



# Protect. Educate. Inspire.

"Ding" Darling Wildlife Society - Friends of the Refuge

## PRESS RELEASE

For immediate release

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Caption: These trash-refashioned creations won prizes in the 2019 competition.

### **Tickets available for 'Ding' Darling Project Refuge upcycle fashion show luncheon**

In 2019, the "Ding" Darling Wildlife Society-Friends of the Refuge (DDWS) introduced Project Refuge: A Couture Fashion Show Using Trash as part of its celebration of the 75th anniversary and in support of the J.N. "Ding" Darling National Wildlife Refuge on Sanibel Island. This year, on March 31, it brings back the runway competition and luncheon for DDWS' 40th anniversary.

"It was such a huge success in raising not only refuge support, but also awareness about recycling and the threat of trash to our wildlife," said Birgie Miller, DDWS executive director. "The fashion ensembles created from repurposed materials were out of this world!"

A limited number of tickets for the luncheon, to be held at The Community House at 2173 Periwinkle Way on Sanibel Island, have gone on sale at [tinyurl.com/PRtickets](http://tinyurl.com/PRtickets). The tickets are \$150 each and available only by advance purchase online. The event takes place from 11:30 a.m. to 2 p.m. and includes emcee fashion commentary by artist Rachel Pierce and a contest judging, along with lunch.

“We have 20 design teams registered to participate in the show,” said DDWS development officer April Boehnen, event organizer. “Expect creations fashioned out of everything from plastic bags to disposable face masks on the ‘trashion’ runway.”

“All profits will directly benefit the refuge’s education and water-quality research programs,” said Miller. “It’s a fun and entertaining way to make a difference while enjoying lunch with friends and like-minded conservationists. A special thanks to Project Refuge Committee chair Toni Ortweiler for helping lead this event.”

Sponsors for the 2022 Project Refuge include: **Call of the Wild Sponsors:** WLM, Bill & Laurie Harkey; **Champion Sponsors:** The Bluedorn Family, Doug & Sherry Gentry; **Guardian Sponsors:** Jim & Liz Birmingham, Wayne & Linda Boyd, Doc Ford’s Rum Bar & Grille, Boomer Duvin & Family, Lee County Solid Waste; John & Kathy McCabe, John & Beth Newland, Greg & Linda Scherer, Bill & Diane Valerian; **Protector Sponsors:** Green Is Good, Mitchell’s Sand Castles; **Defender Sponsors:** Ashton Kirchner Group, HighTower Advisors, R.S. Walsh Landscaping.

Visit [dingdarlingsociety.or/articles/project-refuge](http://dingdarlingsociety.or/articles/project-refuge) for more information. Contact Boehnen at 239-472-1100 ext. 4 for information about sponsoring or volunteering for the event.

#### 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](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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