bear hunt. How many bears were killed?" by C.A. Bridges at [Florida releases results of first black bear hunt in 10 years.](#)

Extended Stay Hotel May be Sold

The vacant and decaying Suburban Extended Stay Hotel on Barrancas Ave near Navy Blvd in Warrington may be sold to Blackhawk Asset Management and reopened as a hotel after renovation. The building has been in disrepair since damaged by Hurricane Sally and a site of reported drug use, domestic violence and unauthorized occupation. Escambia County could forgive the accumulated fines of almost \$400,000 on the property if the purchase moves forward. "We are just working with the new potential owner to bring redevelopment back to that neighborhood and eliminate a source of blight," said Escambia County Natural Resources Deputy Director Tim Day. "It either needs substantial renovation, or it needs to come down." For more on this issue, see the December 11, 2025 *Pensacola News Journal* article "Developer may buy blighted Suburban Extended Stay with goal to reopen" by Mollye Barrows at [Suburban Extended Stay in Pensacola gets renewed interest by developer.](#)

Pensacola Beach Gateway Improvements

Escambia County will begin the “Pensacola Beach Gateway Improvements Project” in January 2026 to replace the Bob Sikes Toll Plaza on Pensacola Beach and replace it with “a new toll gantry with applicable toll-by-plate equipment, CCTV cameras, and new fiber optic communications.” The new facility “will offer enhanced safety features, such as better access for emergency response vehicles, while also helping to reduce congestion at the entrance to Pensacola Beach.” For more on this issue, go to the December 19, 2025 *County News Center* article [Pensacola Beach Gateway Improvements Project to Begin January 2026](#).

Gulf Shores Pedestrian Bridge

With pedestrian access being removed to allow more traffic lanes on Rt. 59’s W.C. Holmes Bridge crossing the Intracoastal Waterway, the City of Gulf Shores is constructing a pedestrian bridge nearby. Scheduled for completion in spring 2027, “The project will include elevators for bikes/pedestrians, plazas and parking areas on each side, new roads, curbs, and parking areas to improve traffic flow and connectivity for the city’s evolving Waterway Village district.” For more on this issue, see the December 23, 2023 *Mullet Wrapper* article [Mullet Wrapper: G.S. Pedestrian Bridge scheduled for spring of ‘27 completion in Gulf Shores & Orange Beach](#).

Saban a Perdido Beach Resort Owner

Former Alabama football coach Nick Saban has become one of the owners of the Perdido Beach Resort in Orange Beach. Perdido Beach Resort opened in 1987 and in August 2025 was named by *Southern Living* as [one of “the South’s best beach resorts.”](#) For more on this issue, see the December 16, 2025 *Pensacola News Journal* article “Nick Saban among investors that acquired Perdido Beach Resort” by Mollye Barrows at [Nick Saban joins Perdido Beach Resort Orange Beach ownership group](#).

Pensacola and Navarre Beaches are 1 & 2

Conde Nast Travelers readers selected Pensacola Beach and Navarre Beach as number 1 and 2 on the publication’s list of the 15 best beaches in the United States. According to *Conde Nast*, “Nestled along the scenic shores of the Gulf of America, Navarre Beach stands out as a gem with its pristine white sand beaches and turquoise waters” while Pensacola Beach was “a premier coastal destination for sun, sand, and adventure.” For more on this issue, see the December 30, 2025 *Pensacola News Journal* article “Pensacola and Navarre beaches judged top 2 in U.S. by Conde Nast readers” by Tom McLaughlin at [Pensacola Beach and Navarre Beach best beaches in U.S. Conde Nast says](#).

PPBEP Operations Manager

The Pensacola and Perdido Bay’s Estuary Program (PPBEP) is looking for a full time Operations Manager to “provide administrative, accounting, and human resources support, enabling the PPBEP team to execute our [its] mission efficiently and effectively. The Operations Manager will support implementation of PPBEP’s Strategic Plan to grow PPBEP’s administrative and accounting capacity.” For more information on the position, go to [Operations-Manager-Position-Description.pdf](#).

Pelican Post December 2025

The most recent issue of the Pensacola and Perdido Bays Estuary Program (PPBEP) *Pelican Post* newsletter has several articles of interest summarized below. To access the newsletter go to [Pelican Post December 2025](#).

Mountainfilm Tour

“Mountainfilm is a non-profit organization and festival that celebrates stories of indomitable spirit and aims to inspire audiences through film, art and ideas.” Following its annual film festival, the organization goes on tour “sharing the year's most inspiring short films with communities worldwide.” The Tour will appear on January 17, 2026 at the Pensacola Little Theatre where tickets can be purchased. The proceeds will help support the Pensacola and Perdido Bays Estuary Program (PPBEP) and Healthy Gulf.

Living Shoreline Assistance

The Living Shoreline Assistance program supports waterfront property owners and community groups in addressing erosion and restoring habitat across local area estuaries. Open Houses on the program will be held in Pensacola on January 21 and February 18, 2026 from 2-8 PM at the Sanders Beach-Corinne Jones Resource Center, 913 S I St, Pensacola, FL 32502.

PPEBP Education and Outreach Intern Position

PPEBP hopes to hire an Education and Outreach Intern to “assist with public outreach including environmental education, public engagement activities, content development, marketing events, media relations, and social media and community relations.”

