

## **PRESS RELEASE**

For immediate release.

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Images available upon request.

### **Art through Conservation Day to make ‘Ding’ Days debut this year**

This year, to celebrate the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of “Ding” Darling Days, the refuge and “Ding” Darling Wildlife Society-Friends of the Refuge (DDWS) are adding a special day devoted to the legacy of conservation art begun by refuge namesake, Pulitzer Prize-winning political cartoonist, and original Duck Stamp artist, J. N. “Ding” Darling.

Art through Conservation Day will bring the weeklong “Ding” Days 2009 to a close at the refuge on Saturday, Oct. 24, from 12:30 to 4 p.m. Highlights of the afternoon include presentations by the 2009-2010 Federal Duck Stamp Artist, Federal Junior Duck Stamp Artist, and Florida Junior Duck Stamp contest winner.

Geared toward families and art enthusiasts, it will offer participants a number of interactive nature-art activities including caricatures by wildlife cartoonist, Dave Horton, and drawing workshops. Celebrity children’s nature author, Marianne Berkes, will lead two sessions on How To Create a Nature Book, and award ceremonies for children and adult nature photography contests will take place.

Tarpon Bay Explorers will offer free shuttle service from the IWA site plus two free naturalist-narrated tram tours of the refuge.

“We’re very excited about the addition of the art day to honor our Duck Stamp Winner and get families involved in nature through the arts,” said Wendy Erler-Schnapp, “Ding” Days committee co-chair for DDWS.”

“Ding” Darling Days begins on Sunday, Oct. 18, with the traditional free Family Fun Day and continues through the week with free and discounted tours of the refuge and Bunche Beach.

The U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, DDWS, and Tarpon Bay Explorers co-sponsor the event. Visit [www.dingdarlingdays.com](http://www.dingdarlingdays.com) for updates on events, to learn about sponsorship opportunities, and to sign up for weekly bulletins. Or call the refuge at 239-472-1100.

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