

## PRESS RELEASE

For immediate release

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Caption: Ranger Toni Westland with Wildlife Refuge Manager Paul Tritaik

### **Ranger Westland receives 20-year award**

On June 19, J.N. “Ding” Darling National Wildlife Refuge manager at Paul Tritaik presented Toni Westland, supervisory refuge ranger at the refuge, with her 20-year award for service to the U.S. government.

Westland joined the staff of “Ding” Darling in 2002 as environmental education specialist. She transferred to the refuge from a position as environmental educator for the Corps of Engineers at the Lake Okeechobee Waterway, which she began in 1998 as a graduate of the University of Wisconsin Stevens Point with a major in natural resource management, emphasis on environmental education.

In 2009, “Ding” Darling promoted Westland to her current position. She remains intrinsically involved in environmental education through her work overseeing visitor services at the refuge.

Westland has received many awards along the way, including a U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service Regional Director’s Award for her curriculum design and proactive approach to resolving student transportation problems to the refuge. With the help of “Ding” Darling Wildlife Society and contributions, she arranged private busing for thousands of kids each year, a private-public partnership program that continues to this day.

Earlier this year, Westland accepted the Florida chapter of The Wildlife Society’s (FLTWS) 2018 Outstanding Educator Award.

“Toni has demonstrated exemplary service to her country in the past 20 years,” said Tritaik. “Her contributions to ‘Ding’ Darling have been immeasurable. It has been an honor to serve with her and present her this milestone award.”

#### 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 239-472-1100 ext. 4 or [director@dingdarlingsociety.org](mailto:director@dingdarlingsociety.org).

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