



SPRING 2020

Society Pages

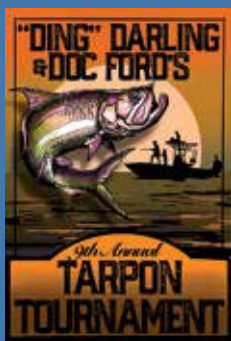
News from Friends of
the J.N. "Ding" Darling
National Wildlife Refuge

ABOUT THE SOCIETY

"Ding" Darling Wildlife Society, the non-profit Friends of the Refuge organization, supports the J. N. "Ding" Darling National Wildlife Refuge Complex through the generation of independent funds to undertake student education, internships, research projects, informational literature, advocacy, land acquisition and facility enhancements. Efforts may extend beyond the Complex's borders and involve partnerships with like-minded conservation organizations.

Tarpon Tourney 2020

75th Anniversary Artist "in Residence" Ed Anderson designed this year's tourney logo.



The ninth annual "Ding" Darling & Doc Ford's Tarpon Tournament on Friday, May 22, once again brings catch, care, and release fishing action to local waters. Doc Ford's — with locations on Sanibel Island, Captiva Island, and Fort Myers Beach — title sponsors the tournament, along with the "Ding" Darling Wildlife Society. Proceeds will benefit wild-

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LEE ANN TAUCK CONSERVATION TRACT



*Refuge names
Wulfert Bayous
in honor of
generous donor*

Supervisory Refuge Ranger Toni Westland, Lee Tauck, Acting Refuge Manager Kevin Godsea, Campaign Leader John McCabe, and DDWS President Mike Baldwin at the unveiling of the new sign

The Lee Anne Tauck Conservation Tract officially became part of the "Ding" Darling vocabulary on January 9, when the Refuge and "Ding" Darling Wildlife Society unveiled a new sign dedicated to island philanthropist Lee Tauck at the recently acquired 68-acre Wulfert Bayous property on Sanibel Island.

"Lee gave the whole project lift-off with her generous donation," said DDWS Campaign Leader John McCabe. "With permission from the Lee County commissioners, which also made the acquisition possible through its \$6.5 million Conservation 20/20 contribution, we dedicate the Lee Anne Tauck Conservation Tract in her honor."

Lee has long been a friend of the Refuge and other island organizations through her volunteering and philanthropy, particularly where conservation education is concerned.

"We endearingly refer to her as 'The Bus Lady,' because for so many years she has been underwriting the cost of more than 5,000 students annually getting

bused to the Refuge for field trips, because the school district cut funding for them," said Supervisory Refuge Ranger Toni Westland. "Her belief in the education of our younger generation to inspire future conservation stewards has been steadfast, and she sees the impact this has on the kids in Lee County and the teachers who bring them on these visits."

"Lee's family tour business has taken her around the world, where she has seen the effects of disappearing natural lands," said DDWS Executive Director Birgie Miller. "As a result, conservation and protection of land is one of her top philanthropic areas of support. The naming of this tract recognizes the impact of philanthropy in protecting land on Sanibel Island."

Lee's influence on land preservation and conservation education spans islands-wide on Sanibel and Captiva and beyond. Her quiet and generous philanthropy has supported additional philanthropic organizations

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A Spoonie in the hand is worth a chance for a "Ding" gift bag



Island 'Spoonie' Scavenger Hunt

This June, 75 Roseate Spoonbills (a.k.a. "Spoonies") will flock into our island community as part of the Refuge 75th Anniversary Celebration. Business and organization partners are invited to hide small spoonbill statues at their places of business as part of an island-wide scavenger hunt. The Refuge is starting now to collect names of businesses that wish to partner in the fun. Email Toni_Westland@fws.gov with your business/organization



name and the contact phone number that the Refuge can reach out to in May.

The hunt will run all of June. Hunters who find a spoonie get to keep it and must turn in the attached tag to the Refuge Nature Store, open daily 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. inside the Visitor & Education Center. They will be entered into a chance to win a Refuge gift bag containing a pair of Vortex birding binoculars plus other "wild" goodies.

TARPON TOURNNEY

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life, water quality research, and conservation education at the Refuge.

The tournament pays out 100 percent of the entry fees as awards to the top five teams. The 55 spots in the tournament filled within a few hours of opening registration online in December.

Team captains also win a coveted "tarpon jacket," a pink sports jacket swimming with tarpon. "It's kind of like the green Masters tournament jacket in golf," said Marty Har- rity, Doc Ford's co-owner, who introduced the tradition in 2017.

"Doc Ford's has been a faithful supporter of our efforts at 'Ding' Darling, helping greatly to bolster Refuge programs and research to balance federal budget shortfalls," said Birgie. "Last year we raised a record \$125,000 for the Refuge as a result of sponsorships, dona- tions, and auction proceeds. In its eight years of existence, the tourney has raised nearly \$575,000. We're so grateful to Doc Ford's for this huge effort in our behalf."

