

VISION FOR J.N. “DING” DARLING NWR

The J.N. “Ding” Darling National Wildlife Refuge is an interwoven system where salt water meets fresh, where shorelines disappear within the tangle of mangrove roots, where coastal and freshwater marshes meet tropical hardwood hammocks, and where submerged aquatic vegetation thrives. These diverse habitats will be managed, conserved, and protected to support a wide array of native birds, fish, mammals, and other wildlife. Visitors will be able to hear songbirds whistling in the hammocks, watch wading birds blanketing the tidal flats during a feeding frenzy, or find solitude in the backwaters of the Wilderness Area.

The refuge will continue to serve as a gateway to the National Wildlife Refuge System, providing educational awareness of this national network of lands and waters to thousands of visitors annually. As a memorial to Jay Norwood “Ding” Darling, the refuge will continue his legacy where environmental education and conservation through art continue in earnest and reflect the grass roots environmental efforts that established the refuge. The refuge will be utilized as a world class living laboratory to foster excellence in biological and ecological research and to enable integrated and adaptive management. The refuge will continue to be a premier example of building partnerships to accomplish the greatest of goals.

VISION FOR PINE ISLAND, MATLACHA PASS, ISLAND BAY, AND CALOOSAHATCHEE NWRS

Existing in an increasingly developed landscape, the refuges of Pine Island, Matlacha Pass, Island Bay, and Caloosahatchee will continue to provide sanctuary to a variety of migratory birds, nesting birds, and other wildlife. Visitors to the area will always be treated to vistas of undeveloped, protected coastal islands, berms, and waterways; tidal swamps; and sand flats, teeming with fish, birds, manatees, and dolphins. Despite high waterway recreational activities adjacent to these island, mangrove, and beach habitats, human impacts to these important resources will be minimized. Fulfilling their establishing purposes as preserves and breeding grounds for native birds, these island refuges will serve as shining examples of partnerships and intergovernmental coordination to manage the important resources of the larger landscape.