

PRESS RELEASE

For immediate release

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[Attached: Water/Ways, Florida Humanities, and Smithsonian logos]

‘Ding’ Darling’s Water/Ways exhibit programming to feature guest speaker series

In conjunction with the visiting Smithsonian Water/Ways exhibit at “Ding” Darling Visitor & Education Center Oct. 28 through Dec. 8, 2016, “Ding” Darling Wildlife Society-Friends of the Refuge (DDWS) will be hosting a free biweekly “Soak-It-In Speaker Series” on Fridays at 1 p.m.

“We have lined up two exciting authors, one incredible photographer, and an expert panel of water researchers and managers,” said Sarah Lathrop, associate director of DDWS, the nonprofit that is also funding Water/Ways’ visit. Lathrop oversees the exhibit with supervisory refuge ranger Toni Westland. “The six-week exhibit will take a global look at water relative to environment, culture, history, and religion, but will also examine the issues and context facing our liquid assets here at home through an accompanying exhibit and collaborative programming we are creating internally.”

On opening day of the exhibit, Oct. 28, author Ellen Prager will deliver the Ocean Trivia Program she presents on cruise ships and for other audiences of all ages. Dr. Prager is a sought-after speaker widely recognized for her expertise and ability to bring science to the layman. She has appeared on the *Today Show* and *NBC News*, *Good Morning America*, *Fox News*, *CBS Early Show*, *CNN American Morning*, *Larry King*, The Weather Channel, and Discovery Channel.

The freelance writer, consultant, science advisor to *CelebrityXpedition* in the Galapagos Islands, and Safina Center Fellow is also participating in Water/Ways programming with her young adults book *Shark Whisperer*, which will be donated to a local school class. She will hold a special program with the students at the refuge during the exhibit.

Cynthia Barnett, a popular refuge lecturer, returns on Nov. 4 for a program about her book *Blue Revolution: Unmaking America's Water Crisis*. *National Geographic* called the book “elegant, inspirational, indispensable;” the *Boston Globe* named it among its Top 10 Science Books.

Award-winning Everglades photographer Mac Stone appears on Nov. 18 for an engaging presentation of his dramatic underwater and other water-related images. Throughout the Water/Ways exhibit, the refuge will display an exhibit of Stone's images in the Visitor & Education Center Auditorium.

A panel discussion titled “Water: Have We Missed the Boat?” winds up the guest speaker series on Dec. 2. DDWS board member and state co-chair of the Everglades Coalition Mike Baldwin moderates a lively, audience-interactive discussion that includes experts Mitch Hutchcraft, Southwest Florida Water Management District; Cara Capp, Everglades Restoration Program; Rae Ann Wessel, SCCF; and Jerry Lorenz, Audubon Florida.

Admission to all presentations is free but limited on a first-come basis. The schedule of lectures is listed below.

Oct. 28 – Author Ellen Prager – Ocean Trivia program

Nov. 4 – Author Cynthia Barnett – *Blue Revolution: Unmaking America's Water Crisis*

Nov. 18 – Nature Photographer Mac Stone – Under Water in the Everglades presentation

Dec. 2 – “Water: Have We Missed the Boat?” interactive panel discussion

Also as a part of Water/Ways programming, DDWS will be showing a water-related film series, sponsored by LCEC, on Wednesdays. The Southwest Florida Fine Craft Guild is planning an artful water and nature exhibition titled “Engulfed” during the event, and an exhibit of water-related, historic cartoons by Jay N. “Ding” Darling will also be on display.

Special Saturday family programs, giveaways, interactive water features, and other activities are in the planning stages. On Saturday, Nov. 26, a Kids Fishing Derby will take place on the Sanibel Causeway in conjunction with the exhibit. Tarpon Bay Explorers, the refuge's recreation concession, will offer a 10 percent discount on 10 of its Saturday Nature & Sea Life cruises during Water/Ways.

“The outstanding, state-of-the-art Smithsonian Water/Ways exhibit lies at the heart of an exciting, engaging six weeks of programming for kids and adults that we hope will ultimately send the message

that we all need to work together to preserve our valuable, vanishing water resources,” said Ranger Westland. "We are honored to be among the select venues hosting the exhibit."

ABOUT WATER/WAYS

Through a highly competitive bidding process, ‘Ding’ Darling was chosen as one of only six Florida locations to host the new Water/Ways. The exhibit, part of the Smithsonian’s Museum on Main Street (MoMS) program, examines water as an environmental necessity and important cultural element. Water covers more than 71 percent of Earth’s surface, having an impact on climate, health, economics, politics, agriculture, transportation, and industry. Water/Ways explores the endless motion of water on Earth’s surface, below ground, and in the atmosphere, and it illustrates its effect on landscape, settlement, migration, and even spirituality. For information about the exhibit, visit www.sites.si.edu.

ABOUT DDWS

As a non-profit 501(c)3 organization, DDWS works to support J.N. “Ding” Darling National Wildlife Refuge’s mission of conservation, wildlife and habitat protection, research, and public education through charitable donations and Refuge Nature Shop proceeds. To support DDWS and the refuge with a tax-deductible gift, visit www.dingdarlingsociety.org or contact Birgie Miller at 239-292-0566 or director@dingdarlingsociety.org.

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