

PRESS RELEASE

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Images available upon request.

'Ding' Darling team receives regional award

Susan Cassell, president of the "Ding" Darling Wildlife Society-Friends of the Refuge (DDWS), and refuge staff, Bill Thomas and Toni Westland, received a U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service Regional Director's Conservation Award in a special annual ceremony in Atlanta, GA, on May 1, 2009.

The award recognized the refuge's and DDWS' joint partnership with Matrix/Biolage's recycling and exotic cleanup projects held in September 2008. The hair care products company's "Going green and looking great doing it" project contributed \$7,000 in cash and \$8,000 in labor to the refuge.

"This partnership is to be congratulated for the leadership, hard work, commitment, and innovative approach to conservation," said Region IV Director Sam Hamilton. "It proves that successful partnerships can engage an entire community and be forged in imaginative and unconventional ways."

Jack Karkis from Saloncentric in Fort Myers and Debora Koyama of Biolage/Matrix/L'Oreal in New York City also received awards. Saloncentric was named Biolage Salon of the Year for having raised the most money for recycled product containers. Biolage donated \$3 per recycled container to "Ding" Darling.

In addition, more than 85 hair care professionals volunteered about four hours of their time removing invasive exotics at the refuge back in September. Ranger Westland coordinated the project with support from DDWS.

DDWS is a non-profit, friends-of-the-refuge organization that supports the Education Center, “Ding” Darling Days, and other educational programs at the refuge.

To join DDWS and become a friend to the refuge, stop in at the Refuge Education Center or visit www.dingdarlingsociety.org.

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