

PRESS RELEASE

For immediate release

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Caption: Bagzilla makes an appearance on National Public Lands Day to educate about damage to wildlife caused by one-use plastic bags.

Free Wildlife Drive admission celebrates National Public Lands Day at the Refuge

J.N. “Ding” Darling National Wildlife Refuge on Sanibel Island will celebrate National Public Lands Day on Saturday, Sept. 30, 2017, on Sanibel Island with free admission to Wildlife Drive, special activities, and issuance of a free pass to any national public land, including the more than 560 wildlife refuges across the U.S.

Wildlife Drive opens at 7 a.m. for free touring and closes at 7 p.m. The free “Ding” Darling Visitor & Education Center opens at 9 a.m. In the Refuge Nature Store, the “Ding” Darling Wildlife Society-Friends of the Refuge (DDWS) is giving away a free Kick the Bottle reusable water container with a purchase of \$5 or more, upon request. This year’s National Public Lands Day celebrates the sixth anniversary of the Kick the Bottle campaign to rid the refuge of the disposable plastic bottles that are a scourge to the environment.

Special free activities take place at the refuge from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.:

10-11 a.m. **Beach Walk** – Meet at Gulfside City Park for a guided, hands-on tour of the beach life at Perry Tract. City parking fees apply. Wear a hat and swimsuit, and bring sunscreen, and water.

1-2 p.m. **Crafts & Bagzilla** – Meet in the Refuge Visitor & Education Center to participate in the Marine Debris Decomposition Timeline game and make recycled wildlife crafts to take home. Meet Bagzilla, the “monster” costumed in 500 plastic bags – the typical annual consumption of one person.

2-3 p.m. **Addicted to Plastic Film Showing** – The award-winning, 53-minute film takes a global journey to investigate what we really know about the material of a thousand uses and why there's so darn much of it. On the way viewers discover a toxic legacy and the men and women dedicated to cleaning it up.

National Public Lands Day is presented with support from DDWS. For more information about the event, contact Ranger Monica Scroggin at 239-472-1100 ext. ???.

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

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