For more information on the tournament, visit dingdarlingtarpontourney.org. Anyone interested in becoming a tournament sponsor should contact Dot Voorhees at 239-472-1100 ext. 239 or dot@dingdarlingsociety.org.

IN THE REFUGE NATURE STORE

THREE WAYS TO SHOP

1. Onsite: Stop in the Refuge Nature Store and be the first to find what's new on our shelves. These Mary Frances beaded bags are one hot new item. Watch our "Ding" on the Wing email bulletins for the latest merchandise.



shipping anywhere in the U.S.A.

3. Don't see what you're looking for online? Email naturestore@dingdarlingsociety.org or call 239-472-1100 ext. 241 for information on ordering store products not yet included on the website.



2. ShopDingDarling.com: Our new e-commerce site grows steadily as Nature Store staff adds more items. Gift categories include Home, Apparel, Collectibles, Books, Art, Eco-Friendly, and Kids. Visit today for

Remember, DDWS members receive a 10% discount onsite at the Nature Store. Profits from all Nature Store sales go directly to the Refuge for educational programs and wildlife research.

LEE ANN TAUCK

continued from page 1

from CROW, SCCF, and the Bailey-Matthews National Shell Museum to F.I.S.H. and BIG ARTS.

Lee's "Ding" Darling contribution kicked off a re- markable campaign led by DDWS, which managed last year to raise \$3 million within months to stem the devel- opment of 28 homes in the Wulfert Bayous area adjacent to the Refuge and other conservation lands. The property is a vital link that will enhance water habitat and quality.

In August 2019, the Lee County Commissioners' vote in favor of supporting the acquisition clinched the deal. DDWS closed on the land in December 2019, and the

property will be managed and maintained by the Ref- uge as part of the historic partnership. DDWS and the Refuge have plans to restore Wulfert Bayous as a man- grove rookery for colonial wading birds over the next several years and preserve the land in perpetuity as a native habitat for all island wildlife.

In November, the National Fish & Wildlife Founda- tion (NFWF) announced its award of \$5,309,000 to fur- ther the Refuge's plans for restoring the property's wet- lands. DDWS had applied for the Gulf Environmental Benefit Fund grant aimed at restoring bird populations affected by the catastrophic BP Deepwater Horizon Oil Spill in 2010, bringing the total to \$14.8 million for the Lee Anne Tauck Conservation Tract by fundraising and unique partnerships.

DID YOU KNOW?



Fossil research shows that Tarpon have been swimming in our seas since prehistoric times. Photo by Al Hoffacker



"The Shining Snail Shell" by Mouna Benmerabet won second place in the contest.

High School Photo Contest Winners

At a special ceremony on March 14, 2020, DDWS announced winners and finalists in the seventh annual "Ding" Darling-Theodore Cross High School Photography Contest at the Refuge. Sponsored by the Theodore Cross Family Charitable Foundation, the competition invited high school students from Lee, Collier, Charlotte, Glades, and Hendry counties to compete for prizes.

Wildlife photographer Steve Allen, Acting Refuge Manager Kevin Godsea and Sanibel resident Jeff Beale judged the contest. They reviewed 121 images taken by students from 14 different schools.

First place went to an image titled "Lip Smacking Good" by Virginia Bayne, a junior from Fort Myers High.

"I really liked the subject matter," said Kevin. "This photo had great light and it is centered and in focus, but still leaves a lot to the imagination. There's a sense of mystery as to what else is going on in the photo. Great shot."

In second place, Mouna Benmerabet, a junior from Cypress Lake High in Fort Myers, portrayed "The Shining Snail Shell."


"This is a very interesting photograph," said Steve.

"The framing and contrast of the swirl on the shell to the upright trees is very visually appealing. Because the background is out of focus, your eyes go up to the tops of the trees and swirl back down to the shell. I also really love this photograph because it shows the habitat the snail lives in very well."

Third place winner "Changing Perspectives" was submitted by senior Christina Walch of Cape Coral High.

"This is a very creative photo and makes you think and ask how this happened," said Jeff, a former art and photography teacher. "I also really enjoyed the warm orange colors and cool blue tones."

"We are so happy to be supporting a contest in my father's name, a contest that will get our youth involved with nature by looking at it — as my father so loved doing — through a camera lens," said Amanda Cross.

Students were able to submit up to two photographs. Winning and honorable mention images are on display at the free "Ding" Darling Education & Visitor Center. To see them online and for information on the 2021 photo contest, stay tuned to dingdarlingsociety.org/articles/photo-contests. 

75th Anniversary Celebration: What's Ahead

It has been a big year already for "Ding" Darling's diamond anniversary. We have celebrated conservation art, Roseate Spoonbills, and "Ding" Darling the man and artist. The celebration culminates on December 1 with public and private ticketed events to honor the date the Refuge opened 75 years ago. Between now and then, we continue to celebrate with events, recreational discounts, and the opening of a temporary exhibit about our namesake.

