



February 2026

Last Chance to Defend Private Beachfront Property Rights!

Escambia County Commissioners will likely vote whether or not to impose Customary Use allowing public use of Perdido Key private beachfront property at their 9:00 AM Thursday February 19, 2026 regular meeting. It only takes three of the five Commissioner votes to implement this invasive measure!

There are two remaining opportunities for Perdido Key beachfront property owners and others to publically defend private property rights against those pushing for Customary Use. Please consider speaking at the following Escambia County Commissioner meetings. Those wishing to speak must sign in prior to the meetings, so plan on arriving at least 30 minutes prior to the scheduled beginning of the meetings.

4:30 PM Thursday February 5, 2026 Public Forum

9:00 AM Thursday February 19, 2026 Regular Commissioner Meeting

The meetings are in the Ernie Lee Magaha Government Building at 221 Palafox Place close to the corner of Government and Palafox Streets in downtown Pensacola. Paid parking is available at the parking garage on Baylen Street between Government Street and Intendencia Street but also along Government and Baylen Streets. Free parking may be available on Spring Street a block further west of Baylen Street. The meeting is in the large room on the ground floor near where you pass through a security checkpoint and sign-in desk to speak at the meeting. Additional information about Customary Use is available on the PKA website at <https://perdidokeyassociation.org>.

PKA Annual Membership Meeting

The 2026 PKA Annual Membership Meeting will be held on Saturday, March 7, 2026, from 10 AM until Noon at the Eden Condominium. The guest speaker will be Escambia County Natural Resources Management Deputy Director Tim Day. Mr. Day has an excellent grasp on the many important issues facing Escambia County in 2026 and our beachfront community in particular. His most recent appearance at a PKA meeting was very informative and much appreciated. The minutes from the 2025 Annual Membership Meeting will be presented for approval at the meeting and are available for review on the Archive page of the PKA website.

New Emergency Room

The Ascension Sacred Heart Emergency Care facility at 13139 Sorrento Rd next to its Perdido area primary care facility opened early December 2026. "This addition ensures those who live in southwest Escambia County get the timely and quality healthcare they need," said Sacred Heart Pensacola President & CEO Will Condon. "With our community growing, it is up to us to meet their medical needs and grow with them." You can reach Ascension Sacred Heart Emergency Care at 850 746-2200. Drawn from the December 3, 2026 *Ascension Sacred Heart News Article* [New Freestanding Emergency Department opens in Perdido Key | Ascension](#).

Pensacola Growth

The Pensacola metro area (Escambia and Santa Rosa counties) has grown by approximately 14% since 2015 to 543,000 residents; it may reach nearly 600,000 by 2035. Among Panhandle tourist destinations, Pensacola underperformed with 2025 guest spending estimated at \$1.4 billion while Bay County saw \$3.4 billion and Okaloosa County \$3.2 billion. For much more on regional economic activity, see the January 15, 2026, *Pensacola News Journal* article "[Pensacola grew but tourists spent less in 2025. What's ahead for 2026](#)" by Mollye Barrows.

Blue Angels 2026 Schedule

The Blue Angels 2026 Show Schedule is available a [U.S. Navy Blue Angels | Show Information](#). The team will perform at Pensacola Beach on July 18, 2026 with its homecoming show at NAS Pensacola scheduled for November 6-7, 2026.

Florida Legislative Update

Two bills making their way through the Florida Legislature are of concern to NGO 1000 Friends of Florida: SB 686 – Agricultural Enclaves could "override local comprehensive plans and accelerate development in rural areas..." while SB 840 – Land Use & Development Regulations addresses "some of the most damaging planning impacts of last session's SB 180, but "could be strengthened." For more information on these and other legislative issues, join a Friends webinar on Wednesday, February 11, 2026 from 11:00 to Noon CST. For more information, go to [Upcoming Webinars - 1000 Friends of Florida](#). Drawn from January 16, 2026 *1000 Friends of Florida* e-mail.

Innerarity Tree Planting

Escambia County sponsored two recent tree planting events with one focused on Innerarity Point. Many volunteers showed up at Galvez Landing on Saturday, January 24, 2026 to plant live oak, red oak, and little gem trees on several Innerarity properties. Instructions on proper planting techniques were provided by a professional tree grower.

Rough Year for Young Manatees

628 manatees died in 2025 exceeding "the previous two years of 556 in 2024 and 546 in 2023." "That still was less than the five-year average of 719 manatee deaths." 97 deaths were from watercraft and 33 from cold stress while 135 were perinatal (within one year of birth). The referenced article finds reason for hope with Florida's estimated manatee population in 2021-2022 between 8,350 and 11,730; estimates from a few decades before were less than half

that. There are also new rehab labs available and additional legal protection, though manatees remain listed as “threatened” rather than the higher category of “endangered.” For more on this issue, see the January 5, 2026 *Florida Today* article “More than 625 manatees died in 2025 in Florida but year also offered hope” by Jim Waymer at [Manatees made mixed news in 2025 in Florida: more deaths, more protection.](#)

Concerns for Cobia and Tripletail

Cobia and tripletail have become popular game fish in recent years but there are growing worries about their populations. To address these concerns, Dr. Sean Powers of the University of South Alabama will lead a \$5 million study to improve understanding of the two species. For more on this issues, see the *Outdoor Weekly Alabama* article [Powers Leads Study on Cobia and Tripletail in the Gulf](#) by David Rainer.

