



July 2026

Customary Use Process Continues

Escambia County's instructions for submitting information to be used in determining if Customary Use (public use of private beachfront property) should be imposed on Perdido Key are at [Escambia County Seeking Perdido Key Beach Usage Information](#) with the submission form at [Perdido Key Beach Information Form](#). The deadline for submission is August 28, 2026. The PKA Board of Directors believes it is extremely important for beachfront property owners to defend their private property rights by submitting information to oppose claims that public use of their beaches has been Ancient, Reasonable Recreational Activity, Uninterrupted, and Free from Dispute – the four criteria for proving Customary Use. Under Customary Use, trespassing, vandalism and parking violations may increase and, as we understand it, property owners would still retain much of their responsibility for the land such as conformance with wildlife regulations (e.g., sea turtles) and cleanups. If established, Customary Use might be imposed on only portions of Perdido Key as was done in Walton County where the 1194 properties that challenged Customary Use retained their private property rights and the 95 that did not had Customary Use imposed. If you have questions about what information to submit, contact PKA Secretary Charles Krupnick at charles.krupnick@gmail.com; if you have difficulty uploading material through the County portal, contact PKA Director Lisa Henseler at lhenseler@yahoo.com. You also have an opportunity to personally express your concerns about Customary Use to Commissioners at the 4:30 PM July 23, 2026 Escambia County Board of Commissioners Public Forum.

World Oceans Day 2026

Perdido Key's World Oceans Day 2026 celebration was held on Monday, June 8, 2026 at the Perdido Key Community Center and provided wonderful opportunities to learn more about the oceans and the challenges they face. A banner headline of presenters included Dauphin Island Sea Lab, UWF Conservation of Marine Mammals/Florida Panhandle Marine Institute, Escambia County's Natural Management/Marine Resources division, Healthy Gulf, Gulf Islands National Seashore, Florida State Parks, Friends of Pensacola State Parks, Escambia County Lifeguards, NIHUI Dive Charters, plus Perdido Key Rotary and Kiwanis Clubs. Also featured were the *Marlin the Cowboy* movie, snowballs from Bam! Snoballs, beach safety toys from Youths Left Behind, Take & Make from Southwest Branch West Florida Public Libraries and a Bag Raffle prize from Perdido Bike Rental. The event helped improve local understanding of our wonderful oceans and the many organizations pursuing ocean relevant

issues. As part of its World Oceans Day declaration, the United Nations encouraged us “To move from passive inheritors of the ocean’s generosity to active guardians of its future.”

PKA Recognized by Perdido Key Area Chamber

On June 17, 2026 at a “Business After Hours” get together at Hub Stacey’s, the Perdido Key Area Chamber of Commerce and Chamber President/CEO Tammy Thurow recognized PKA as its “Member of the Month” for its service to the Perdido Key area. This included PKA’s role in events such as the recent World Oceans Day celebration held at the Perdido Key Community Center.

Blue Angels & Pensacola Beach Air Show

The Blue Angels Week buildup for the annual Pensacola Beach Air Show begins with Breakfast with the Blues on July 15. A full Blue Angel Practice follows on July 16 and then the Air Show Dress Rehearsal on July 17. The official Pensacola Beach Air Show is on Saturday, July 18.

Beach Mouse and Dunes Day at Johnson Beach

Saturday, June 27, 2026, was a postcard-perfect beach day to celebrate the Perdido Key beach mouse and the dune ecosystem it helps protect. Several organizations were involved in the “fun, family-friendly event” on the pavilion at Perdido Key Area of Gulf Islands National Seashore (Johnson Beach) where attendees were able “to learn more about the beach mouse, enjoy educational games, and more.” Among the participants were representatives from the Brevard Zoo in Melbourne, FL where a separate group of Perdido Key beach mice is kept to reestablish the species on Perdido Key should a hurricane or other event destroy the local population.

Apply Now for 2026-27 Leadership Perdido Key Program!

The Perdido Key Area Chamber of Commerce is accepting applications for the 2026-2027 “Leadership Perdido Key” class. “The program is among the area’s top leadership development opportunities. It is designed to educate, inspire, and connect leaders across the Perdido Key community. Both current and emerging leaders are encouraged to apply.” The application deadline is July 31, 2026 with the first class scheduled for September 9, 2026. For more information, go to June 10, 2026 OBA website article [Perdido Key Chamber Opens Applications For New Leadership Program Class](#) by R. Ken Cooper. Please contact President and CEO of the Perdido Key Area Chamber of Commerce Tammy Thurow at tammy@perdidochamber.com if interested in the program.

