

## PRESS RELEASE

For immediate release  
Contact: Chelle Koster Walton  
239-472-3499  
[ChelleTrav@aol.com](mailto:ChelleTrav@aol.com)

Images available upon request.

### **Free kids nature journals, yoga classes highlights of Earth Day 2009**

In partnership with Tarpon Bay Explorers and “Ding” Darling Wildlife Society-Friends of the Refuge (DDWS), J.N. “Ding” Darling National Wildlife Refuge will host Earth Day 2009 on Saturday, Apr. 18, from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. The theme is Reconnect: Earth, Family & Fitness.

The first 200 kids to arrive for Earth Day will receive a free oversized Nature Journal, compliments of DDWS. Activity stations will teach kids ways to use the journal such as decorating their Earth Pledge, doing leaf rubbings, and stamping animal tracks.

“Families can then take those beautiful journals home and continue to record their outdoor explorations with drawings, poetry, letters to Mother Earth -- whatever they want to do to help them feel connected with nature,” said Ranger Toni Westland, event organizer. “We’d love to think families would make a point of getting out in nature together to record their children’s journey into the great outdoors.”

At 12 noon and 1 p.m. free Family Yoga classes will teach fitness through animal poses at the Cross-Dike Pavilion. The 30-minute classes are limited to 15 participants each on a first-come basis (no sign-up ahead of time). Mats and blankets are provided.

Tarpon Bay Explorers, the refuge’s official concessions operator, will be providing free bike use on-site at the refuge throughout the event to encourage families to get out and get fit. Trained volunteers will lead 4-mile loop bike tours of the refuge at 11 a.m., 12:30 p.m., and 2 p.m. Visitors can also bike Wildlife Drive and Indigo Trail on their own. Wildlife Drive admission is free that day to all cyclists and hikers (\$5 for motor vehicles). Earth Day visitors can also sample fresh-brewed shade-grown coffee provided by DDWS.

Besides kayak rentals and tours, Tarpon Bay Explorers offers refuge visitors nature boating cruises, educational Deck Talks, and other daily opportunities to learn more about local wildlife and its habitat. Call 239-472-8900 or visit [www.tarponbayexplorers.com](http://www.tarponbayexplorers.com) for more information.

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](http://www.dingdarlingsociety.org).

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