

# News Release



J.N. “Ding” Darling National Wildlife Refuge  
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:  
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J.N “Ding” Darling National Wildlife Refuge (Refuge) will be closing the Bailey Tract for four to six weeks starting on the afternoon of Sunday, June 3, 2018. This closure is for a planned hydrologic restoration project, in partnership with the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC), commencing on the morning of Monday, June 4, 2018. To avoid public safety concerns, the Bailey Tract will be closed to all public access for the duration of the restoration project.

In response to public input received by the Refuge, parts of the planned restoration have been modified to leave a part of Ani Pond open and keep a loop trail around it. The Refuge and FWC also intend to:

- Remove the two artificial levees (approximately 1.5 and 0.5 acres, respectively) along both sides of the Tarpon Bay Slough and restore the footprint to marsh habitat;
- Remove the levee road along the northwestern edge of Ani Pond (approximately 0.1 miles) and restore the footprint to marsh habitat, leaving the larger of the two loop trails in place;
- Partially fill the Ani Pond and leave the eastern portion of the pond intact. The portion of the Ani Pond extending from the island to the western shore (approximately 1.2 acres) will be filled with excavated material and restored to marsh habitat.
- Install a series of up to eight culverts through the surrounding road levees to restore the hydrologic connection between existing fragments of marsh.

This restoration is intended to enhance the hydrology of a portion of the Bailey Tract to benefit a suite of species dependent on the historic cordgrass marsh habitat of Sanibel Island. The restoration will partly restore the hydrology of the affected area by helping to increase groundwater levels, improve surface water capacity, extend the hydroperiod of the marsh, and ultimately restore the freshwater marsh habitat in the affected area.

For any questions, please contact refuge manager Paul Tritaik at paul\_tritaik@fws.gov.

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