U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
National Elk Refuge

PO Box 510
Jackson, Wyoming 83001

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
January 2, 2013 13-01

Lori Iverson
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NATIONAL ELK REFUGE AND JACKSON HOLE HISTORICAL SOCIETY & MUSEUM INVITE VISITORS TO "RENDEZVOUS WITH THE PAST"

The National Elk Refuge is pleased to partner with the Jackson Hole Historical Society & Museum to sponsor a free, family event on Monday, January 21 at both the Jackson Hole & Greater Yellowstone Visitor Center and historic Miller House. The event, titled "Rendezvous with the Past," will celebrate the area's rich homesteading history through a variety of activities offered from 10:00 AM to 4:00 PM. A dynamic line-up of games, projects, and presentations will appeal to persons of all ages.

At the visitor center, located at 532 N. Cache Street in Jackson, historic items related to food preparation will be on display throughout the day. Relics will include a butter churn, porcelain oven, waffle iron, coffee grinder, ice cream maker, and other tools that were often part of a homesteader's kitchen.

Settlers' children played some of the same games we do, and many games that were popular during an earlier time are still played today. From 10:00 AM to 12:00 PM, old fashioned floor games will be set up inside the visitor center. Eager children and nostalgic adults alike are welcome to try their hand at Tiddlywinks, Pick Up Sticks, Jacks, and more.

At 12:00 PM, a refuge naturalist will present a slideshow and narrative produced by the Jackson Hole Historical Society called "Homesteader Hopes and Reality in the High Country of Jackson Hole" in the visitor center theater. Through historic photographs and stories of early day residents, guests will learn about the history of settlers in the Jackson Hole valley and the challenges they faced.

The historic Miller House, located ¾ mile north of the refuge entrance at the end of East Broadway Street, will be open for the days' activities from 1:00 to 4:00 PM, giving visitors a rare opportunity to visit the home outside of the summer season. Guests to the historic site can practice a homesteaders' skill of resourcefulness by reusing scraps to make something new. Participants can make a colorful candle from wax shavings, design a square for an Elk Refuge "tie me up" quilt that will later be displayed at the History Museum, or turn leather pieces into wearable jewelry with a hammer and paint. No experience is necessary! A refuge winter naturalist will also be available to discuss the history of the National Elk Refuge and the significance of the iconic Miller Ranch.

For more information on the January 21 event, please call 307.734.9378.

Homesteading presentations will continue on Tuesday, January 22, when the Jackson Hole Historical Society & Museum hosts a Dutch oven cooking presentation at 7:00 PM, given by Jessica Flock of the Wyoming Humanities Council. The presentation is part of a month-long series of events in conjunction with *Key Ingredients: America by Food,* a Smithsonian Institution traveling exhibition at the Center for the Arts through January 20. Tuesday's presentation will be held at the History Museum at 225 N. Cache Street. For more information on the January 22 presentation, please call 307.733.2414.

– FWS –

U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

National Elk Refuge News – January 23, 2013

January Event Celebrates Jackson Hole History

A young artist puts some final touches on a leather crafts project (left) while others take theirs to a painting station and add some colored details (right).

Visitors to the Jackson Hole & Greater Yellowstone Visitor Center had an exciting opportunity to learn about local history and participate in some old–time traditions this past Monday at a day–long event called "Rendezvous with the Past." Activities included a display of kitchen relics, a talk featuring a number of historic photographs, and a variety of children's games and crafts. The event was a collaboration between the National Elk Refuge and the Jackson Hole Historical Society & Museum (JHHSM), who partnered to celebrate the area's rich homesteading history.

Children in the Teton County School District were on a no–school day Monday due to a teacher inservice, a calendar event noted by refuge program coordinators. The National Elk Refuge has previously worked with the Teton County Parks & Recreation Department to provide programming for children on days when school is not in session, including holidays, teacher inservice days, and spring break. Consequently, many of Monday's activities were tailored for youngsters, and the event was advertised as free and family–friendly.

The upper floor of the visitor center became a hub of activity beginning at 10:00 AM. Eager children and nostalgic adults alike were welcome to try their hand at old–fashioned games like Tiddlywinks, Pick Up Sticks, and Jacks, all pastimes predating settlement in the Jackson Hole valley. "The floor instantly transformed into a giant game table as soon as our first group of children arrived," explained winter naturalist Justin St. Onge, who joined in the fun and help explain the rules.

Elsewhere in the visitor center, another winter naturalist staffed a display area of historic items primarily related to food preparation. "I think it stimulated memories for many visitors," said Jessica Stirling, who stood by to describe the use of many

Children all over the world have played some form of jacks. The game, along with variations of it, was common in the late 1800s and early 1900s.

of the relics. “A lot of the adults reminisced about seeing some of these items in older relatives’ homes.”

Refuge volunteer Joe Lozar shared stories of settlers in the Jackson Hole valley and the challenges they faced during a slideshow of historic photographs provided by the JHHSM, which houses an extensive collection of black and white photographs in their archives. Guests that took in the slideshow included descendants of Frank Petersen, Ben Goe and Bertha Chambers, all families that once homesteaded on the refuge prior to its establishment.

