



For Release March 3, 2008

Contact: Susan Cassell - DDWS  
239-472-1100, x233  
Evan Hirsche - NWRA  
202-333-9075

## **“Ding” Darling Wildlife Society Donation Supports NWRA/Refuge System**

**Washington, D.C./ Sanibel, FL** – The National Wildlife Refuge Association (NWRA) is pleased to announce that the “Ding” Darling Wildlife Society (DDWS) is donating \$15,000 in support of NWRA’s advocacy on behalf of the National Wildlife Refuge System. ““Ding” Darling Wildlife Society views this and past donations as an investment in both our refuge and the Refuge System,” said Susan Cassell, President of the Society. “The J.N. ‘Ding’ Darling refuge is linked to the other 547 national wildlife refuges through statute and migration; it’s critical we work with and support our national partner.”

Funds provided by DDWS will help to underwrite the NWRA’s work in Washington as it seeks to increase federal funding for the Refuge System. The 100-million-acre Refuge System faces a crisis, with more than \$3.5 billion worth of unmet wildlife stewardship and public outreach needs. The current annual budget to manage an acre in the federal system is only 4 dollars and 34 cents. Lack of funds means refuges are unable to meet their wildlife conservation goals, and fail to consistently educate diverse local communities about the conservation and quality of life values they provide.

“Support from the “Ding” Darling Wildlife Society will make a difference for us as we educate decision-makers about the importance of refuges to wildlife and local economies,” said Evan Hirsche, President of the NWRA. “By working together nationally and locally, refuge Friends and the NWRA are creating a brighter future for our national wildlife refuges.”

In early April, the NWRA will join with the “Ding” Darling Wildlife Society and 77 other volunteer Friends groups on Capitol Hill to send a powerful message to Congress and the Administration that refuges ought to be a priority in the FY09 Federal Budget.

*“Ding” Darling Wildlife Society is a non-profit Friends of the Refuge organization that supports education, visitor services and wildlife conservation at the J.N “Ding” Darling National Wildlife Refuge. Visit: [www.dingdarlingsociety.org](http://www.dingdarlingsociety.org)*

*The mission of the National Wildlife Refuge Association is to protect, enhance and expand the National Wildlife Refuge System, lands and waters set aside by the American people to conserve our diverse wildlife heritage. Visit [www.refugeassociation.org](http://www.refugeassociation.org).*

###