Compensation will be \$17.00/hour for a 20-30 hour workweek. The deadline for application is January 16, 2026. Please go to PPEBP *Pelican Post December 2025* for full application information.

Aquaculture in the Carolinas

Aquaculture in the Carolinas is extensive and diverse. Thomas Derbes, Sea Grant Extension Agent in Santa Rosa County in the December 6, 2025 *UF/IFAS* article [Aquaculture in the Southern United States: Part 5 – North and South Carolina | Panhandle Outdoors](#) looks at aquaculture industries such as North Carolina's cold-water trout production and South Carolina's shellfish and finfish sectors.

Plastic Threats to Ocean Animals

A recent Ocean Conservancy web entry on plastic pollution provided disturbing information on how plastics and other man-made substances are killing sea life. Only a few pieces of balloon rubber smaller than a pea can kill a seabird; less than half a baseball of plastic can kill a loggerhead sea turtle; and, when marine mammals consume 12 pieces of soft plastic like grocery bags, models predict a 50% chance of the animal's death. For more on this issue, see November 9, 2025 *Ocean Conservancy* web article

[Does Eating Plastics Really Kill Ocean Animals? - Ocean Conservancy](#) by Britta Baechler, Erin Murphy and Nick Mallos.

Green Turtles Not “Endangered”

Green sea turtle status has been changed by the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) from “endangered” to “least concern.” According to the Turtle Foundation, “After decades of intensive conservation efforts, the global population of these sea turtles has increased by around 28 percent since the 1970s – an impressive testament to the effectiveness of consistent conservation action.” The article also warned that “Many regional populations remain at risk, and threats such as the illegal trade in eggs, hunting, bycatch in fishing nets, the loss of critical nesting beaches, and the impacts of climate change continue to endanger their survival.” For more on this issue, go to the *Turtle Foundation* web entry “IUCN: Green Sea Turtle No Longer Endangered – A Success for International Species Conservation” at [Green Sea Turtle No Longer Endangered| Turtle Foundation](#).

Water Quality Funding Hopes

The Northwest Florida Water Management District hopes to obtain Florida State funding “to improve the region’s water quality, protect its water supply and allow for habitat restoration in fragile ecosystems.” The plan will focus on “sub-basins” within the region’s seven watersheds with “11 Mile Creek within the Perdido Bay watershed and Carpenter Creek and Bayou Texar, which feed into Pensacola Bay” tentatively selected as Escambia County sub-basins for consideration. For more on this, see the December 2, 2026 *Pensacola News Journal* article [11 Mile Creek among seven NWFL waterways eyed for restoration](#) by Gregg Pachkowski.

Rattlesnakes Parts 2, 3, and 4

Rick O’Connor continues his series of *UF/FAS* articles on rattlesnakes with the December 15, 2025 [Rattlesnakes on Our Barrier Islands; Part 2 – Prey Selection | Panhandle Outdoors](#), December 22, 2025 [Rattlesnakes on Our Barrier Islands; Part 3 – Envenomation | Panhandle Outdoors](#) and December 22, 2025 [Rattlesnakes on Our Barrier Islands; Part 4 – Thermoregulation](#).

Horseshoe Crab Watch Report

138 horseshoe crabs were seen during the 2025 spring nesting season and 28 in the fall nesting season in Escambia and Santa Rosa Counties. The majority were observed in the Ft. Pickens and Naval Live Oaks North shore locations. To view the “2025 Horseshoe Crab Watch Report,” go to [2025 Horseshoe Crab Watch Report - UF/IFAS Extension Escambia County](#).

January Calendar

Jan 1 – Polar Bear Dips & Plunges at Flora-Bama, Gulf Shores, and Pensacola Beach
Jan 1-19 – Ice Skating at The Wharf
Jan 2-3 – Bee Gees Now! A Tribute to the Bee Gees at OWA Theater
Jan 2-6 – Magic Christmas in Lights at Bellingrath Gardens & Home
Jan 2,3,16,17,18,30,31 – Pensacola Ice Flyers at Pensacola Bay Center
Jan 3 – Pensacola Mardi Gras Kickoff at Seville Quarter in downtown Pensacola
Jan 4 – Coastal Weddings Expo at the Pensacola Bay Center
Jan 8 – Snow Bird Hootenanny Beach Bum Party at the Flora-Bama
Jan 10 – Coastal Alabama E-Cycling & Shred Day at Gulf State Park Pavilion
Jan 10 – Monster Truck Wars at Escambia County Equestrian Center, 7750 Mobile Hwy

Jan 19 – Martin Luther King Day Parade in downtown Pensacola
Jan 22 – Snow Bird Hootenanny Touchdowns & Hometowns at the Flora-Bama
Jan 23 – Yesterday: A Tribute to the Beatles at OWA
Jan 24 – Kids and Kritters Mardi Gras Parade in Pensacola Beach
Jan 25 – Big Beach Marathon & Half Marathon beginning at The Hangout in Gulf Shores
Jan 26-27 – The Great Pages Circus in Fort Walton Beach
Jan 31 – Senior Bowl at University of South Alabama's Hancock Whitney Stadium in Mobile

The following websites provide additional information about events on our great Gulf Coast:

<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