

PRESS RELEASE

For immediate release

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Caption: Erin Myers

‘Ding’ Darling hires deputy refuge manager

Erin Myers joined the staff at J.N. “Ding” Darling National Wildlife Refuge this month as the new deputy refuge manager. She comes to the refuge from a position as the private lands biologist for South Florida.

Myers served as a collaborative partner with a U.S. Fish & Wildlife (USFWS) program developing and implementing wildlife management plans, managing multi-agency restoration programs, and coordinating partnerships between government and non-governmental agencies and the public.

“Erin has demonstrated her leadership skills by actively engaging in some of Florida’s biggest conservation challenges,” said Kevin Godsea, acting refuge manager at “Ding” Darling. She is a founding member and past co-chair of the Florida Invasive Species Partnership, co-chair of the Southwest Florida Cooperative Invasive Species Management Area, past chair of The Wildlife Society Invasive Species Working Group, and past president of the Florida Chapter of the Wildlife Society.

After growing up in Texas, Myers studied to become a wildlife veterinarian at Texas A&M University. She went on to earn her master’s degree in wildlife pathology at Colorado State University in Fort Collins. Her career goals later took a different turn that landed her in Florida in 2001.

Myers took a position with the Florida Fish & Wildlife Conservation Commission, first working in North Florida. “I (a) fell in love with Florida, and (b) fell in love working with private landowners,” she says. She spent 2-1/2 years in that position and another 11 years in her previous job in South Florida before accepting the position at “Ding” Darling in early March this year.

“My first trip to Florida in 2001 was to Sanibel,” says Myers. “It was a whole other world that I fell in love with. My husband and I decided we wanted to be back in this specific location. It is a dream come true, really.”

Myers commutes from her home in Naples, where she lives with her husband Kevin, 15-year-old daughter Isabel, and 13-year-old son Logan. She looks forward to helping with upcoming USFWS studies on the Sanibel Island rice rat, an at-risk species that recently received federal funding for recovery research at the refuge's Botanical Site.

“Although everything is a bit chaotic with COVID-19, I'm trying to help keep refuge management moving forward and learn all I can about the refuge workings,” she said.

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 profits.

To support DDWS and the refuge with a tax-deductible gift, visit dingdarlingsociety.org or contact Birgie Miller at 239-472-1100 ext. 4 or director@dingdarlingsociety.org.

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