Fun: Osprey with Catfish Catch

“While surf fishing has been slow in west Gulf Shores recently for Jimmy Bell. He recently had a surprise visitor when adult osprey landed close by, apparently impaled by its intended catfish breakfast and unable to fly farther. Jimmy assisted the bird’s release, which circled a few times before again claiming the prize catch.” Republished with permission; for photo and article go to January 20, 2026 *Mullet Wrapper* at [https://mulletwrapper.net/fishing-is-fun-osprey-with-catfish-catch.](https://mulletwrapper.net/fishing-is-fun-osprey-with-catfish-catch)

More Winn-Dixie Stores Becoming Aldi

Three Winn-Dixie stores will convert to German-owned Aldi’s but the nearest one to Perdido Key on Sorrento Road will remain a Winn-Dixie. For more on this issue, see the January 13, 2026 *Pensacola News Journal* article “3 More Pensacola area Winn-Dixie stores to close and convert to Aldi” by Brittany Misencik at [Winn-Dixie stores converting to Aldi Pensacola Cantonment, Gulf Breeze.](#)

Free Course and Lecture on Invasive Species

The University of Florida is offering a free online course that “provides information on invasive plant species identification, treatment approaches, and field safety specifically targeting volunteers and new crew members working with invasive plant management.” To enroll go to <https://ifas-sfrc-for.catalog.instructure.com/courses/invasive-plant-tiered-training---volunteercrew-trainee>; per Rick O’Connor January 23, 2026 e-mail.

Rick’ O’Connor will also host the lecture “Invasive Hitchhikers” that “introduces the community to potential invasive species threats spread by ‘hitchhiking’ on us around the community.” The lecture will begin at 10 AM on February 11, 2026 at the Escambia County Extension Office Windstorm Classroom, 3740 Stefani Road. To register contact Rick O’Connor at roc1@ufl.edu (850-475-5230).

Recreational Fishing Presentation

The University of West Florida is hosting a presentation on “Recreational Fishing” by Erin Pereira from the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission. The program will be from 9 to 10 AM on February 6, 2026 in Building 76A, Room 102 with zoom option

available. Information provided by January 15, 2026 Rick O'Connor e-mail; contact Rick at roc1@ufl.edu (850-475-5230) for more information.

Master Naturalist Course

Registrations are being accepted for the spring Coastal Florida Master Naturalist Course. Classes will meet on consecutive Tuesdays between March 10 and April 21, 2026 (skip April 14) at several sites in Escambia and Santa Rosa Counties. "Classes are limited to 20 people and registration ends the morning of March 4. Participants can miss one class and still receive certification." There are scholarship options available. For more information and registration, go to the following websites: <https://conference.ifas.ufl.edu/fmnp/cs26-07inperson.php> and <https://masternaturalist.ifas.ufl.edu/become-a-master-naturalist/scholarships/>.

What's a Stinkhorn?

There are a number of interesting articles in the current issue of *Extension Cord* from Okaloosa County's Sea Grant office, including "Stinkhorns are Wild and Smelly Fungi" by Larry Williams at [UF/IFAS: Extension Cord – Plugging you into the latest and best information](#) [January issue](#).

February Calendar

Feb 1 – Hotel California: The Original Eagles Tribute at OWA Theater
Feb 1 – Paw-Di Gras Dog Mardi Gras celebration on Garden Street in downtown Pensacola
Feb 3,10,17,25,28 – Morning at the Museum at National Naval Aviation Museum at NAS
Feb 5 – Snow Bird Hootenanny Mardi Gras Mambo at the Flora-Bama
Feb 6 – Perdido Key Mardi Gras Masquerade Ball at Lillian's Pizza
Feb 6,7,15,27,28 – Pensacola Ice Flyers at Pensacola Bay Center
Feb 7 – Double Bridge Run beginning in downtown Pensacola
Feb 12 – Pensacola Mardi Gras Mambo family event at the Pensacola Bay Center
Feb 13-15 – College baseball with Ohio State and Saint Louis at Blue Wahoo Stadium
Feb 14 – Great Backyard Bird Count at Wildlife Sanctuary of Northwest Florida in Pensacola
Feb 14 – Pensacola Grand Mardi Gras Parade in downtown Pensacola
Feb 14 – Valentine's Day
Feb 15 – OWA Mardi Gras Parade and Party
Feb 16 – Moon Pies on Main at The Wharf
Feb 17 – Orange Beach and Gulf Shores Mardi Gras Parades
Feb 19 – Snow Bird Hootenanny Rock Your Decade at the Flora-Bama
Feb 19 – Clint Black at the Saenger Theatre in downtown Pensacola
Feb 20-22 – Pensacon at the Pensacola Bay Center
Feb 22 – Pensacola Chocolate and Cheese Fest at Community Maritime Park in Pensacola
Feb 27 – Sleeping Beauty ballet at Saenger Theatre in downtown Pensacola
Feb 27-28 – Pensacola Dog Fanciers Annual Dog Show at Escambia County Equestrian Ctr
Feb 28 – Orange Beach Seafood and Car Festival
Feb 28 – Shrimp & Grits Festival in Destin
Feb 28 – EDEN: Expo for Disabilities and Exceptional Needs 2026 in Fort Walton Beach

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