

## Advocacy Through Education

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The “Ding” Darling Wildlife Society (DDWS) is committed to do all it can to prevent the kind of ecological attack that the Refuge experienced last summer and fall. Our primary weapon in this fight is advocacy through education.

Advocacy is critical to defending the Refuge because it allows us to reach out to the relevant decision-makers and those who influence the decision-makers and encourage them to take steps that will protect the health of the Refuge. A good example of the advocacy we do is the recent DOTW article that asked our members to write to the Army Corps and request that it consider the health of the Refuge as it goes through the process of determining a new release schedule for Lake Okeechobee.

The issues that impact water quality are complex and dynamic. As a result, we strongly believe that our members will be more effective advocates for the health of the Refuge if they have an up-to-date understanding of the issues. Armed with this education, our members can make an informed decision about whether or not to participate in one of our *calls to action*, such as our recent request to have members write to the Army Corps.

To achieve our goal of advocacy through education, we have created an [advocacy resources web page](#) to update our readers on the relevant issues and to more effectively reach out to them when we need their help. The new resources page has two components. One component, the sidebar on the right, archives previously published “Ding” on the Wing articles that are still pertinent, such as the 2018 article that discussed the relationship between blue green algae and red tide.

The other component has references from a variety of sources as well, including SCCF, the City of Sanibel, and the University of Florida. We have grouped these references into several categories including Current Water Conditions and Water Storage and Quality Issues. Included in the references are links to the current condition of the Caloosahatchee River and a video that shows the construction of the C-43 reservoir. One link points to information about the 2019 Florida legislative session.

Due to the dynamic nature of the challenges facing the Refuge, we will continually update the advocacy resources page. We encourage you to visit often.

**In case you missed it:** The Florida House and Senate released [competing budget proposals](#).