Here's what's upcoming:

Through April 24 — 75th Anniversary Scenes from the Refuge Exhibition by Artist "in Residence" Ed Anderson (see page 11)

May 9, 2020 — Tarpon Bay Explorers Saturday (25% off boat and kayak tours)

May 16, 2020 — Free Tarpon Bay Explorers SUP Clinic

May 22, 2020 — 75th Anniversary "Ding" Darling & Doc Ford's Tarpon Tournament

June 1, 2020 — 75th Anniversary Island "Spoonie" Scavenger Hunt Kick-off (see page 2)

July TBD — Unveiling of the WoW Mobile Classroom

July 4, 2020 — "Ding" is grand marshal in Sanibel Independence Day Parade

August 19, 2020 — New Water Exhibit Unveiling

September 12, 2020 — Tarpon Bay Explorers Saturday (25% off boat and kayak tours)

October 20, 2020 — 75th Anniversary "Ding": The Man, The Art, The Stories Exhibition Opening

November 3, 2020 — 75th Anniversary Proclamation Reading at City Hall with reception

November 14, 2020 — Tarpon Bay Explorers Saturday (25% off boat and kayak tours)

December 1, 2020 — Official 75th Anniversary Celebrations

ADVOCACY UPDATE

DDWS Sponsors the Everglades Coalition Conference

by Sarah Ashton & Jim Metzler,
DDWS Advocacy Committee Co-Chairs


The Everglades Coalition (EVCO) is an alliance of more than 60 local, state, and national organizations dedicated to the full restoration of the Greater Everglades Ecosystem. The "Ding" Darling Wildlife Society was the lead sponsor at the alliance's 35th Annual Everglades Coalition Conference, which was held recently at the South Seas Island Resort on Captiva Island, Florida.

Sponsoring the conference gave the Society the opportunity to interact with key decision-makers on issues



Jim Metzler (second from right) with EVCO panel at the recent conference

of importance to the Refuge. It also afforded the Society multiple opportunities to educate conference attendees about DDWS and the Refuge. Part of this education was showing conference attendees a recently created video that highlights DDWS' mission. Another part was Jim Metzler, Co-chair of the Society's Advocacy Commit-

tee, moderating a panel that analyzed the impact that Florida's national wildlife refuges have on Everglades restoration. Please visit dingdarlingsociety.org/articles/advocacy-resources to view our committee's archives of advocacy-related information relating to water quality in and funding for the Refuge. 



Meet at Gulfside City Park for a guided Family Beach Walk every Friday at 9 a.m. this summer.

Free Summer Programs 2020

Wildlife Wonders talks, weekly walks, and nature crafts highlight the free summer programs running June 8 through August 8, 2020, at the Refuge. Summer programming is made possible by support from the “Ding” Darling Wildlife Society. The schedule of weekly activities follows. No pre-registration is necessary.

- Reading in the Refuge, every Wednesday at 10 a.m.: Attendees of each 45-minute reading-and-crafts session learn about a Refuge animal and make a take-home craft related to it. Meet in the Visitor & Education Center classroom.
- Indigo Trail Walk, every Thursday at 10 a.m.: Join Refuge naturalists as they lead a one-hour tour to the Wildlife Education Boardwalk to identify and discuss the ecosystem’s plants, mammals, birds, and reptiles - geared for adults and children alike. Bring water, sunscreen, and bug spray. Meet at the flagpole in front of the Visitor & Education Center.
- Family Beach Walk, every Friday at 9 a.m.: The one-hour program convenes at Gulfside Park to explore the Refuge’s gulf-front Perry Tract. City parking fees apply. Bring water, sunscreen, and bug spray.
- Wildlife Wonders, every Saturday at 11 a.m.: Refuge education staff lead this 30-minute indoor program about the mysteries of manatees, alligators, crocodiles, horseshoe crabs, and birds in the Visitor & Education Center auditorium.

For more information on the Refuge summer programs, call 239-472-1100 ext. 237 or visit dingdarling-society.org/articles/free-refuge-programs.

DID YOU KNOW?



The horseshoe crab is a living fossil. It has been around some 220 million years — longer than dinosaurs.

STAFF NEWS

Welcome New Interns

This winter, “Ding” welcomed four new interns to help out for the season with labor shortages caused by federal budget cuts.

Anna Tursky, a native of Fond du Lac, Wisconsin, has joined the Conservation Education team. She graduated from the University of Wisconsin—Stevens Point in 2017 with a bachelor of science degree in biology, emphasis in aquatic biology. Previously, Anna worked two summers as a research tech for the Wagner Lab at Michigan State University on a sea lamprey study and, in between those stints, at a Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources fish hatchery.



Michaela Arndt, from Green Bay, Wisconsin, will be working as a Visitor Services Intern with Supervisory Refuge Ranger Toni Westland this year. She last interned at Wisconsin’s Aldo Leopold Nature Center in the field of development. She graduated from the University of Wisconsin—Madison in December, where she studied wildlife ecology and environmental conservation.



