

PRESS RELEASE

For immediate release
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Caption: Refuge STAR teacher Sara Hallas

‘Ding’ STAR teacher helps with environmental education

Thanks to a grant from the LAT Foundation to “Ding” Darling Wildlife Society-Friends of the Refuge (DDWS), J.N. “Ding” Darling National Wildlife Refuge has hired a Summer Teachers Assisting Refuges (STAR) teacher for two months to help with summer family programs and other environmental education activities.

This year’s STAR, Sara Hallas, is an environmental science teacher for the Lee County School District, a position she took in fall 2016. Prior to that she taught second grade at River Hall Elementary in Alva.

“My office is in the Lee County Public Education Center in Fort Myers,” said Hallas.

“My other office is in the Southwest Florida estuaries. This is where the fun, hands-on, engaging learning takes place. I teach students from different schools around the district about estuaries and why their preservation is so vital.”

Her teaching experience makes her an ideal candidate for assisting with the refuge’s hands-on summer family programs.

“I love being outdoors and educating students about wildlife and their habitats, sharing the passion and love for all of the organisms that make that wonderful habitat so amazing and unique,” said Hallas. “I feel honored to have this opportunity to be a part of this community, learning and sharing that knowledge with all that visit.”

“We are really grateful for this grant that will allow Sara to fill in one of the employment

gaps left by recent government budget cuts and hiring freezes for the summer,” said Supervisory Refuge Ranger Toni Westland. “We welcome her experience and enthusiasm to the ‘Ding’ team.

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 or contact Birgie Miller at 239-292-0566, 239-472-1100 ext. 4, or director@dingdarlingsociety.org.

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