Sargassum Hits Perdido Key

Sargassum seaweed has come to Perdido Key in a big way. It lines the beaches of the Perdido Key Area of Gulf Islands National Seashore (Johnson Beach) and continues west on the island though seemingly in lesser amounts.

Johnson Beach Parking Sign Operational

A sign indicating available parking spaces at the Perdido Key Area of Gulf Islands National Seashore (Johnson Beach) is operational. It is located on the north side of Johnson Beach

Road not far from the park entrance and just before a turnaround space next to the north traffic lane. If parking is not available, vehicles can turnaround to help reduce congestion in the area.

Hurricane Preparedness

After a few seasons with virtual no hurricane threat or damage to the Perdido Key corner of Florida, one might slip into complacency. But we all know hurricanes have not forgotten about the Panhandle so it is a good time to review storm readiness recommendations, perhaps beginning with the June 1, 2026 *Escambia County News Article* [Escambia County Encourages Preparedness as Hurricane Season Kicks Off June 1.](#)

Pensacola Beach Renourishment Completed

After three months of sand placement, Pensacola Beach's \$35 million renourishment project is complete. "This project was a major investment for Pensacola Beach and Escambia County," said Santa Rosa Island Authority Executive Director Mike Burns. "Not only does this project protect and strengthen 8.1 miles of beach and infrastructure, Florida Power and Light spent \$28 million hardening the infrastructure lines on Pensacola Beach." The referenced article highlights the delight of beach goers with the many seashells deposited with the new sand. For more on this issue, see the June 12, 2026 *Pensacola News Journal* article [Pensacola Beach renourishment project complete adds 8 miles of sand](#) by Mollye Barrows.

SS United States Sinking Delayed

According to an update from Okaloosa County, the SS United States is "ready to go" from its temporary berth near downtown Mobile to an underwater location south of Destin, but the county cannot set a deployment date until federal agencies complete their reviews. "We are waiting on final approvals from the Army Corps of Engineers and the EPA," said Nick Tomacek, spokesperson for Okaloosa County which purchased the ship in 2024. "Once we have both of those, we will set a 30-to-60-day window for deployment." For more on this issue, see the April 22, 2026 *AL.com* article [Historic SS United States prepped for sinking, but stalled by federal sign-offs - al.com](#) by John Sharp.

Property Tax Cut Proposal Moves Forward

Florida government's latest property tax proposal "would substantially reduce property taxes for more than 58,000 households in Escambia County—76% of all homesteaded properties—but it would also leave local governments [in Escambia County] with \$124.8 million in losses over two years." The 60% reduction in property taxes expected from the proposal would apply to Florida primary residences only. Local officials point out that critical services will need to be reduced if the tax cut proposal is approved. The measure requires 60% approval by Florida voters in the November general elections to become part of the Florida constitution. For more information on this issue, see the June 2, 2026 *Pensacola News Journal* article "DeSantis tax cut may cost Escambia \$124.8M, the gut law enforcement and libraries" by Jim Little at [DeSantis' property tax cut 'catastrophic' for Escambia municipalities.](#)

Offshore Fish Farm near Fort Morgan

A fish farm is being developed about 2 miles from Fort Morgan, Alabama. Much smaller than the fish farm proposed for 26 miles offshore of Pensacola, the farm will raise red drum but also

have “hanging baskets with oysters and macro algae, a seaweed” – all native species. According to marine biologist Ashley McDonald of the Dauphin Island Sea Lab: “It’s not one of these big, massive aquaculture projects, the idea being that we wanted to incorporate local native species with intrinsic market value for Gulf species locally. We wanted to provide an avenue for smaller commercial harvesters that might be looking into branching out into aquaculture or subsidizing any of their commercial revenue and doing it in a way that it doesn’t feel like it’s competing with commercial harvest.” For more on this issue see the June 24, 2026 [article Mullet Wrapper: Aquaculture project 2 miles off Fort Morgan harvests its first fish in Gulf Shores & Orange Beach](#) by David Rainer.