Biology intern Haley Miller, originally from Haverhill, Massachusetts, most recently worked as a research assistant at the Marine Biological Laboratory in Woods Hole, Massachusetts. In 2018, she graduated from Chapman University in California with a bachelor of science degree in environmental science and policy. Concurrently with her “Ding” internship, Haley is working on a master’s degree in forest resources at Clemson University in South Carolina.



DDWS provides living stipends and other benefits for more than a dozen interns each year. The Refuge supports interns with free housing. To help support the Refuge internship program, contact Sierra Hoisington at 239-472-1100 ext. 4 or shois@dingdarlingsociety.org.

New Temp Refuge Staffer

The Refuge has hired a 180-day emergency staffer to help see administration through the busy season this year. Entry fees to Wildlife Drive help fund the short-term stints at “Ding” Darling to assist permanent staff, which has been cut back due to federal budget short-comings.

Visitor Services Ranger Bryan Marquardt hails from Stillwater, Minnesota, and last worked at Rio Grande Del Norte National Monument near Taos, New Mexico. He arrived in January to assist Supervisory Refuge Ranger Toni Westland, first as an intern, now in a temporary staff position.



“I am thoroughly enjoying the weather, the birds, the beach, the sunny days, the food, and the diversity of wildlife found here,” says Bryan, who graduated from North Dakota State University in 2012 with a bachelor degree in zoology. “I am excited to be a part of the staff at ‘Ding’ Darling for the 75th anniversary.”

Congratulations, Sara!

Best wishes for happiness to our Conservation Educator and her new husband. Sara and Brent Soderholm were wed on Saturday, February 22. Congratulations to the beautiful bride and her lucky husband!



Farewell Ranger Monica

In January, staff, volunteers, and friends gathered to send off Ranger Monica Scroggin to her new FWS gig as a permanent Visitor Services Specialist at the Crystal River National Wildlife Refuge north of Tampa, Florida, famed for its manatee populations. She joins former “Ding” Deputy Refuge Manager Joyce Palmer, who currently serves as the Refuge Manager at Crystal River NWR.



Ranger Monica started at “Ding” Darling in fall 2016 as an intern, after graduating from Florida Gulf Coast University (FGCU) with a degree in environmental studies. In January 2017, the Refuge hired her as a temporary, part-time Visitor Services Ranger. Last year, she finished a master’s degree in natural science education from Colorado State University.

“We are so happy for Monica, especially happy that she’s not traveling far from us,” said Supervisory Refuge Ranger Toni Westland. “We wish her the best of luck and commend Crystal River for the wisdom of hiring such a competent staffer.”

45/82 Society



Together, through planned giving, we can continue the education and conservation efforts at the J.N. "Ding" Darling National Wildlife Refuge.

Continue Your Impact

Many of our members help shape the future of the Refuge by designating the "Ding" Darling Wildlife Society as a beneficiary in their estate plans. They become members of the **45/82 Society** (signifying the year of the Refuge's establishment in 1945 and the year of the Society's founding in 1982). A combination of large and small planned gifts received throughout the years has enabled the "Ding" Darling Wildlife Society to continue its support of the Refuge in areas of land acquisition, education, research, and other important conservation efforts.

Supporting these efforts through your estate is easier than you may think.

"Next to my family, "Ding" Darling holds the second most special place in my heart, and I want future generations to see the natural beauty that is 'Ding' Darling many years from now."



- Jim Sprankle
Member of the 45/82 Society

As a nationally renowned wood carving artist, Jim Sprankle and his artwork have impacted the J.N. "Ding" Darling National Wildlife Refuge in ways many may not realize. His volunteerism and philanthropy through his artwork over the last 26 years have made a big difference at the Refuge and other organizations throughout Lee County. Through the years, Jim's donated carvings have raised more than \$2 million to benefit the conservation work at the Refuge. Jim and his wife Patty continue to give of their time and personal finances along with the carvings of birds and feathers, but yet Jim wanted to do more, so he chose to include the "Ding" Darling Wildlife Society in his estate plans.

Sample Language for Your Plan

If you wish to name the "Ding" Darling Wildlife Society in your estate plans or name us as a beneficiary of your retirement accounts or life insurance, please name us as follows:

"I, [name], of [city, state, ZIP] give, devise, and bequeath to the "Ding" Darling Wildlife Society, Inc., a Florida non-profit corporation located on Sanibel Island, Florida [written amount or percentage of the estate or description of property]."

Our tax identification number is:
59-2240895

Jim has made the Refuge and its mission of conservation, wildlife protection, and education part of his life since he and his wife Patty moved to Sanibel nearly 25 years ago. He began as a volunteer and continues today in that capacity, working at the front information desk, roving the center, cooking hotdogs for "Ding" Darling Days in years past, having served as DDWS board president for 5 years, and, most recently serving on the campaign committee to raise philanthropic support for the 68-acre property recently named the Lee Anne Tauck Conservation Tract.