A total of 175 people attended at least one of the “Rendezvous with the Past” activities at the visitor center.

The historic Miller House opened in the afternoon for the days’ activities, giving visitors a rare opportunity to visit the home outside of the summer season. There, a series of craft projects were set up with mostly a younger audience in mind. Participants could make candles, design a small square as part of a refuge “quilt,” and turn leather pieces into wearable jewelry with a hammer and paint. Staff was also on hand to answer questions about the Miller Ranch.

In all, 90 people visited the Miller House on Monday for the three–hour special winter opening.

The two organizations will combine resources again on Monday, February 18 to offer lessons and crafts with a wildlife theme. The event activities and schedule will be posted at www.fws.gov/nationalelkrefuge/JacksonHoleVisitorCenter.htm.

A group of students intently listen to a naturalist’s description of how food was prepared in an earlier era.

Brenda Roberts from the JHHSM helps three children get started on making a small tapered candle from a vat of melted wax.

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
National Elk Refuge

PO Box 510
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
January 24, 2013 13-02

Lori Iverson
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NATIONAL ELK REFUGE CONTINUES TO ASSESS CONDITIONS

With the 10–year average mark for initiating supplemental feeding on the refuge approaching, biologists are continuing to closely monitor snow and forage conditions. The average start date for supplemental feeding over the last decade has been on January 26, though the start date can widely vary depending on a number of conditions. Supplemental feeding was initiated on January 5 in 2011 but delayed until February 2 in 2012.

Biologists from the National Elk Refuge and Wyoming Game & Fish Department began conducting regular surveys of refuge conditions in early January. During their assessments, they record measurable data such as the amount and density of the snow and accessible natural forage for elk wintering on the refuge. Weekly monitoring, done most recently on Tuesday, January 22, shows that snow on the refuge remains relatively dry, likely due to steady cold temperatures over the past few weeks. While frequent melting and freezing of snow due to temperature variations can create hard packed conditions and may limit elks' ability to paw through snow, lighter density snow is less apt to impede access to forage. There is still significant available forage remaining in wet meadow areas north and northwest of Miller Butte.

Field observations suggest there are between 3,700 to 5,000 elk on the refuge or on adjacent Forest Service land. The variation in the count is attributed to groups of elk using the McBride management unit and areas further north where they cannot be easily counted without creating significant disturbance. Approximately 60% of radio collared elk likely to winter on the refuge were detected on the south end last week.

– FWS –

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
National Elk Refuge

PO Box 510
Jackson, Wyoming 83001

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
January 28, 2013 13-03

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NATIONAL ELK REFUGE ANNOUNCES SUPPLEMENTAL FEEDING START DATE

National Elk Refuge Manager Steve Kallin has announced that supplemental feeding of elk and bison wintering on the refuge will begin on Thursday, January 31.

Biologists monitoring environmental conditions on the refuge noted a change from last week, when surveys indicated much of the snow was relatively dry and not limiting access to remaining standing forage. However, cold weather that had prevailed during the previous few weeks was replaced by warmer temperatures this weekend, reaching 40 degrees and above. In addition to melting snow, a light rain reached areas of the valley floor. When temperatures cooled again on Sunday, a layer of ice and crusted snow formed in several of the sample areas biologists assessed again this morning. Though some forage still remains in wet meadow areas north and northwest of Miller Butte, it is expected to be consumed during the next few days as accessibility to forage in other areas becomes more difficult due to conditions.

When supplemental feeding is initiated on the refuge, staff begin distributing small rations to allow the animals to adjust to the new high protein diet. Elk will begin receiving a gradual increase in feed before reaching a full daily ration, which generally averages eight pounds of feed per animal.

Approximately 5,000 elk and 650 bison are currently on the refuge.

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
February 7, 2013 13-04

NATIONAL ELK REFUGE AND JACKSON HOLE HISTORICAL SOCIETY & MUSEUM INVITE VISITORS TO BE "WILD ABOUT WILDLIFE"

The National Elk Refuge is pleased to again partner with the Jackson Hole Historical Society & Museum (JHHS&M) to sponsor a free, family event on Monday, February 18 at the Jackson Hole & Greater Yellowstone Visitor Center. The event, titled "Wild About Wildlife," will celebrate the abundance of wildlife that winters on the refuge. A variety of activities are planned from 10:00 AM to 4:00 PM.

In January, the two organizations teamed up to offer a host of games and activities that focused on homesteading in the Jackson Hole valley. This month, the two groups have developed several activities that will help participants learn about adaptations that animals must make in order to survive the long, cold winters in the valley.

From 10:00 am to 12:00 PM, Brenda Roberts from the JHHS&M will introduce the concept of story hides, an ancestral tradition of painting bison hides with geometric forms or pictures to depict important events in a person's life – see examples below. Supplies will be available for participants to create their own small story hide. Winter naturalists from the National Elk Refuge will also be on hand to display various hides and explain how an animal's fur can differ from summer to winter as animals adapt to the change in seasons.

Left: Crow. Date Unknown. Cat. No. 358. 167. National Museum of Natural History, Smithsonian Institution. Depicting warriors returning from a raid.

