

## PRESS RELEASE

For immediate release

Contact: Chelle Koster Walton

239-699-4754

[ChelleTrav@aol.com](mailto:ChelleTrav@aol.com)

Caption: DDWS president Doris Hardy signs papers with Refuge Manager Paul Tritaik, and Susan Trokey, senior realty specialist for the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service.

### **‘Ding’ Darling takes possession of additional acreage**

In December 2015, National Investment and Development Corporation of Miami, Fla., donated a parcel of environmentally sensitive land between Old Blind Pass and Clam Bayou on Sanibel Island to the “Ding” Darling Wildlife Society-Friends of the Refuge (DDWS). Last week, the friends group transferred ownership of the 6.92 acres, to the J.N. “Ding” Darling National Wildlife Refuge. The refuge will maintain stewardship of the wildlife habitat as part of its nearly 8,000-acre complex.

“Without the generosity of the “Ding” Darling Wildlife Society and their donors, this generous land donation would not be possible,” said Wildlife Refuge Manager Paul Tritaik. “It is an important habitat for gopher tortoises and many of our coastal species.”

DDWS is also in the process of raising funds to purchase 8.15 acres on Sanibel Island’s Wulfert Road as a crucial wildlife corridor for the “Ding” Darling Refuge. If not preserved by the refuge, the land could be developed with as many as five dwellings and one major boat dock with direct access into Pine Island Sound, as already approved by the City of Sanibel. Construction of new homes and the increase in boat traffic would have significant impact on the habitat of 80 different land and marine species that live or feed on or near this property.

Anyone interested in making donations to or learning about the land acquisition campaign for “Ding” Darling should contact DDWS executive director Birgie Miller at 239-292-0566 or by email at [director@dingdarlingsociety.org](mailto:director@dingdarlingsociety.org).

### 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 [dingdarlingsociety.org](http://dingdarlingsociety.org) or contact Birgie Miller at 239-292-0566 or [director@dingdarlingsociety.org](mailto:director@dingdarlingsociety.org).

###