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"Ding" Darling Wildlife Society - Friends of the Refuge

PRESS RELEASE

For immediate release

Contact: Chelle Koster Walton
239-699-4754

ChelleKWalton@gmail.com

Caption: Join a Nature-Sketching tour on Earth Day.

Caption: Make like an osprey and catch fish at "Ding" Darling Day's Wildlife Olympics.

Refuge celebrates Earth Day over weekend

This year, J.N. "Ding" Darling National Wildlife Refuge celebrates the 52nd annual Earth Day on two separate events over the weekend. On Friday, April 22, it hosts special family activities throughout the day at the Refuge Visitor & Education Center on Sanibel Island. Two days later, as part of its "Ding" Darling Day Conservation Carnival, it again honors the occasion on Sunday, April 24, at Lakes Park in Fort Myers.

Friday's free activities begin at 9 a.m. with a ranger-led hike on Indigo Trail, followed by two nature-sketching walks to the Wildlife Education Boardwalk with local artist Vince Thomalla. Free sketch books are included. See the schedule below and pre-register for tours, which are limited to 10 participants each, at DingDarling.Eventbrite.com.

Throughout the day, from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m., visitors can earn a free spoonbill key tag by completing the Earth Day Scavenger Hunt, and create a make-and-take jellyfish craft from a recycled plastic bottle. Admission to Indigo Trail will be free from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. (Wildlife Drive is closed on Fridays.)

On Sunday, the refuge and “Ding” Darling Wildlife Society-Friends of the Refuge (DDWS) have planned a full day of Conservation Carnival and nature activities from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. at Lakes Park.

More than 20 local conservation non-profits will be participating to engage visitors with information and carnival games where they can earn prizes. Game-players can earn a free treat from Southern SnoBalls, plus other gifts and prizes. The refuge hosts a Dunk Tank, where festival-goers can try their luck at sinking surprise “celebrity dunkees.”

Other activities that day will include Earth Day crafts, Wildlife Olympics, tours of the WoW (Wildlife on Wheels) mobile nature experience, bilingual birding walks, biking, and artists in residence plein-air demos. All activities are free, but Lakes Park charges a \$1 per hour, \$5 per day parking fee. For a full calendar of activities that day, visit dingdarlingday.com.

Friday, April 22, activities:

7 a.m.-7 p.m. – Free admission to Indigo Trail. (Wildlife Drive is closed on Fridays.)

9-10 a.m. – Ranger-led hike on Indigo Trail

10-11 a.m. – Nature-sketching tour to the Wildlife Education Boardwalk

1-2 p.m. – Nature-sketching tour to the Wildlife Education Boardwalk

Ongoing 10 a.m.-2 p.m.

- Earth Day Scavenger Hunt – earn a spoonbill key tag
- Earth Day Craft on the Visitor & Education Center balcony

For more information on Earth Day at the refuge, call 239-472-1100 ext. 237 or visit dingdarlingsociety.org/articles/events.

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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