Right: Shunka Ishnala (Lone Dog), Yanktonai. About 1870. National Museum of the American Indian, Smithsonian Institution. Photo by Janine Sarna Jones

Following the daily 11:30 AM visitor center program, visitors can join a naturalist for a talk about winter adaptations and migration habits of some of the animals found on the refuge along with others within the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem.

– continued –

Afternoon activities will move outdoors as staff will lead an interactive program on the visitor center lawn at 12:30, 1:00, 1:30 and 2:00 PM. Visitors can join a naturalist to learn how animals' feet, fur, and sources of food change or are adapted to the seasons. Participants can enjoy the presentation on snowshoes, provided free of charge for persons of all sizes and ages.

A craft activity will wrap up the day, giving visitors an opportunity to make a pine cone bird feeder from 2:00 to 4:00 PM while learning about energy conservation and winter food sources.

All activities are family–friendly, free of charge, and enjoyable for a wide range of audiences. With school out of session for the President's Day holiday, local families are encouraged to bring children to the visitor center to take advantage of the fun, educational programming.

The Jackson Hole & Greater Yellowstone Visitor Center is located at 532 N. Cache Street in Jackson. For more information on the February 18 event, please call 307.734.9378.

– FWS –

U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

National Elk Refuge News – February 15, 2013

Refuge Collars Wolves from Pinnacle Peak Pack

Northern Rockies Wolf Coordinator Mike Jimenez arrives by helicopter to a location where a team of refuge field staff await with collaring equipment. The tail of one of the passengers can be seen dangling from the aircraft.

During the month of February, many of the management efforts on the National Elk Refuge are centered around elk and bison using the winter range. This week, though, it was wolves that were the biological focus as wildlife managers collared four members of the Pinnacle Peak pack, a group that has resided on the refuge for several years. The wolf collaring effort on the refuge coincides with the Wyoming Game & Fish Department's collaring conducted in other areas of northwest Wyoming over the past few weeks.

On September 30, 2012, wolves were removed from the list of threatened and endangered species, allowing the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to return management of wolves to the State of Wyoming under an approved management plan. However, the National Elk Refuge assumes responsibility for the management of wolves within its jurisdictional boundaries. Refuge staff coordinated this week's collaring project with U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service Biologist Mike Jimenez, who serves as the Northern Rockies Wolf Coordinator.

Wildlife managers used a helicopter Friday afternoon to visually locate the wolves on the refuge and dart four members of the pack with Telazol, an injectable drug commonly used in the immobilization of carnivores. The wolves were then lifted into the helicopter and flown a short distance to a location where a refuge field crew stood by with the collars and sampling equipment. In just over an hour, staff had deployed the collars, collected hair samples, and recorded statistics such as sex, age, and weight. During the process, staff monitored the animals' temperatures and respiration. Two biologists remained on site when the data collection was complete to ensure the wolves got safely back up on their feet when the immobilization drug wore off.

Refuge Manager Steve Kallin places a collar on a yearling female wolf.

From the data generated by the collars, biologists will be able to monitor the size of the pack, document its distribution, record mortalities, measure the pack's reproductive success, and note breeding pair status. The information will also help Refuge Biologist Eric Cole with his on-going studies of elk density and distribution as the presence and movement of wolves on the refuge are variables that may influence behavioral patterns in elk.

An in-depth web site on news, information and recovery status of gray wolves in the Northern Rocky Mountains can be found at http://www.fws.gov/mountain-prairie/species/mammals/wolf/.

Refuge Biologist Eric Cole removes a whisker from a male yearling. The whisker can be used for a sample isotope analysis to learn about the animal's diet.

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
National Elk Refuge

PO Box 510
Jackson, Wyoming 83001

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
March 20, 2013 13-05

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NATIONAL ELK REFUGE TO END SUPPLEMENTAL FEEDING FOR THE SEASON

National Elk Refuge Manager Steve Kallin has announced that supplemental feeding of elk and bison wintering on the refuge is scaling back this week, with feeding expected to end for the season by early next week. Feeding began this season on January 31 and will total approximately 55 days when the program ends for the season.

The end date and total number of days for the supplemental feeding program varies from year to year. Last year's feeding season was very comparable to this year, beginning on February 2 and ending on March 28. However, during the winter of 2010/2011, feeding began in early January and continued through the middle of April. This year will mark the second consecutive year the feeding season was two weeks shorter than the 10–year average of 71 days.

Though many environmental factors are measured to determine when the feeding program should begin, elk behavior plays a significant role in deciding when feeding should conclude for the year. When snow-free ground becomes available, elk noticeably lose interest in supplemental feed provided by the refuge and instead search out new spring growth or residual forage from the previous growing season. The refuge's feeding schedule this year corresponds with the Wyoming Game & Fish Department's decision to end feeding at its three feedgrounds in the Gros Ventre drainage. The coordinated effort to end supplemental feeding at the same time in several locations will foster a natural shift in elk distribution.

Despite the end to the supplemental feeding program next week, horse–drawn rides on the National Elk Refuge are scheduled to continue through Saturday, April 6; wagons can be substituted for sleighs when inadequate snow remains. The rides are a popular way for people to view elk, enjoy the refuge, and watch for other wildlife. Hours of operation remain from 10:00 am to 4:00 pm daily, including weekends. Tickets are sold at the Jackson Hole & Greater Yellowstone Visitor Center, located at 532 North Cache Street in Jackson. For further information on the horse–drawn rides, please call 307.733.0277 or 1.800.772.5386.

