

PRESS RELEASE

For immediate release
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Caption: Intern Tucker Phillips will assist with refuge visitor services.

‘Ding’ welcomes visitor services intern

Tucker Phillips recently joined the team at J.N. “Ding” Darling National Wildlife Refuge on Sanibel Island as a Jim & Liz Birmingham 2022 Visitor Services Intern, working fulltime with supervisory refuge ranger Toni Westland through the 2021-2022 season.

Phillips arrived from his hometown Herndon, Va. He graduated from George Mason University in Fairfax, Va., where he majored in environmental science with a concentration in conservation.

“My favorite part about Sanibel is definitely the weather, and my favorite thing about the refuge is how important the work we do here is,” said Phillips. “I’m really looking forward to meeting all the people who come to visit and helping to show them why the refuge matters, as well as getting a little more involved with the wildlife.”

The “Ding” Darling Wildlife Society-Friends of the Refuge (DDWS) provides living stipends and other benefits for about a dozen interns each year. The refuge supports interns with free housing. For more information about the refuge’s internship programs, contact Westland at 239-472-1100 ext. 237.

“We welcome our new interns’ energy and enthusiasm,” said Westland. “We thank our friends group for making their internships possible. With our shrinking staff, due to federal budget cuts, this sort of partnership is crucial to keep the refuge running.”

The Birmingham, of Sanibel Island and Colorado, donate in support of an annual refuge internship. They have been coming to Sanibel for many years and believe in the importance of supporting the communities where they live, especially when it comes to giving the younger generation an appreciation for conservation.

DDWS currently stewards two named internships for the 2021-2022 year and is accepting

donations for three future named intern funds at \$12,500 a year, which is the cost for supporting one intern including stipends, travel, tolls, Sanibel Rec Center membership, and other expenses. For information about supporting refuge internship programs, contact Lynnae Messina, DDWS associate director, at 239-472-1100 ext. 233.

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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