

PRESS RELEASE

For immediate release

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Caption: Elizabeth Preciado plans to intern at the refuge into this summer.

Refuge welcomes visitor services intern

Visitor services intern Elizabeth Preciado arrived recently to help the J.N. “Ding” Darling National Wildlife Refuge on Sanibel Island with staffing shortages this year, thanks to funding from the “Ding” Darling Wildlife Society-Friends of the Refuge (DDWS).

Preciado, a senior at the California State University of Sacramento, will graduate in May degreed in recreational parks tourism with a concentration in management and certifications in natural resources and outdoor experience.

She will be assisting supervisory refuge ranger Toni Westland in overseeing programs and amenities for the more than one million annual visitors to the refuge. Preciado looks forward to learning more about daily operations, managing the Visitor & Education Center, special fundraisers, and educational programs that help visitors to understand and support the refuge's mission, she said.

“What I love about Sanibel so far is the environment,” added the Whittier, Cal., native. “I am not only amazed by its wildlife here on the refuge but, by the community. Everyone at the refuge has been so welcoming and kind. It’s great to be welcomed and feel like I have a second family here.”

“We embrace Elizabeth’s energy and enthusiasm as a positive addition to the team,” said Westland. “We thank our friends group for making her internship possible. With our shrinking staff, due to federal budget cuts and the current shutdown, it’s crucial for this sort of partnership to keep the refuge running.”

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 Birgie Miller, DDWS executive 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 profits.

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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