– FWS –

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
National Elk Refuge

PO Box 510
Jackson, Wyoming 83001

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
April 1, 2013 13-06

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CRITICAL WINTER RANGE CLOSURES REMAIN IN EFFECT

Refuge Manager Steve Kallin has issued a reminder that two areas of the National Elk Refuge will remain closed to the public through April 30.

From December 1 through April 30 each year, winter closures limit public travel on the Refuge Road. Traffic and pedestrian use is only allowed on the first 3.5 miles of the Refuge Road, from the refuge entrance on Broadway Avenue to the Twin Creek subdivision. Access to the refuge beyond the Twin Creek subdivision is restricted as part of an area closure to protect wintering wildlife and is coordinated with the Bridger-Teton National Forest. The Refuge Road will reopen for public travel beyond the Twin Creek subdivision on May 1, giving public access to the Curtis Canyon and Flat Creek Roads and adjoining National Forest. Restrictions for accessing the Bridger-Teton National Forest through the National Elk Refuge on May 1 can be found under the "Spring Road Information" tab on the refuge's home page at *www.fws.gov/nationalelkrefuge.*

The section of the North Highway 89 Pathway from Flat Creek to the Gros Ventre bridge also remains closed through April 30. The 5–mile segment of the pathway is subject to an annual closure in order to reduce impacts to elk and other wildlife that spend the winter on the National Elk Refuge. The closure is a condition of the agreement between Teton County and the National Elk Refuge for pathway use on U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service property. Unlike neighboring federal lands with multiple recreational opportunities, the National Elk Refuge is mandated to prioritize habitat conservation and wildlife management, adhering to a "wildlife first" mission when considering or allowing public uses. The seasonal closure of the pathway maximizes benefits to important wildlife habitat and migration corridors and allows the refuge to be in compliance with its mission and purpose.

Spring can be an especially difficult time for wintering animals, when their energy reserves are low and abundant new vegetation growth, or "greenup," is not yet widely available for foraging. Disturbances can deplete an animal's remaining reserves when it's repeatedly startled or stressed by the presence of humans on foot or bicycle. Wildlife such as mule deer are attracted to the early greenup along the Highway 89 corridor, where increased moisture from runoff and warmer temperatures can stimulate new growth sooner than in areas further from the roadway. Human disturbances to animals near the roadway increase the chances of collisions between motor vehicles and wildlife.

For further information on road or pathway seasonal closures, please call the National Elk Refuge administrative offices at 307.733.9212.

– FWS –

U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

National Elk Refuge News – April 17, 2013

Refuge Photos Go Viral

The expression "going viral" is no longer a vague term at the National Elk Refuge after a series of seven photos were met with an explosive reaction earlier this month and quickly became an Internet topic of interest.

The U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service's Mountain–Prairie Region's Web and Social Media Coordinator, Ryan Moehring, regularly features National Elk Refuge photographs on the region's Facebook page. Moehring notes when the Refuge's Outdoor Recreation Planner, Lori Iverson, posts new pictures to the station's photo gallery, and he frequently uses the images to share visuals from the field. Through Moehring's efforts this winter, several National Elk Refuge photographs received thousands of views and were posted on other web pages, increasing the total number of views for the individual pictures.

On March 29, Iverson called Moehring to alert him she was posting seven new pictures she had shot the night before of an encounter between two juvenile mountain lions and five coyotes. She had a hunch the photo series might bring an even bigger response than the 3,800 views of boxing female elk posted earlier in the month, a photo that was the highest performing image of the month on the photo sharing web site "flickr." After viewing the new mountain lion photos, Moehring concurred and wrote back, "I think this could be big." Those words ran true—and very quickly so.

Moehring crafted the post and started promoting it through environmental non–governmental organizations, nature photographers, and Internet celebrity pages. Within the first three hours, the photos already had 17,000 views on the photo set and 21,000 views on Facebook, plus numbers that couldn't be accurately quantified on Twitter. Another hour later, the numbers had doubled.

On Saturday, March 30, Moehring wrote Iverson at home, pleading, "We've gone viral. Can you help me create a response?" Though the photos were captioned, the virtual audience wanted more information. Over a half million people had viewed the pictures by then, and many were requesting additional content. Internet viewers wanted to know more about the outcome,

the status of the mountain lions, and possible reasons for the standoff. Moehring and Iverson collaborated over the weekend to develop short posts to add, and on April 1 they penned and posted a lengthy response that addressed the most common questions and concerns.

Though the final number of hits may never be determined, Moehring could verify the photos had more than 2.6 million views in just 72 hours. The incident was featured the following week on media sources including FoxNews and the home pages of Yahoo.com and NBC.com, no doubt increasing the numbers well beyond the mark already established.

In the ensuing weeks, Iverson heard from friends around the country that had seen the pictures and recognized her name in the photo credit. The correspondence included a kind note from Jim Kurth, Chief of the National Wildlife Refuge System. After showing the pictures at a headquarters staff meeting, Kurth wrote an email and ended it with, "Keep up the great work and keep that camera handy."

