

# News Release



J.N. “Ding” Darling National Wildlife Refuge  
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:  
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J.N “Ding” Darling National Wildlife Refuge is holding a public meeting on three upcoming projects.

The J. N. “Ding” Darling National Wildlife Refuge will be holding a public meeting about 3 separate topics inside the “Ding” Darling Visitor & Education Center on **Wednesday, February 28 at 1:00pm.**

1. Planned routine prescribed burns on Sanibel Island. Plans for prescribed burns on conservation lands will be discussed with fire professionals from the Refuge, Sanibel-Captiva Conservation Foundation (SCCF) the City of Sanibel and the Sanibel Fire Rescue District.
2. Hydrological restoration at the Bailey Tract. Plans for this project involve partially filling the Ani Pond, reconnecting wetland habitat and other hydrological enhancements for the benefit of endemic, State-threatened Sanibel Island rice rat, secretive marsh birds, and other species dependent on Spartina marsh habitats.
3. Posting of a State-mandated wildlife buffer zone around the rookery islands in Tarpon Bay to protect colonial nesting birds. The Tarpon Bay Keys are managed through a lease agreement with the State of Florida, which mandates establishment of a buffer around the rookery islands in the middle of the bay. The refuge intends to post the wildlife buffer zone of 25 yards to comply with the terms of this agreement.

The meeting will begin with a presentation about all three topics, and will be followed by the opportunities for the public to provide comments on each of them.

Come learn about how we will help conserve the natural ecology of the area through prescribed fire, while reducing the likelihood of catastrophic wildfires, restoring native marshes and safeguarding rookery islands. The purpose of these meetings will be to gather public input to help inform management decisions to better serve the mission of the wildlife conservation and the interest of the community.

For any questions, please contact wildlife refuge manager Paul Tritaik at 239-472-1100 ext 223.

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