

PRESS RELEASE

For immediate release
Contact: Chelle Koster Walton
239-472-3499
ChelleTrav@aol.com

Images available upon request.

DDWS funds refuge interns

“Ding” Darling Wildlife Society-Friends of the Refuge (DDWS) has provided funding for living-expense stipends for up to eight interns at J.N. “Ding” Darling National Wildlife Refuge in the 2008-2009 fiscal year.

One joined Environmental Education Specialist Toni Westland in January. **Cassie Bauer** hails from the University of Wisconsin Stevens Point, where she earned her degree in resource management and environmental education with a minor in biology. She will be living and working at the refuge until May 2009.

Two others came on board in February as biology interns.

Rob Lara is a recent University of Florida (UF) graduate with a Bachelor’s degree in wildlife ecology and conservation. One of his favorite duties at the refuge is alligator surveys because of his love for reptiles. When Rob leaves in July, he will return to Gainesville, Florida, to work for the U.S. Forest Service in partnership with UF. He will be working there trapping reptiles and amphibians around lakes in the Ocala National Forest as part of a 10-plus-year project to monitor species diversity and population size.

Another University of Wisconsin Stevens Point alumni, **Sabrina Lartz** graduated in December 2008 with a major in wildlife management and ecology and a minor in captive wildlife. She will stay on through August, after which she is considering working on a Masters degree in either wildlife diseases or habitat management at UF in Gainesville. She has been enjoying particularly her work surveying small mammal populations on

Sanibel, especially when the biology team comes across the occasional Sanibel rice rat, a threatened species.

“These individuals are doing essential work for the refuge while gaining valuable experience,” said Refuge Manager Paul Tritaik. “The refuge, as always, is indebted to the ‘Ding’ Darling Wildlife Society for making the funds available for this program.”

DDWS is a non-profit, friends-of-the-refuge organization that supports the Education Center and other educational and biological/habitat programs and services at the refuge.

To join DDWS and become a friend of the refuge, stop in at the Refuge Education Center, call 239-472-1100 ext. 233, or visit www.dingdarlingsociety.org.

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