The success of the viral story was used an example in numerous sessions throughout a "Digital Communications in Conservation" workshop held a week later at the National Conservation Training Center in Shepherdstown, West Virginia. The event captured both the power of social media and the importance of having photographs to enhance a story. "This mountain lion post, and several other viral posts we've seen this past year, affirms in my mind that our social media program is headed in the right direction," commented Moehring. "Many people may not know who the Fish and Wildlife Service is, but that is rapidly changing, and I think social media has a lot to do with that change." Moehring continued, "We have one of the largest and most successful social media programs in all of government, with more than 200 accounts nationwide. Our vast network reaches millions of citizens every month. Given all the challenges we face in our efforts to preserve and protect America's wildlife resources, now more than ever it is vital to be able to communicate with the public – right there on their mobile devices where they are already browsing Facebook and Twitter – about all of the amazing conservation work we're doing on their behalf."

The series of mountain lion photos and accompanying captions can be viewed at *http://bit.ly/11dTZzZ*. The Refuge's entire flickr collection is housed at *http://bit.ly/15mNeQP*.

U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

National Elk Refuge News – April 17, 2013

Refuge Explains Pathway Seasonal Closure

The seasonal closure of the North Highway 89 Pathway from Flat Creek to the Gros Ventre bridge has been of interest this month, with some local residents questioning the restriction of use between October 1 and April 30. Refuge Manager Steve Kallin emphasizes the mission of the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service and the agreement that was developed when the pathway was approved.

The 5–mile segment of the pathway is subject to an annual closure, a key condition of the agreement between Teton County and the National Elk Refuge for pathway use on U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service property. The seasonal closure of the North 89 Pathway was decided upon collaboratively with the county after a 2009 environmental assessment determined the closure was legally necessary. Another alternative identified during the planning process called for locating the pathway on the west side of the highway with fewer restrictions, but public comment supported the east side placement despite the seasonal restriction.

Unlike neighboring federal lands with multiple recreational opportunities, the National Elk Refuge is mandated to prioritize habitat and wildlife conservation, adhering to a "wildlife first" mission when considering or allowing public uses. Some potential pathway users have noted that the National Elk Refuge allows both fishing and hunting during part of the closure period, activities perceived as disturbances no different than cycling or pedestrian use of the pathway. Public uses on National Wildlife Refuges are guided by the National Wildlife Refuge System Improvement Act of 1997, an Act that ensures the Refuge System is managed as a national system of related lands, waters, and interests dedicated to the protection and conservation of wildlife resources. One of the major components of the Act states that hunting and fishing are legitimate and appropriate public uses of the Refuge System and should be priority public uses when possible.

On the National Elk Refuge, hunting and fishing are more than just recreational activities. Each directly relates to management of

Mule deer are often spotted in the spring adjacent to North Highway 89 and the pathway.

A mule deer darts into traffic from the area near the pathway, narrowly averting a collision with a truck.

wildlife. Refuge waters support a wild population of Snake River cutthroat trout, a unique variety of cutthroat species and the only trout native to the area. However, Brook, brown, and rainbow trout are also present in Refuge waters. By harvesting non–native trout, anglers can reduce the impact on the native cutthroat trout population. Hunting, too, is used as a management tool on the Refuge, helping reduce the number of bison and elk to meet population objectives developed with the Wyoming Game & Fish Department. Hunting was identified in the 2007 Bison and Elk Management Plan as a necessary means to achieve population goals.

While some observers this April have noted few animals near the pathway or little disturbance to those close by, others have provided conflicting information. Refuge staff has received several descriptions of animals noticeably wary or stressed by people parking along the side of the road, exiting their vehicles, and approaching the fence. Kallin further explained, "Anecdotal observations alone don't constitute a thorough evaluation. We're also looking at GPS and radio collar data and photo–based documentation that records density and distribution of animals." The Refuge agreed to work with the county over a three– to five–year period to better analyze impacts of the pathway and determine if the seasonal closure could be adjusted or the use period expanded. However, Refuge staff began receiving requests to extend the pathway season even before the first year was over. "An evaluation isn't valid if it only captures one or two seasons," Kallin added. "You run the risk of missing important variables or conflicts."

Approximately 2,000 to 4,000 elk remain on the Refuge this week, with numbers fluctuating as elk make exploratory movements off and back onto the Refuge. Their movements usually increase as more areas become snow–free and spring greenup starts to occur. Greenup often happens earlier along the Highway 89 corridor, where increased moisture from runoff and warmer temperatures stimulate new growth sooner than in areas further from the roadway. While traffic from vehicles is described as a "predictable disturbance" to wildlife, sporadic human disturbances near the roadway cause a more fearful reaction in animals, thus increasing the chance of collisions between motor vehicles and wildlife as the animals react to the interaction.

Some pathway users advocate that the Refuge should not use a fixed date to open the pathway each season, but rather should annually announce the date to coincide with the end of migration. This spring's repeated movement of elk on and off the Refuge, typical for this time of year, serves as an example of the complications that could arise. "From a management standpoint, we can't repeatedly open and close the pathway based on rapid changes in elk distribution, anticipated animal behavior due to weather, or other factors," Kallin said. "Our approach is to mitigate conflicts before they happen rather than react to them when they do."