Thank You for your commitment

By creating a personal legacy, you also create a lasting legacy for the Refuge. Your gift through your estate plan, large or small, is critical to the Refuge's future survival. We would like to recognize you as a member the 45/82 Society, unless you prefer anonymity. **If you have already remembered the "Ding" Darling Wildlife Society in your estate plans, please let us know so we can thank you and make a plan to fulfill your wishes at the time the gift is realized.**

For more information on how to leave a lasting gift for conservation, please contact Executive Director Birgie Miller at 239-472-1100 ext. 4 or director@dingdarlingsociety.org, or visit our website at dingdarlingsociety.org/articles/leave-a-legacy.



Go Wild for Dingoes SOARED this year!



LOVIN' SPOONBILLS

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Over **\$300,000** raised to support our conservation education program.
Thank you to everyone who flocked together to make this event a success!



**Special thanks to our
sponsors & auction donors.**

Call of the Wild

Jim & Patty
Sprankle



Champion Level



Todd & Barbara
Bluedorn



Boomer
Duvn & Family



Guardian Level

Ron E. & Josephine
Smith

Bill & Diane
Valerian

Tiffani Kaliko
&
John Silvia

Hank & Linda
Spire

Doug & Sherry
Gentry

John & Kathy
McCabe

Jim & Dolce
Doss

Sarah Ashton
Realtor RE/MAX
of the Islands

Mike & Terry
Baldwin

John & Kay
Morse

Protector Level

Defender Level

50% Off Framing
The Gresham Family
William & Barbara Millar
Mitchell's Sand Castles
Geoffry & Karen Moss
R.S. Walsh Landscaping
Sanibel Moorings
Stewart & Sons Insurance Inc.
Bob & Kathy Wiesemann

We would also like to thank all of those who donated to our auction!

Steve Allen • Ed Anderson • Mark & Gretchen Banks • Paul Bannick • Jim Bennight • John Bloom • Barbara Bluedorn • Barbara Broadhurst •
Clyde Butcher • Cast About Charters • Century Link Stadium • Jeff Clemens • Gary Eigenberger • Robin Fidler • Bill & Laurie Harkey •
Island Inn • On Island • Rachel Pierce • R Mended Metals • Jim & Patty Sprankle • Tino's Southwest Kitchen • Vortex Optics •
Waterman Broadcasting • Ralph & Jean Woodring

PROJECT REFUGE LIT UP THE CATWALK

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Thank you to our sponsors!

▶ **Champion**

Jim & Liz Birmingham

▶ **Guardian**

Jim & Patty Sprankle
Lee County Solid Waste
Jim & Dulce Doss

▶ **Protector**

Bob & Kathy Wiesemann
Pfeifer Realty Group

▶ **Defender**

Mitchell's Sand Castles
Nick Adams Photography
Sanibel Captiva Beach Resorts
Boomer Duvin & Family

Scott McPhee
Doug & Sherry Gentry
Sanibel Moorings

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PROJECT REFUGE

A Fashion Statement for Mother Earth

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"We have 23 one-of-a-kind fun and unique fashions to showcase," Master of Ceremonies Rachel Pierce told the audience gathered for the Twist Tie Optional Luncheon & Runway Show at The Sanctuary Clubhouse on March 10. "All were designed by creative and passionate individuals who want to bring awareness to recycling and repurposing trash that is produced here on this small island, in our surrounding counties, as well as all over the world."

The luncheon culminated the five-month Project Refuge: A Couture Fashion Show Using Trash that "Ding" Darling Wildlife Society planned as part of the Refuge's 75th Anniversary Celebration. Rachel Pierce, morning co-anchor for NBC2, narrated the exciting event, which raised support for the Refuge as well as environmental awareness. Judges included Loki Anthony, Merni Libonate, and Robin Tauck.

They selected the contest's three winners, awarding them "trophies" — dolls made from recycled materials by the Southwest Florida Fine Craft Guild. The Guild also devoted its time and energy to creating one-of-a-kind centerpiece dolls, which attendees were able to purchase to raise additional funds for the Refuge cause.

Congratulations to the winners, pictured here: Second-place winner Linda Lange for Team Cover Story, first-place winner Hayden Lambek for Team Downton Shabby, and third-place winner Jenna Basehart for Team Steel Mary. Thanks once again to Rachel, our judges, the Southwest Florida Fine Craft Guild, designers, sponsors, attendees, DDWS staff and volunteers, and the Project Refuge Committee of Toni Ory and Dot Voorhees. With a ton of creativity and work, we were able to put forth a fashion statement that made a difference.



