

PRESS RELEASE

For immediate release

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Caption: Kevin Godsea

Caption: Bob Gerwig

‘Ding’ Darling welcomes back two familiar faces

Last week, the J.N. “Ding” Darling National Wildlife Refuge welcomed the return of two staff members from the past. Former lead refuge ranger Kevin Godsea has stepped in for a 60-day detail as acting refuge manager; and Bob Gerwig, who served as lead for the refuge’s 2009 summer Youth Conservation Corp program, has been hired as refuge wildlife specialist.

“It is an honor to come back to ‘Ding’ Darling and help a place that meant so much to me in the early part of my career,” said Godsea. “Having been away for 11 years, much as changed, but it is refreshing to see some familiar faces that have continued to volunteer at the refuge and serve the ‘Ding’ Darling Wildlife Society.”

Godsea, who served at “Ding” Darling from 2000 to 2008, is filling in for Refuge Manager Paul Tritaik, who is serving on special detail duty at the refuge system’s regional office in Atlanta, Ga. Since leaving “Ding,” Godsea has filled the position of refuge manager at Cape Romain National Wildlife Refuge near Charleston, S.C., and currently at Florida Panther National Wildlife Refuge Complex in southern Florida.

Gerwig, following his temporary stint at “Ding,” worked full-time for the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service for 10 years at the Winthrop National Fish Hatchery in Washington State, rising to the position of assistant manager. Most recently, he spent a year working in the Army Corps of Engineers’ Fort Myers office.

A graduate in biology from Southern Illinois University in Carbondale, Gerwig will be assisting the refuge’s biology, maintenance, and administrative teams full-time for a four-year term.

"This is coming full circle," said Gerwig, who became a fan of the refuge as a child in the 1970s while visiting family from his home in Chicago. "The refuge is exactly what made me want to go into the field."

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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