

National Elk Refuge News – September 2, 2009

Refuge Tours Highlight Projects and Challenges



Refuge Manager Steve Kallin leads the ride in the early morning light.

National Elk Refuge Manager Steve Kallin took several elected officials on a tour of the northern section of the refuge last week, giving the group an informal opportunity to view the resource while discussing current refuge projects and challenges. Participating in the tour were Teton County Commissioners Hank Phibbs, Leland Christensen, and Paul Vogelheim, along with Town of Jackson Mayor Mark Barron.

The elected officials agreed the tour was a useful way to learn more about National Elk Refuge programs. “With Federal lands making up such a significant part of Teton County,” Vogelheim explained, “we need to consider

how our decisions and policies can impact neighboring public lands.”

Kallin stressed the importance of keeping the lines of communication open with city and county officials. While the Bridger-Teton National Forest, Grand Teton National Park, and National Elk Refuge regularly meet with leaders from the city and county, the ride by horseback last week added a visual component to the discussions. “It was a privilege to see and hear about the refuge like this,” Barron added.

The National Elk Refuge also participated in a tour open to the public earlier this month, sponsored by the Jackson Hole Conservation Alliance. The refuge was the focus

of one of the Alliance’s “Border Walks,” a series of field trips designed to bring citizens and agency staff together to walk along public land and town boundaries and discuss issues that arise from the shared borders. “The Jackson Hole Conservation Alliance believes that as growth and development increase in the area, some of the greatest impacts will be on the surrounding public lands,” explained Louise Lasley, Public Lands Director for the Alliance. “We need to be aware of what we need to do to protect these valuable resources.”