THANK YOU TO OUR 2020 TARPON TOURNAMENT SPONSORS

TITLE



STARTING POSITION



CHAMPION



PREMIERE



PRESENTING



PLATINUM

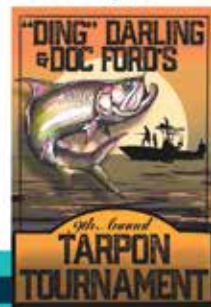


GOLD



SILVER

Island Sand Paper
Anisa Stewart Jewelry
Semmer Electric
Bonita Bills Waterfront Cafe
Peter & Barb Rogers



WoW! Mobile Unit Nears Completion

In February, DDWS received a donation from the Blue-dorn Family of Sanibel Island and Dallas, Texas, to purchase a heavy-duty truck to tow the Refuge's Wildlife on Wheels (WoW) mobile classroom. It is scheduled to debut in July 2020, in time for the Sanibel Independence Day parade, for which the city of Sanibel selected "Ding" Darling to act as grand marshal in honor of its 75th anniversary.

"That was the last piece of the puzzle to put together the unit and extend the Refuge's educational reach to at-risk communities and people in the five-county area who are unable to visit 'Ding' Darling," said DDWS Executive Director Birgie Miller. "We are so thrilled that Barbara Bluedorn found the project captivating because of the importance of its outreach mission and the impact it will have on children and their families."

The WoW mobile classroom will travel to distant schools, libraries, after-school programs, events, and other venues to teach and inspire people of all ages to save and protect land, water, and the wildlife that need the habitat to survive.

The educational WoW project began with an anonymous \$100,000 family grant last spring. Later, another donor contributed a \$50,000 challenge grant that brought in another \$100,000 toward WoW's completion. Donations have arrived from Refuge friends and education supporters across the country.

"All of the donors to this long dreamed-of project believe in education as the key component to making a difference in protecting what is left in our world for the wildlife and the people who depend on it," said Supervisory Refuge Ranger Toni Westland, who leads the project with DDWS Development Officer Sierra Hoisington. "We are always looking for new and creative ways to engage people of all ages in conservation. We are so excited about the possibilities of teaching and inspiring in hard-to-reach communities through WoW."

Currently in its fabrication stage, WoW will be unveiled this summer as part of the Refuge's 75th Anni-



The WoW team — artist David Williams, Supervisory Refuge Ranger Toni Westland, and DDWS Development Officer Sierra Hoisington — traveled to North Carolina in February to try out the WoW mobile classroom shell for size.

versary Celebration. Learning stations both inside and outside WoW will interpret mangrove ecosystems, water quality, water conservation, pollution and plastic, animal scats and tracks, Florida's native animals, wildlife sounds, and other topics that meet the Refuge's mission.

Refuge staff, Lee County teachers, and a team of volunteers will draw on knowledge gained in the classroom to design the interpretative exhibits and programs that complement Florida educational requirements.

"The Refuge will continue bringing schools here by bus — nearly 5,000 students annually," said Ranger Toni. "But our WoW mobile classroom will allow Refuge staff to reach thousands of more kids and their families in a five-county area, who are otherwise unable to experience the outdoors at the Refuge."

Anyone interested in making a tax-deductible donation for ongoing needs for the WoW project can contact Birgie at 239-472-1100 ext. 4 or director@dingdarlingsociety.org.

Artist rendering of Wildlife on Wheels by David Williams



SOCIAL MEDIA FOLLOW US!

To "like" us on **Facebook** (along with more than 14,500 others), search for "Ding" Darling Wildlife Society. (You can also "like" the Refuge by searching for its "Official" page.) You can follow us on **Instagram**, where we have 12,100 followers, at [@dingdarlingwildlifesociety](https://www.instagram.com/dingdarlingwildlifesociety). On **Twitter**, search @DingDarlingWS. Also visit our **YouTube** channel by searching "ding darling wildlife society."



Wildlife Drive Fee Changes

Effective October 1, 2020, admission fees to the Refuge's Wildlife Drive will change. The new fees are a result of positive feedback from two public comment meetings held in April 2019 and approval by the U.S. Department of Interior, which last okayed a fee change more than 30 years ago. The Refuge fielded a 60-day public comment period upon the announcement of proposed new fees.

As reflected in the chart to the left, daily vehicular admission fees will increase on October 1 from \$5 to \$10 and annual passes from \$12 to \$25. Entry fees for pedestrians and cyclists will remain at \$1 each for persons ages 15 and older only. Admission to the Visitor & Education Center and Bailey Tract trails is still free. The cost of the Senior Pass, Access Pass, and other federal passes all remain the same and are available for purchase at the Refuge Nature Store.

"The fees help maintain structures, roads, and landscaping across our 6,400 acres," said Supervisory Refuge Ranger Toni Westland, who oversees visitor services. "We also have become increasingly reliant on entrance fees for staff salaries, especially where public safety and security are concerned."

The fee income also is used to increase accessibility at the Refuge and for other visitor facilities.