National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior
Grand Teton National Park & John D. Rockefeller, Jr. Memorial Parkway

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U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
U.S. Department of the Interior
National Elk Refuge

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Interagency News Release

For Immediate Release
May 6, 2013

Snake River Headwaters Environmental Assessment Available for Public Review

MOOSE, WY — Grand Teton and Yellowstone national parks, John D. Rockefeller, Jr. Memorial Parkway and the National Elk Refuge released today for public review the *Snake River Headwaters Comprehensive River Management Plan and Environmental Assessment* (CRMP/EA). This environmental assessment, prepared in compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act, will be open for review and comment for 57 days from May 6 – June 30, 2013.

This plan was prepared for the newly designated wild and scenic Snake River and tributaries that are managed by the National Park Service (NPS) and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS). The Bridger-Teton National Forest has developed a separate but concurrent plan for the U.S. Forest Service (USFS) managed river segments. These comprehensive river management plans provides long-term guidance for protecting and enhancing the entire Snake River Headwaters administered by the NPS and USFWS.

During the review period, the NPS, USFWS and USFS will hold two open houses:
Tuesday, June 4 at Moran Elementary School (gymnasium), 2 Central St., Moran WY; and
Wednesday, June 5, Teton County Library (auditorium), 125 Virginian Lane, Jackson WY.
Both are from 4:00 p.m. – 7:00 p.m. Information on both the NPS/USFWS and USFS plans will be provided and staff will be available to answer questions.

The NPS/USFWS plan examines three alternatives for long-term management of wild and scenic-designated rivers within and along the boundaries of Grand Teton and Yellowstone national parks, John D. Rockefeller, Jr. Memorial Parkway and the National Elk Refuge. The NPS/USFWS preferred alternative is Alternative C. Under this alternative, the headwaters would be managed as a more primitive, undeveloped, natural setting with modest improvements to enhance resource conditions and visitor experience.

Comments on the plan can be submitted online at http://parkplanning.nps.gov/snakeriver or in writing to Superintendent, Grand Teton National Park, PO Drawer 170, Moose, WY 83012. Comments submitted via U.S. Postal Service must be postmarked by June 30, 2013.

Copies of the *Snake River Headwaters CRMP/EA* are available at http://parkplanning.nps.gov/snakeriver. To request a CD, contact the park at 307-739-3465. Hard copies of the CRMP/EA are also available at the Craig Thomas Discovery and Visitor Center in Moose, Wyoming and at the Teton County Library reference desk.

Individuals who choose to submit a comment should know that any responses given, including personally identifying information, could be made public at any time. Requests to withhold personal identifying information from public access can be made but the NPS and USFWS may not be able to honor such a request.

www.nps.gov/grte
www.nps.gov/yell
www.fws.gov/nationalelkrefuge

U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

National Elk Refuge News – May 14, 2013

Refuge Increases Jackson District Boy Scout Revenue

Several Scouts line up to take turns carriyng antler bundles onto the stage during the annual antler auction on Jackson's Town Square.

With this year's annual antler auction only days away, both National Elk Refuge staff and Jackson District Boy Scout leaders are busy making final preparations for Saturday's event. The renowned sale on the Jackson Town Square generates critical funding for Refuge habitat projects. This year, the Scouts will see an increase in the percentage of revenue they receive from the Refuge for assistance with the auction.

The partnership between the National Elk Refuge and Jackson District Boy Scouts is long–standing and is supported by a 1985 Memorandum of Understanding between the U.S. Department of the Interior and the Boy Scouts of America. The agreement states the Department will be involved in Boy Scout program activities to the extent they pertain to the conservation, management, and development of the nation's natural resources. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, a bureau within the Department of the Interior, also expresses support for Boy Scout educational programs through a policy that encourages Service employees to foster communication with Scout leaders and offer guidance and support for Scout programs and activities related to conservation and natural resource management.

The Jackson District Boy Scouts play an integral role in the collection and sale of antlers from elk wintering on the Refuge. This year's antler auction on May 18 will be the 46th consecutive year for the event that showcases the unique partnership between the Jackson District Boy Scouts and the National Elk Refuge.

Each spring, Refuge staff begins collecting antlers as soon as they start dropping, or "shed," in early March. Not only does this reduce the incidents of illegal poaching,

A Scout proudly holds up his find duing the spring antler collection.

but it helps avoid damage to equipment that could occur if the antlers are accidentally run over during refuge management operations like supplemental feeding, spring harrowing, or irrigating.

Through an annual special use permit, the Jackson District Boy Scouts are allowed to help Refuge staff pick up antlers in late April and early May, making a final sweep for antlers to sell at the auction. Approximately 100 Scouts and their leaders participate in the spring antler collection.

Several weeks later, the Scouts take center stage during the annual auction, held each year on the Saturday before Memorial Day weekend. Alone or in groups of two, Scouts carry antlers up to the stage bundle by bundle as bidders vie for ownership of the sale item.

