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"Ding" Darling Wildlife Society - Friends of the Refuge

PRESS RELEASE

For immediate release

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Caption: Avery Renshaw is assisting with all biology-related duties at the refuge.

Caption: Lindsey Voegele's position entails various administrative tasks throughout western Florida refuges.

'Ding' Darling hires two staffers

This month, two new federal employees clocked in at J.N. "Ding" Darling National Wildlife Refuge (NWR) on Sanibel Island. Avery Renshaw will fill the newly created refuge position of biological technician; Lindsey Voegele steps in as administrative payroll and travel technician for multiple Florida refuges.

Renshaw, who worked at "Ding" Darling from April 2019 to December 2020 as a biology intern, assisted senior refuge biologist Jeremy Conrad with his mangrove fertilization doctorate project, which included field data collection and sample processing.

"In her new position, she will be working with me on all things biological related," said Conrad. "This includes research, surveys, restoration, water quality, and planning." Hers is a four-year term position. Due to lack of hiring funds in the refuge budget, the "Ding" Darling Wildlife Society-Friends of the Refuge is partially supporting Renshaw's first-year salary.

"Thank you to 'Ding' Darling Wildlife Society for supporting my first year in this exciting new position," said Renshaw. "They are helping to make it possible for me to pursue my dream career!"

Originally from Mount Airy, Md., Renshaw previously interned with Mote Marine Lab's Coral Reef Ecological Processes Program in the Florida Keys. She graduated in 2018 with a bachelor's degree in environmental science and studies with a biology concentration from Towson University in Towson, Md.

"Through my internship, Sanibel Island and its natural ecosystems have become important and significant places to me, so when this job opportunity arose, I had to apply," said Renshaw. "I wanted to continue contributing to the refuge's mission to protect and preserve the island's wildlife and natural habitats. I'm especially looking forward to important restoration efforts at the newly acquired refuge habitat."

Voegele, who is currently working remotely from Oregon, will be arriving in March to make "Ding" Darling her home base for working with Crystal River NWR, Florida Keys NWR Complex, and Southwest Florida NWR Complex, which includes "Ding" Darling, Florida Panther, and Ten Thousand Islands refuges.

She will arrive in March to "Ding" Darling from the Bureau of Land Management in Coos Bay, Ore, where she worked as an administrative assistant. Voegele graduated from the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign in 2010 and has worked for other land management agencies including the National Park Service and U.S. Forest Service.

"I have lived in the Fort Myers area previously, and I am excited to enjoy sunshine, beaches, and the beautiful Florida coast once again," said Voegele. "I am looking forward to learning more about the refuge. It is always fun to discover the behind-the-scenes activities each refuge is working on."

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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What were the dates you worked in that capacity? I interned from April 2019-December 2020

Did you work on any special projects? I assisted Jeremy Conrad with his mangrove fertilization PhD project, which included a lot of field data collection and sample processing.

What are you most looking forward to in your new position? I am excited to build upon my mapping and data analysis skills in this position. I am also looking forward to taking on more responsibilities at the Refuge and helping with important restoration efforts.

What made you want to stay after your internship to take that job? Through my internship, Sanibel Island and its natural ecosystems have become important and significant places to me, so when this job opportunity arose I had to apply. I wanted to continue contributing to the Refuge's mission to protect and preserve the Island's wildlife and natural habitats.

Since the "Ding" Darling Wildlife Society is partially supporting your first year salary, maybe you'd like to add a thank-you for making that possible? Thank you to "Ding" Darling Wildlife Society for supporting my first year salary in this exciting new position. They are helping to make it possible for me to pursue my dream career!

How do you want your name to read?

Lindsey Voegele. Voegele is pronounced just like vaguely; like you can vaguely remember how to say Voegele.

Hometown?

I am from a very small town in northern Illinois.

Where did you come here from? Last job/internship/school?

I am coming from the Bureau of Land Management in Coos Bay, Oregon where I worked as an Administrative Assistant.

Where did you graduate from and when? Your field of studies? Other relevant school/job experience?

I am a graduate of University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign in 2010. My degree isn't related to my career necessarily, but I fell in love with public lands as a teenager and young adult. Eventually, I sought a

career with Land Management Agencies. I have worked for the National Park Service, US Forest Service, Bureau of Land Management, and now the US Fish & Wildlife Service.

You are a team employee: What refuges do you cover?

I will be working with Crystal River, Florida Keys Complex and Southwest Florida Refuge Complex (this includes Ding Darling and FL Panther).

What are your duties?

I will be working at a payroll & travel technician, processing and reviewing all payroll and travel reimbursements. Additionally, I will cover a variety of administrative tasks for the refuge.

You will be moving to the refuge RV area in March? Will "Ding" be your home base?

Ding Darling will be my home base. I will be living in the Sanibel/Fort Myers area. I have lived in the Fort Myers area previously, and I am excited to enjoy sunshine, beaches, and the beautiful Florida coast once again.

Did you want to mention anything about family?

No, nothing comes to mind.

What do you like best about Sanibel and the Refuge so far?

While I won't be working at Ding Darling for a bit (working remotely until I can move), I have visited Sanibel and the Refuge before. There is a lot to like about Sanibel with the beautiful beaches. I enjoy looking for seashells and walking in the sand. I am looking forward to learning more about the Refuge. It is always fun to discover the behind-the-scenes activities each Refuge is working on. I am looking forward to learning about all the different programs/projects at Ding Darling.

Any special projects/programs/duties you look forward to working on?

My main focus will be payroll and travel reimbursement. This allows me to get to know all employees and see the different types of work they are doing. Right now, I am most excited to get to know everyone and see what they do each day.

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