J.N. "Ding" Darling National Wildlife Refuge Fee Increases on Wildlife Drive Effective October 1, 2020		
Fees	Through 9/30/2020	As of 10/1/2020
Motorized Vehicles	\$5	\$10
Hikers & Bikers	\$1	\$1
Annual Pass	\$12	\$25
Visitor & Education Center	FREE	FREE
Bailey Tract	FREE	FREE
100% of Entrance Fees support the J.N. "Ding" Darling National Wildlife Refuge. Thank you for your support!		
FREE Visitor & Education Center, open 9am - 4pm, everyday! Wildlife Drive is CLOSED on Fridays. All visitors must exit refuge lands and waters no later than 1/2 hour after legal sunset.		
1 Wildlife Drive, Sanibel, FL 33957 • 239-472-1100 • fws.gov/dingdarling		

MEMORIAL AND HONOR GIFTS

December 1, 2019 – February 29, 2020

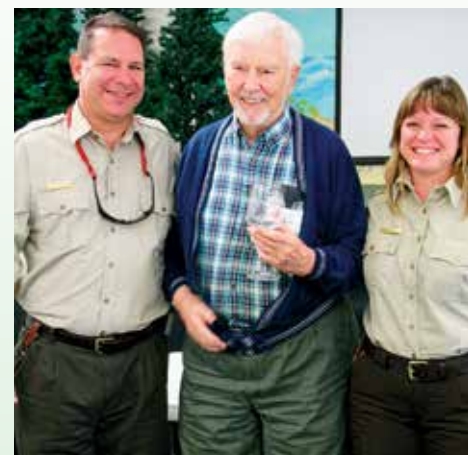
Memorial gifts and gifts made in honor of special occasions are a wonderful way to pay tribute to family and friends who are important to us. Throughout the year, the "Ding" Darling Wildlife Society has received gifts in memory and in honor of loved ones. Thank you to everyone who supported the Refuge in this thoughtful and meaningful way.

We recently received gifts in MEMORY of the following:

William & Adaline Allen	Suzanne Dubuc	Marilyn Kloosterman	William J. Saunders, Jr.
Linda Almira	Martin Gallagher	Ted Kucera	Florence Savage
In Memory of Ani Pond	Wilfred E. Gardner Jr.	Augusta Lmbiase	Lisa Schill
Andrew Barton	Christine Glancy	Margie Lee	Donald Schoenewolf
David J. Baues	Robert Dick	Roger & Marilyn Lipster	Stanley LaVere Smith
Judy Storey Bohrfen	Mary Rose & Ernest Duke	Barry & Francine Litofsky	Peter Haldor Sneve
Frank & Jane Bopp	Betty Eertmoed	Dr. Robert G Meeker	Diana Snyder
Hilda Brauder	Sara Fricke	Allan Milledge	Zachary Strang
Donald & Phyllis Buchta	Ruth & Charlie Gerecke	Jeanne & Bill Neideck	Peter A. Sturtevant
Jeffrey Case	Philip Hart	Jim & Betty Lou Osborne	Ronald Sutphin
Gary Cole	Marilyn Hoffman	Hal Patinkin	Roy Sweeney
Rosalie Courter	Karlyn Holman	Debbie Cutchin & Paulette Patrik	Jack Tyrer
Michael F. Cuscaden	Maria & Hartley Howard	Phyllis A. Prokof	John Vignali
Dr. Howard Randall Deming	George Howe	Bill Rankin	Jane Werner
Daniel Clifford Davis	Rev. Bob Ingraham	Donald B. Reed	Janet & Ann Wilson
Dan Davis	SamSabrina Kaplan	Amy Simkowitz-Rogers	Felix & Susanne Yokel
Michael Denick	Mohinder Kaur	Edward Rybeck Sr	Anna Zimmerman

We recently received gifts in HONOR of the following:

Carrie Alexander	Andrew T. Burns Family	Donald Herman	Joe & Jenna Stack
Clarissa Atkinson	Ralph & Audra Clarkson	Belle Brown Knight	Fred Stanback
Marilyn Baird	Ding Darling Wildlife Society	Diane & Kevin Lonergan	Robert Stillwell
Kim Milling & Joyce Barney	Employees, Interns &	Sue & Kevin Lynch	Pete Swan
Pat Barrett	Volunteers	Peter Meekin	Robert Urion
Sarah Pullins & Matthew Blume	Barbara Tully & Joseph Doran	Birgie Miller	Dot & Scott Voorhees
Matthew & Sarah Blume	Leigh Gay	Mick & Kathleen O'Beirne	Sherrye Walker
Lily Brennan	Doris D. Hardy	Rick & Jane Ranieri	Bob & Marni Wise
Maya Brennan	Ann & Neal Harris	Missy & Tony Scoville	Jeff & Peg Wier
Chuck & Barbara Bryden	Taylor & Betsy Hay	The Sisters (Jan Falcone)	Roger & Jo Wiggins
		The Smith Family	John & Martha Wolf



Bill receiving an award for his 28 years of service.