Wedged in between the two visible activities are hundreds of hours of preparation rarely seen by the public, behind–the–scenes work that couldn't be accomplished by the Refuge staff alone. In addition to preparing the antlers for sale, Scout leaders help advertise the event through an ElkFest web site, register bidders, make logistical arrangements for the sale, and coordinate with dozens of Scouts and leaders to assist on the day of the auction.

A week before the auction, Scout leaders begin preparing the collected antlers for sale. Volunteers sort the antlers, separating out those that are broken, non–typical, or heavy six, seven, and eight–point in size.

Sorting the antlers and creating individual sale lots is a full day's work, completed by a large pool of Scout volunteers.

A Scout volunteer matches a pair of antlers to sell as a set at the auction.

Groups of antlers are weighed and tagged in preparation for the auction.

Individual antlers are grouped into various sized bundles, then taped or tied together to create a cluster that will be sold as one auction item. Scout leaders look for antlers that have the same curvature, color, and texture with the tines coming off the main beam in roughly the same place for those buyers who will build chandeliers, lamps, or other items where similarity between the antlers is important. Volunteers also make up matched pairs whenever possible, coveted by individuals or vendors who may resell them.

After the bundles are created, Scout leaders weigh and tag each group. During the auction, the antlers are sold per pound, so bidders need to know the total weight of any lots they may be interested in purchasing. As soon as a bundle of antlers is weighed, a tag listing both the lot number and the total weight of the antler bundle is attached. The laborious process takes many hours and is spread out over several days.

"When it's all said and done, the Jackson District Scouts donate around 2,000 hours every spring towards the preparation and sale of antlers," explained Refuge Manager Steve Kallin. "That's the equivalent of a full–time employee working a 40–hour week for a full year." For their work, Scouts have historically received 20% of the auction proceeds to go towards their Friends of Scouting fees.

Once bundles of antlers are ready for sale, they are loaded onto pallets and trucks to be transported to the Town Square on the morning of the auction.

Antlers are laid out on the Town Square and available for viewing prior to the start of the auction.

This spring, Kallin revised a Memorandum of Understanding with the local Boy Scout district to increase their share of proceeds to 25%, reflecting the increase in dues the local district has struggled to pay. "We recognize the extent of their work and the extraordinary effort it takes to pull this off an event of this scale," Kallin added.

Cliff Kirkpatrick, who chairs the antler sale committee for the Jackson District Boy Scouts, acknowledges the importance of the increased share of revenue. "The additional funding will help us cover the fees required to even offer scouting here in Jackson," he explained. "It will also help us to continue supplementing fees for day camps, leader and Scout training, Eagle Scout and leader recognition dinners, and other district activities." Other districts rely on donations by parents, leaders, community members, and businesses to pay the Friends of Scouting fees.

This Saturday, Scout leaders will start their morning at 5:00 am, loading up antlers to haul to the Town Square and have set up by 7:00. Prospective buyers have several hours to look at the selections prior to the auction's 10:00 start. Though the auction itself lasts several hours, the work for many Scout leaders will not end till the last chores are completed in late afternoon or early evening.

Two scouts stand on the stage with an auction lot during the bidding process.

U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

National Elk Refuge News – May 17, 2013

Unique Training Held at the Refuge

A dog alerts on a package of marijuana hidden under the boardwalk as part of a training exercise near the historic Miller House.

May is a busy training month at the National Elk Refuge, with maintenance and visitor services volunteers arriving and seasonal irrigators coming on board. Various trainings greet the incoming workers and provide the temporary staff with the information they need to do their jobs. This month, though, a different kind of training was thrown into the mix, one where successful participants were rewarded with tennis balls and other play toys.

Teams of dogs and their handlers used the Refuge's historic Miller Ranch this week to conduct field exercises as part of a four–day seminar hosted by the Teton County Sheriff's Office. The workshop drew participants from a number of law enforcement agencies that use dogs for detection of explosives and narcotics as well as tracking and apprehension.

Approximately 60 officers from Wyoming and neighboring states attended a classroom session that focused on canine narcotics updates; 30 dog teams stayed on through the week for field exercises. The teams honed their skills in order to reach certification through the National Police Canine Association (NPCA). NPCA was established in 1997 and is a 501(c)(3) non–profit association dedicated to the training,

An officer and instructor debrief after running a black lab through a drill.

development and certification of law enforcement canine teams and their administrations. The association offers nationally accepted certifications throughout the year across the United States.

Use of the National Elk Refuge as one of the field sites was coordinated by staff member Amanda Soliday, a maintenance worker who volunteers with the Wyoming K–9 Search and Rescue program. The organization trains competent search dog teams and assists local, state, and federal authorities in search and rescue situations. Teton County Sheriff Deputy, Dave Hodges, who organized the interagency training, explained the benefit of using the Refuge's Miller Ranch as a training site. "We work the dogs in a variety of environments, simulating situations where they may be used," Hodges said. Officers used the Miller Barn, a laundry facility, and a historic outbuilding for their training at the Refuge.

