

## PRESS RELEASE

For immediate release

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*Caption:* Dr. Ellen Prager

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

### **Smithsonian Water/Ways exhibit opens with noted marine scientist appearance**

In conjunction with the visiting Smithsonian Water/Ways exhibit at the “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 biweekly “Soak-It-In Speaker Series” on select Fridays at 1 p.m. Noted author Dr. Ellen Prager kicks off both the series and exhibit on Friday, Oct. 28, with an Ocean Trivia program for all ages.

“Ellen Prager has developed this amazing program that she presents on cruise ships,” said Sarah Lathrop, associate director of DDWS, the nonprofit that is also funding Water/Ways’ engagement. Lathrop oversees the exhibit with supervisory refuge ranger Toni Westland. “Earlier that day, she is doing a different program with students from The Sanibel School and Lehigh Elementary School about her book, which the society donated to all the students, called *Shark Whisperer*. It is one of a trilogy of marine detective young-adult books.”

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 marine scientist, freelance writer, consultant, science advisor to *CelebrityXpedition* in the Galapagos Islands, and Safina Center Fellow is also author of the popular adult book, *Sex, Drugs, and Sea Slime: The Oceans’ Oddest Creatures and Why They Matter*.

Admission to all speaker presentations is free but limited on a first-come basis. The schedule of speakers 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 John Moran – Our Water, Our Future

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 Mac Stone’s water-related Everglades’ photography will also be on display. .

Special Saturday family programs, giveaways, interactive water features, and other activities are scheduled. On Saturday, Nov. 26, a Kids Fishing Derby will take place on the Sanibel causeway in conjunction with the exhibit. WaterVentures Florida's Learning Lab will make a one-day stop on Saturday, Dec. 3. 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."

For more information on Water/Ways and a full calendar of events, visit [dingdarlingsociety.org/articles/waterways](http://dingdarlingsociety.org/articles/waterways).

#### 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](http://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](http://www.dingdarlingsociety.org) or contact Birgie Miller at 239-292-0566 or [director@dingdarlingsociety.org](mailto:director@dingdarlingsociety.org).

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