

News Release



J.N. "Ding" Darling National Wildlife Refuge
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Refuges Begin Comprehensive Planning: What are your ideas for future management of the Ding Darling refuge?

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is pleased to announce the initiation of the Comprehensive Conservation Plan (CCP) process for J.N. "Ding" Darling National Wildlife Refuge (NWR) Complex located in Sanibel, Florida. In addition to the J.N. "Ding" Darling NWR, the Complex includes the Caloosahatchee NWR, Matlacha Pass NWR, Pine Island NWR, and Island Bay NWR. The purpose of this planning effort is to develop CCPs that will provide these refuges with 15-year management plans for the conservation of fish, wildlife, and plant resources and their related habitats, while also providing opportunities for appropriate and compatible wildlife dependant recreation. The planning process for these CCPs involves several stages: preplanning, conducting public scoping, developing alternatives and a draft CCP, inviting public review and comment, developing and adopting a final CCP, reviewing and monitoring implementation of the CCP, and revising the CCP within 15 years. The Service intends to conduct initial public scoping for the J.N. Ding Darling NWR Complex in April 2008. Public scoping meetings are scheduled as listed.

April 8, 2008	5-9pm	Sanibel School
April 9, 2008	6-9pm	Cypress Lake Middle School, Ft. Myers
April 10, 2008	6-9pm	Pine Island Elementary School

Developing a CCP is considered a federal action which, pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), requires an environmental evaluation. NEPA requires an open process for determining the extent and variety of issues to be addressed (scoping) in the proposed action. In addition to the listed public scoping meetings, the Service is working with Native American Tribes and intergovernmental partners to develop a list of the full range of issues, concerns, and ideas for future management of these refuges. The purpose of these meetings will be to begin development of a list of issues and concerns regarding future management of the refuges that will deal with all phases of refuge management and management constraints. Receiving input from the public is invaluable for developing these plans and provides managers feedback on conservation issues that affect our community.

The Refuge has created a web page to keep you informed of the process, which includes a form to sign up for the mailing list and provides information on how to submit public comments (e.g., by attending a public scoping meeting and by mailing, emailing, faxing, or dropping off written comments). Please visit www.fws.gov/dingdarling for more conservation planning information and for updates throughout the planning process. We look forward to hearing from you and we appreciate your involvement in planning the future of these refuges.

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