

PRESS RELEASE

For immediate release

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Caption: In 1923, two-time Pulitzer Prize winner Jay “Ding” Darling penned this prophetic political cartoon titled “What Man Does To One Of the Most Beautiful Gifts Of Nature – The River.”

[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. 7, 2016, “Ding” Darling Wildlife Society-Friends of the Refuge (DDWS) will be hosting a free “Soak-It-In Speaker Series” on select Fridays at 1 p.m. The finale to the series, “Water: Have We Missed the Boat?” presents an interactive panel discussion with local water-quality experts on Dec. 2.

“This discussion will be open to audience questions with an in-depth look at Southwest Florida water woes,” said Sarah Lathrop, associate director of DDWS, the nonprofit that is also funding Water/Ways’ engagement. Lathrop administers the overall exhibit with supervisory refuge ranger Toni Westland. “The six-week exhibit will take a global look at water relative to environment, culture, history, and spirituality. It will also examine the issues and context facing our liquid assets here at home through this panel discussion, an accompanying exhibit, and collaborative programming we have created internally.”

DDWS board member and state co-chair of the Everglades Coalition, Mike Baldwin will moderate “Water: Have We Missed the Boat?,” which includes key players and researchers in local water management and conservation: Mitch Hutchcraft, governing board member of the Southwest Florida Water Management District; Cara Capp, Everglades restoration program manager with the National Parks Conservation Association; Rae Ann Wessel, SCCF natural resource policy director; and Jerry Lorenz, state research director for Audubon Florida, member of the Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary Advisory Council, and founding member of the Florida Oceans and Coastal Resources Council.

Admission to the panel discussion is free but limited on a first-come basis. The schedule of all free presentations in the series is listed below.

Oct. 28 – Author Ellen Prager – Ocean Trivia program

Nov. 4 – Author Cynthia Barnett – Blue Revolution: A Water Ethic for Florida and America

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 mounting 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 also scheduled. 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. We hope it 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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