Farewell to a Friend

We recently received the sad news that longtime volunteer and DDWS Board of Directors consultant Bill Rankin passed away. He and his wife Jeanne Rankin, an Emeritus Board Member, received the Founders Award in 2018 for their many hours of devotion to the Refuge. Bill volunteered for 28 years roving, at the front desk, and advising the board during the construction of the Visitor & Education Center. "He will be sorely missed by us all," said Ranger Jeff Combs, volunteers coordinator.



Ed stands next to a journal page and the tarpon painting that resulted at his ongoing Scenes from the Refuge Exhibition.

Free Artist 'in Residence' Exhibition through April 24

Iaho wildlife artist Ed Anderson kicked off the Refuge's 75th anniversary celebration last summer with an eight-week artist "in residence" educational program. He gathered inspiration during daily visits to the Refuge. The results of that inspiration — about a dozen paintings and art journal entries — are now part of the Scenes from the Refuge exhibition in the Visitor & Education Center Auditorium through April 24, 2020.

Admission to the exhibition is free. During the exhibition, the Refuge Nature Store will be selling his work plus one-of-a-kind souvenirs featuring Ed's art

to benefit conservation and education efforts at "Ding" Darling. Visitors can also order custom pieces through the store.

"Our Refuge was created by conservation artist Jay Norwood 'Ding' Darling in 1945, so it's more than fitting that we began celebrating our 75th anniversary with interpretive art programs," said Supervisory Refuge Ranger Toni Westland. "Darling, who created the Federal Duck Stamp program, designed the first duck stamp and the Refuge System's Blue Goose logo. He won the Pulitzer Prize twice for his popular political cartoons, many of them conservation-related."

During his artist "in residence" program, Ed was involved in a number of projects focused on wildlife and journaling art. He mentored students from Quality Life Center of Southwest Florida and PACE Center for Girls, engaging them in mural projects. He also did pop-up art sessions along Wildlife Drive and conducted formal art and journaling workshops and demonstrations.

"It was exciting to be inspired by the Refuge's beauty and some of 'Ding' Darling's famous conservation cartoons," said Ed. "Darling could be considered one of the original wildlife doodling storytellers, and that's essentially how I work."

WILDLIFE SPOTLIGHT



DID YOU KNOW?

A group of storks has many collective names, including "a clatter of storks," "a filth of storks," "a muster of storks," "a phalanx of storks," and a "swoop of storks."

Here, we showcase the best wildlife shots taken recently at the Refuge by photographers, volunteers, staff, interns, and others. Rebecca Clemens contributed this photo she called "Inspecting the Troops." A Great Egret appears to be keeping some Roseate Spoonbills and Wood Storks in line.

If you have a Refuge wildlife picture to share, please contact Sierra Hoisington at shois@dingdarlingsociety.org.

TARPON BAY EXPLORERS SCHEDULE

(tarponbayexplorers.com; call ahead to 239-472-8900 to confirm schedule and make reservations)

Tram Tours of Wildlife Drive*: April Mon-Thurs 10am - 4pm hourly, Sat-Sun 10am, 11:30am, 1 pm, 2:30pm, and 4pm; May and Jun Mon-Thurs 10am, 11:30am, 1pm, 2:30pm and 4pm; Sat-Sun 10am, 1pm, and 4pm

Kayak Trail Tour: April Mon-Thurs 8:30am, 10am, 11:30am, 1 pm; Sat-Sun 10 am, 1 pm; May and June daily 8:30am or 10 am, plus Mon-Fri 1pm

Sunset Rookery Paddle: April daily; May and June Mon, Wed, Fri and Sat or Sun. All 2 hours prior to sunset

Breakfast Cruise: Mon, Wed, Fri 8:30am

Standup Paddleboard Tour: April daily 9am, plus Tues, Thurs 2pm; May and June Tues, Thurs, Sat 9am

Nature and Sea Life Cruise: Daily at 11am and 1:30pm

Evening Cruise: Daily. All 2 hours prior to sunset

Aquarium & Touch Tank: Daily at 3pm

Rentals and fishing charters: Daily 8am-6pm



One Wildlife Drive
P.O. Box 565
Sanibel, FL 33957

Forwarding Service Requested

239-472-1100, ext. 233
dingdarlingsociety.org

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THEODORE CROSS CONTEST WINNER

Virginia Bayne from Fort Myers High School took first place in the seventh annual "Ding" Darling-Theodore Cross High School Photography Contest this spring with her "Lip Smacking Good" portrait of a deer. More than 120 students from 14 different schools in the five-county area participated. See page 3 for more.

COVID-19 PRECAUTIONS

DDWS and the Refuge are taking all necessary precautions to safeguard visitors, staff, and volunteers from COVID-19 while continuing to protect our wildlife. For up-to-date information on closings and cancellation, monitor dingdarlingsociety.org/articles/covid-19.