

## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

### **NEWS RELEASE: Setting of the Dam Gate Ceremony at Lake Darling State Park, February 12, 2014**

The Iowa DNR Staff and the Friends of Lake Darling State Park are pleased to announce the formal Gate Setting ceremony at Lake Darling State Park on Wednesday February 12, 2014. The dam gate will be closed at this time to impound Honey Creek waters and to begin the Lake filling process after long efforts of building a new dam, lake restoration, beach and campground renewals. Although reopening and rededication of Lake Darling State Park lay ahead after warm weather allows for completion of road and trail work, this event will be both historic and a turning point in the renewal of a beloved State Park named for one of our nation's greatest conservationist and Pulitzer Prize winning cartoonist, Jay N. "Ding" Darling. The February dam closure will permit the Park Fisheries Staff to properly prepare and manage the restocking of Lake Darling's new prime habitat with fish.

Historically, on Sunday, September 17, 1950, Jay N. "Ding" Darling was given the honor of closing the original Lake Darling dam with local dignitaries at his side and before a crowd of many thousands. Then, as now, the public had to await several months for the finishing touches to ready the park for opening. The Wednesday, February 12, 2014, gate closing will symbolize "Darling is Back" as a conservation legacy.

The history of Lake Darling State Park from its inception to present day is a rocky road of success, then deterioration, stagnation and through partnerships and volunteerism, revitalization again. By the mid 1960's "Ding" Darling (Oct. 21, 1876 – Feb. 12, 1962) would be gone and the Des Moines Register declared, "Lake Darling is a "Mud-Hole", Ding wouldn't like it". But now, with decades of efforts, clean waters are flowing through conservation practices of the watershed and will be celebrated in a restored Lake and renewed Park, bringing conservation of natural resources to-life in the spirit of Darling for generations to come.

We extend an invitation to you and your organization to set aside this day for your attendance. The Setting of the Gate is planned for 10:00 AM, at the Lake Darling Dam, 1237 310<sup>th</sup> Street, Clay Township, Washington County, Iowa. Followed by a program at Brighton Community Center, 100 E. Washington Street, Brighton, Iowa.

I will forward more details and schedules as they become available. I can be reached at 641-660-3668 (cell) or email at [larryjdickinson@gmail.com](mailto:larryjdickinson@gmail.com) or Dr. Fay A. Vittetoe, President, Friends of Lake Darling 319-694-2815 [ansvit@iowatelecom.net](mailto:ansvit@iowatelecom.net)