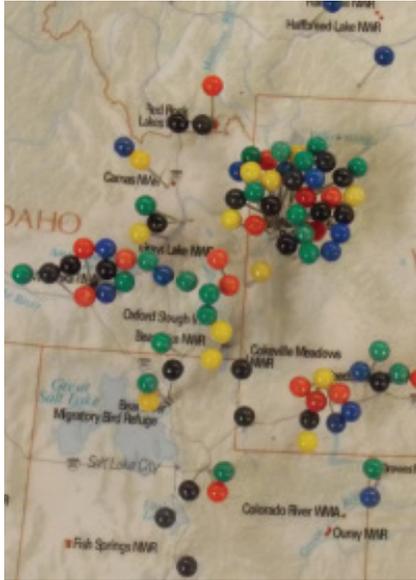


National Elk Refuge News – March 25, 2014

Ten-day Refuge System Celebration Draws to a Close



Above: The Snow King Hill Climb, a popular Jackson event, brought in enough local traffic on the last four days of the celebration to boost the regional number of pins.

Right: Winter naturalist Justin St. Onge watches as a visitor pins her refuge. Refuges in the western United States ended up getting more pins than those east of the Mississippi River.



For ten days this month, the first exhibit greeting guests at the Jackson Hole & Greater Yellowstone Visitor Center was a large United States map and a bowl of pins. The map, listing all the units within the National Wildlife Refuge System, went up on March 14 as part of celebration of the 111th birthday of the Refuge System and was a means to show visitors how large the System has grown. The National Wildlife Refuge System is a division of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service within the Department of the Interior.

In the spirit of March Madness and friendly competition, people were asked to place a pin on the national wildlife refuge closest to their home while winter naturalists kept an eye on which part of the country, what wildlife refuge, and which states led the challenge.

Though the east coast initially captured and retained the lead for the first few days, the western United States gained momentum and snatched the victory on the final weekend of the ten-day celebration. The victory was fueled by a large regional event held in

Jackson March 20 – 23 that brought in many visitors from throughout Wyoming and two of the neighboring states. Final results: refuges in the western United States = 391; refuges east of the Mississippi River = 246. The top five states receiving the most pins included:

- Wyoming – 76
- Texas – 44
- Idaho – 38
- Georgia – 39
- California – 34

Activity organizers were unsure of what the outcome of the

