

PRESS RELEASE



For immediate release

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Caption: Actor Joe Wiegand takes on the persona of President Theodore “Teddy” Roosevelt for his lively and entertaining presentations.

Save March 6 for ‘Ding’ Darling annual fundraiser

Go Wild for “Ding” has taken many shapes through the years as the major fundraiser for the “Ding” Darling Wildlife Society-Friends of the Refuge (DDWS). To meet the challenges of the islands’ hurricane recovery status, this year’s event evolves to take place on March 6 as Go Bully for “Ding” – An Evening with Teddy Roosevelt, riffing off one of the president’s favorite expressions.

The venue, too, has changed. The event will run from 5:30 to 8:30 p.m. at Broadway Palm in Fort Myers. In consideration of the hardships many island residents and business owners have suffered since the hurricane in September, DDWS has lowered the price of reservations to \$75 per person this year.

The mission, however, remains the same: All profits will support the J.N. “Ding” Darling National Wildlife Refuge on Sanibel Island, this year specifically its hurricane recovery efforts.

The evening’s entertainment features popular refuge personality and Teddy Roosevelt reprobator Joe Wiegand. He has been bringing President Roosevelt to life for more than a decade and has performed in all 50 states and overseas, including a White House performance in honor of Roosevelt’s 150th birthday in 2008. He has made numerous appearances at “Ding” Darling, one of his favorite venues.

Formerly a veteran political consultant and elected public servant in his native Illinois, Wiegand is a political science graduate of the University of the South – Sewanee in Sewanee, Tenn.; a former graduate assistant at Northern Illinois University’s Center for Governmental Studies; and a Harry S. Truman Scholar and Thomas Watson, Jr., Fellow.



The evening will include his entertaining performance and audience interactions, dinner, drinks, and a live auction. A limited number of reservations, available on a first-come basis, will go live starting Wednesday, January 11, at 8 a.m.

“We hope that, despite the trials of the past months, our friends will be able to join us for this delightful evening aimed to bring the refuge back to its post-hurricane glory as a wildlife haven and sanctuary for the soul,” said Birgie Miller, DDWS executive director. “The refuge needs your help more than ever right now. We are also accepting sponsorships for the event to further benefit ‘Ding’ Darling.”

For information on sponsorship, contact April Boehnen at aprilb@dingdarlingsociety.org or 440-452-9083. Visit gowildfording.com to learn more about the event, making reservations, and sponsoring Go Bully for “Ding.”

Sponsors who have already offered their support for this year’s event include: **Call of the Wild:** Gretchen Banks, Jim & Liz Birmingham, The Bluedorn Family, Jim & Patty Sprankle; **Champion:** Bill & Laurie Harkey, Jo Smith; **Guardian:** Milestone Auctions, Bill & Heather O’Keefe; **Protector:** Mike & Terry Baldwin; **Defender:** A Friend of the Refuge, HighTower Advisors – Fort Myers, Chip & Nancy Roach, Hank & Linda Spire.

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 239-292-0566 or director@dingdarlingsociety.org.

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