

NWF President Interviewed For Documentary

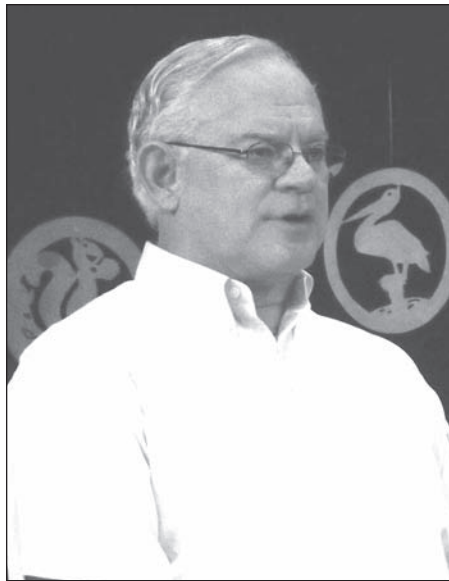
By Jeff Lysiak

It isn't every day that the head of the National Wildlife Federation comes to Sanibel, so it's a good thing that Sam Koltinsky and his crew of filmmakers were on the island to preserve the historic visit for others to see in the near future.

Last month, Koltinsky and his team from Marvo Entertainment Group, LLC interviewed Larry Schweiger, president and chief executive officer of the National Wildlife Federation, for the documentary film *America's Darling*. The 60-minute film, scheduled to be released this fall – just in time for the “Ding” Darling Days celebration at the JN “Ding” Darling National Wildlife Refuge – shares the life story of Jay Norwood Darling, the legendary conservationist, political cartoonist and part-time resident of Captiva.

After years of extensive travel and research, conducting interviews and scouring through archived treasures and special collections, Koltinsky has currently headquartered his production of the film here in Southwest Florida and was happy to have Schweiger become a part of the documentary.

“I was introduced to Larry through Kip Koss, Darling's grandson,” explained Koltinsky. “Last year, I made a trip to



Larry Schweiger responds to a question the National Wildlife Federation headquarters and met Larry as well as some of his team there. I was greeted when I walked into the door with Darling's work. Larry and I connected right away. It was my hope to have the interview here on Sanibel and I am fortunate that it worked with his schedule.”

Schweiger served for eight years as president and CEO of the Western Pennsylvania Conservancy, where he pioneered watershed restoration and promoted ecological research, land conservation and community outreach. Prior to that, he was the executive secretary of the Joint House/Senate Conservation



Moments before his interview, Larry Schweiger receives a touch-up from production assistant Brigitte Koltinsky. At right is executive producer Sam Koltinsky

Committee for the Pennsylvania General Assembly, senior vice president for Conservation Programs at National Wildlife Federation, and first vice president of the Chesapeake Bay Foundation.

Two weeks ago, Koltinsky sat down with Schweiger for about an hour – on the stage at BIG ARTS' Schein Performance Hall – and asked him several questions about the connection between Darling and the National Wildlife Federation (NWF), how his efforts more than half a century ago are still impacting the environmental movement of today and the importance of educating future generations about how to better preserve wildlife.

“Ding' Darling was a man who grew up hunting, fishing and spending a lot of time outdoors,” said Schweiger. “He was, at heart, someone who loved nature. It permeated his entire life and he understood what a magnificent gift nature was.”

According to Schweiger, Darling founded the NWF when President Franklin D. Roosevelt convened the inaugural National Wildlife Conference in 1936.

“Clearly, he understood the need to have a wildlife organization,” Schweiger continued. “Above all else, ‘Ding’ Darling was a visionary. He saw what was ahead for wildlife and he saw what was ahead for humanity and he became such an inspirational and powerful voice.”

Koltinsky stated that excerpts from Schweiger's interview will be posted on the production company's website (www.marvoentertainmentgroup.com) sometime in the coming weeks, adding, “I think that Darling would be pleased to see what his legacy is doing through the NWF.”

They will be conducting additional interviews and filming more footage of people linked to Darling's family and conservation legacy here on Sanibel and Captiva.

“We have a host of people that we are scheduling over the next four months while in production,” said Koltinsky. “We plan to go into post production in late summer and have the one-hour project ready for ‘Ding’ Darling Days.”

Among the people scheduled to be interviewed for *America's Darling* are

Douglas Brinkley, professor of history at Rice University; Dr. Mark Madison, historian with the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service; John McCabe, president of the “Ding” Darling Wildlife Society; refuge staff members Paul Tritaik and Toni Westland; Kristie Anders, director of education with the Sanibel-Captiva Conservation Foundation; and Calina Carstens, second place winner from last year's Conservation Cartoon Contest.

“Ding” Darling Days 2012 will be celebrated October 14 to 20 at the JN “Ding” Darling National Wildlife Refuge on Sanibel. ❄️

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