

PRESS RELEASE

For immediate release

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Caption: Emily Schwartz

Refuge welcomes summer education intern

Education intern Emily Schwartz arrived on June 5 to help the J.N. “Ding” Darling National Wildlife Refuge on Sanibel Island with staffing shortages this summer, thanks to funding from the “Ding” Darling Wildlife Society-Friends of the Refuge (DDWS).

Schwartz, a rising sophomore at Colgate University in Hamilton, N.Y., is an environmental studies major exploring a minor in fields such as political science, geology, and psychology.

“I have been coming to Sanibel since I was little and I have always admired the sense of community,” said the Fort Myers native. “This island cares about the environment and takes real steps to conserve it for decades to come.”

Her first week on the job, Schwartz helped set up World Oceans Day at the refuge on June 8. She will be assisting Conservation Educator Sara Hallas and Supervisory Refuge Ranger Toni Westland with visiting summer camp groups and visitor services.

“I absolutely love the atmosphere that the refuge has,” said Schwartz. “People who come to ‘Ding’ have an interest in learning, and that is crucial for the future of our environment. I also want to say that I have been here for only a short time so far, and the people I work with are amazing. They make this opportunity better than I could have imagined and welcomed me into their world. I have already learned so much.”

DDWS provides living stipends and other benefits for about a dozen interns each year. The refuge supports interns and resident volunteers with free housing.

“Our interns bring youthful energy, enthusiasm, and creativity to the refuge team,” said supervisory refuge ranger Toni Westland. “At the same time, the program gives students and recent graduates an opportunity to learn hands-on about the environment and refuge operations.”

For more information about the refuge’s internship programs, contact Westland at 239-472-1100 ext. 237. To learn about supporting the refuge intern program, contact Sarah Lathrop, DDWS associate director, at 239-472-1100 ext. 4.

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 239-472-1100 ext. 4 or director@dingdarlingsociety.org.

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