Ocean Monitoring System to Remain

The Ocean Observatories Initiative (OOI) is a network of more than 900 scientific instruments that monitor ocean conditions and climate impacts across the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans. Built to operate for decades the system was being shut down and removed after only 10 years in operation, but “the Trump administration has reversed course on a controversial plan to remove four of five ocean monitoring arrays from the Pacific and Atlantic after meeting intense opposition from members of Congress, researchers and ocean advocacy groups.” For more on this issue, see the June 18, 2026 *USA Today* article “Feds cancel plan to rip out ocean monitoring system after backlash” by Dinah Voyles Pulver and Zachary Schermele at [Ocean monitoring system safe after feds cancel plan to rip it out](#) and the June 11, 2026 *USA Today* article “Feds will abruptly dismantle system monitoring climate change, oceans” by Dinah Voyles Pulver at [Climate change, ocean monitoring system to be abruptly dismantled](#).

Vacationers and Invasive Species

Vacationers can spread invasive species in a number of ways, such as bringing firewood to different locations and having destructive golden mussels stuck to the propeller blades of their boats. “Exotic species are introduced in many ways, including via shipping containers, ballast water in ships, the wildlife trade, imported plants and even tropical cyclones.” Efforts to prevent this include “rules about moving firewood, cleaning boats, killing invasive species on sight or transporting fruits, vegetables and plants.” For more on this issue, see the June 21, 2026 *Times-Herald Record/USA Today* article [PressReader.com | Vacationers urged to follow tips to stem the spread of invasive species](#) by Dinah Voyles Pulver.

Fog and Germs

Who knew fog contains beneficial bacteria? Less than 1% of fog droplets have bacteria, but there are a lot of droplets! From fog sample studies by Pennsylvania’s Susquehanna University and Arizona State University, according to Arizona State the methylobacteria bacteria stands out: “Methylobacteria consume simple carbon compounds, including chemicals such as formaldehyde. Formaldehyde is a common pollutant that adds to ozone smog and harms human health.” For more on this issue, see the June 1, 2026 *USA Today* article [Fog contains millions of bacteria, study finds](#) by Doyle Rice.

Freshwater Naturalist Course

Florida’s only “Freshwater Restoration Florida Master Naturalist” short course will be held from July 7-9, 2026 at the Florida Public Archaeology Network Office (Day 1), 207 East Main Street

in Pensacola and the Escambia County Extension Office Windstorm Building (Days 2 & 3), 3740 Stefani Road in Cantonment with field trips to sites in Escambia and Santa Rosa Counties. Instructors include Carrie Stevenson, Coastal Sustainability Agent, and Sea Grant Agents Rick O'Connor and Thomas Derbes along with several guest speakers. Please e-mail Carrie Stevenson at ctsteven@ufl.edu or call 850-475-5230F with any questions; for more information and statewide course schedule go to <https://conference.ifas.ufl.edu/fmnp/>. The course cost is \$250 and includes electronic file (PDF) of its manual; \$295 includes the PDF and a color printed bound copy of the manual. You can register online at <https://conference.ifas.ufl.edu/fmnp/FR26-01inperson.php>; registration closes on July 1, 2026. Drawn from June 18, 2026 Rick O'Connor e-mail.

Have a Great 4th of July!

The PKA Board of Directors hopes you have a terrific 250th Anniversary 4th of July Holiday!

Blue Angels practice at NAS Pensacola on July 1,21,22,28

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

July Calendar

July 2 – Independence Day Street Party at The Wharf

July 2-31 – Visit Pensacola Storytelling Series at Visit Pensacola Visitors Information Center

July 3-4 – Red, White and Wahoos Summer Celebration at Pensacola Blue Wahoos Stadium

July 3-4 – Various Alabama Gulf State Park 250th Independence Day events

July 4 – Flora-Bama All American 4th of July Party

July 4 – Star Spangled 250th Spectacular at OWA

July 4 – Firecracker 5K Road Race in downtown Pensacola

July 4 – Shark 5K Run/Walk at The Wharf

July 4 – Flora-Bama Freedom Run, 4 Mile and 1 Mile Run/Walks

July 4 – Fireworks in downtown Pensacola and at Pensacola Beach

July 7-12, 21-26 – Pensacola Blue Wahoos at Blue Wahoos Stadium in Pensacola

July 11 – Tanabata Star Festival of Japanese traditions at UWF

July 15-18 – Blue Angels Week

July 17-19 – Alabama Deep Sea Fishing Rodeo on Dauphin Island

July 18-19 – Repticon at Fort Walton Beach

July 19 – Pensacola Vintage Fest at Pensacola Interstate Fairgrounds on Mobile Highway

July 24-25 – Hot Rod Nationals Car-Truck-Bike Show in Fort Walton Beach

July 25 – Kayla Richardson & Friends at the Saenger Theatre in downtown Pensacola

July 25-26 – Monster Jam at Pensacola Bay Center

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