

PRESS RELEASE

For immediate release.

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Caption 30YEAR: Deputy Refuge Manager Joyce Palmer (left) and Supervisory Refuge Ranger Toni Westland congratulate Frank Fallert on his 30-Year Award.

Caption TABLES: 280 volunteers keep the refuge open seven days a week in spite of government budget shortfalls.

Refuge, DDWS honor volunteers

“Ding” Darling Refuge and “Ding” Darling Wildlife Society-Friends of the Refuge (DDWS) celebrated their annual Volunteer Awards Luncheon on Feb. 19, 2016, at the Sanibel Community House.

“Your help makes ‘Ding’ Darling National Wildlife Refuge successful and helps us earn the reputation for outstanding volunteerism and customer service nationwide,” Refuge Manager Paul Tritaik told the gathered volunteers. “Your dedication has made all the difference in our meeting our mission.”

The refuge reports that in fiscal year 2015, 280 volunteers worked 49,990 hours at the refuge, representing a labor savings of \$945,639 or almost 20 full-time staff members.

“Refuge staff has been slashed by more than 50 percent in recent years,” said Birgie Miller, DDWS executive director. “We would be facing cuts in visitor services and maintenance if not for our wonderful volunteers.”

DDWS formed in 1982 specifically to support a volunteer corps after the opening of the refuge’s first visitor center that year. More than 11,000 people visited in the first month after the center opened, overwhelming a staff unaccustomed to dealing with the inquisitive public.

“Volunteers stepped in then to fill in the gaps left by inadequate federal funding, and they continue to do so even more today,” said DDWS president and active volunteer Doris Hardy.

Below is a list of volunteers who won awards for reaching hour and year achievement levels.

YEARS AWARDS

30 years: Frank Fallert

20 years: Is Cloak, Ken Poulson

10 years: Doug Albert, Paul Albert, Barbara Broadhurst, Susan Cassell, Gary Dutton, Millicent Heeney, Toom Mehalic, Latham Morris, Bill Porter, Edith Rood, Ed Sessa, Elaine Swank, Bill Zack

HOURS AWARDS

8,000 hours: Marilyn Kloosterman

6,500 hours: Frank Fallert

6,000 hours: James Sprankle

5,500 hours: Judy Davis, Doris Hardy

5,000 hours: Doris Hardy, Ann Wollschlager

4,500 hours: Ed Combs

4,000 hours: Terry Baldwin

3,500 hours: Latham Morris, Jack Wettstein, Patty Wettstein

3,000 hours: Betsy Doonan, Miriam Hursey, Jack Wettstein, Patty Wettstein

2,500 hours: Susan Harpham, John McCabe, Ken Poulson, Richard Willis

2,000 hours: Patsy Dicken, Robert Dicken, Ben Klause, Mary Klause, Alan Parker, Linda Parker, Jeanne Tyrer

1,500 hours: Charles Dunham, Lynda Dunham, Glen Gresham, Phyllis Gresham, Ken Kopperl, Ginny Kopperl

1,000 hours: Doug Albert, Paula Albert, Sally Barsley, Carol Herr, John Herr, Peggy Hupfeldt, Marge Keller, Ken Kopperl, Ginny Kopperl, Fred Monick, Jim Newes, Arland Oleson, France Paulsen, Bill Porter

500 hours: Pat Appino, Joyce Barney, Kathy Boyd, Frances Holmes, Randy Holmes, Jim Jackson, Irene Raber, JoAnn Reece, Sally Stranahan, Carol Strange, Roger Tosch

250 hours: Mike Baldwin, Judy Barberi, Jim Bennight, Jan Cohen, Marion Evans, Michael Galloway, Frances Holmes, Randy Holmes, Barb Kennedy, Janet Lucree, Ilona Menzel, Nancy Riley, Nancy Sebree, Gerri Sylliaasen, Amanda Wilkinson

150 hour: Jim Bennight, Stan Bunsick, Carole Ecker, Mike Ecker, Michael Galloway, Louise Guertin, Tom Guertin, Frances Holmes, Randy Holmes, Krizan Zdenko, Alice Lavimoniere, Gary Lavimoniere, Janet Lucree, Kim Milling, Linda Naylor, Michael Rice, Marvin Richards, Gus Santos, Orlene Shimberg, Anne Suss, Cathy Swerdlick, Pat Taylor, Ray Vazquez, Tom Ware Wanda Werner, Amanda Wilkinson, David Wright

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 or contact Birgie Miller at 239-292-0566 or director@dingdarlingsociety.org.

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