A program scheduled for later this summer will give the public an opportunity to see a working search dog demonstration. Soliday will conduct the live demonstration with her dog on Friday, July 26 at the Jackson Hole & Greater Yellowstone Visitor Center at 10:00 AM. Soliday's program, which the Refuge has hosted in previous years, is always popular with the public, particularly children. Soliday uses members of the audience to help with the demonstration. Visitor Center Manager Natalie Fath adds, "The kids especially love applauding and rewarding the dog when it successfully completes a search." The demonstration is open to the public and free of charge.

Two dogs have successful finds of naracotics hidden for training purposes, stashed under a Miller Ranch outbuilding (left) and inside a laundry facility near the volunteer RV sites (right).

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
National Elk Refuge

PO Box 510
Jackson, Wyoming 83001

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
May 19, 2013 13-08

Lori Iverson
307.733.9212, ext. 6

46TH ANNUAL ANTLER AUCTION GENERATES RECORD TOTALS

Despite the steady rain and cool conditions, a good crowd turned out for the 46th annual Boy Scout Elk Antler Auction in Jackson, Wyoming on Saturday, May 18. The sale, held each year on the Saturday before Memorial Day weekend, makes available shed antlers collected from the National Elk Refuge.

This year, 8,507 pounds of antlers were sold at the auction, up from the 7,398 sold last year and the previous 10–year average of 8,133 pounds. More notable than the slight increase in antlers, however, was the average price per pound paid this year by the 103 buyers registered at the sale. Bidders paid an average of $15.43 per pound at Saturday's auction, or $5.71 per pound higher than the $9.72 average during the previous 10 years. "We had heard the market was up this year," Refuge spokesperson Lori Iverson said, "but it was exciting to see it come to fruition on Saturday."

Because of the higher price paid per pound, Saturday's sale yielded a total of $131,400. During the past decade, the amount generated from the auction has averaged $77,781. Refuge records indicate this year's total sales and price per pound set records, exceeding the $111,305 generated in 2011 and the $13.79 per pound average paid in 1989. In 2012, the sale brought in a total of $90,469 with an average price per pound of $12.15.

The majority of proceeds from the antler auction are donated to the National Elk Refuge, which maintains approximately 25,000 acres as winter range for the Jackson Elk Herd. The money generated from the sale is used for habitat projects on the Refuge. In 2012, the proceeds were a key funding source for paying seasonal irrigators and purchasing additional GPS collars to track and document elk distribution and migration.

In previous years, the Jackson District Boy Scouts received 20% of the auction proceeds for their assistance with the event. The District uses the money to pay Friends of Scouting dues, a fee required for them to remain in the Boy Scouts of America organization and offer scouting in the Jackson area. The funding also helps them continue supplementing fees for day camps, leader and Scout training, and other activities. This spring, Refuge Manager Steve Kallin revised a Memorandum of Understanding with the Scouts and increased the District's share of proceeds to 25%, recognizing the extraordinary effort it takes to pull off such a large event as the antler auction. Each year, Scouts and Scout leaders donate approximately 2,000 hours to prepare and execute the sale, comparable to one staff member working a 40–hour week for a full year. "The relationship we have with the Jackson District Boy Scout leaders is outstanding, and their partnership contributions are notable," Kallin explained. An article describing the behind–the–scenes work that goes into preparing for the auction, along with a photo collection of the work, is posted on the Refuge's home page at *www.fws.gov/nationalelkrefuge.*

Next year's antler auction is set for Saturday, May 17. However, single antlers are available for sale throughout the year at the Jackson Hole & Greater Yellowstone Visitor Center, located at 532 North Cache Street in Jackson. For further information on the Boy Scout antler auction, please contact the National Elk Refuge Administrative Office at (307) 733.9212.

– FWS –

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
National Elk Refuge

PO Box 510
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
May 21, 2013 13-09

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NATIONAL ELK REFUGE ANNOUNCES SUMMER SCHEDULE OF FACILITIES

Refuge Manager Steve Kallin announced today the 2013 summer season schedule for public facilities on the National Elk Refuge.

The Jackson Hole & Greater Yellowstone Visitor Center, located at 532 North Cache Street in Jackson, will expand its hours of operation to 8:00 AM through 7:00 PM daily beginning Saturday, May 25. The popular multi–agency center is staffed by personnel from the National Elk Refuge, Jackson Hole Chamber of Commerce, Bridger–Teton National Forest, Grand Teton National Park, and the Grand Teton Association. The facility is owned and operated by the National Elk Refuge and is a source for items such as maps, brochures, permits, and Federal lands passes. The Visitor Center also includes an extensive bookstore, with proceeds from the sales benefiting educational programming on the Refuge.

The historic Miller House, located approximately ¾ mile north of the National Elk Refuge entrance on East Broadway Street in Jackson, will open for the season on Sunday, May 26. The charming homestead will be open from 10:00 AM through 4:00 PM daily, including weekends, through mid–September. The Miller House and surrounding land was the first piece of property purchased for the creation of the National Elk Refuge, established in 1912. The homestead is decorated with period pieces and gives visitors the opportunity to learn more about the establishment and early history of the Refuge. The Grand Teton Association operates a small sales outlet at the Miller House, carrying unique items representative of the early 20th century. Entrance to the Miller House is free of charge.

For additional information about activities or services at the National Elk Refuge, please call the administrative offices at (307) 733.9212.

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U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
National Elk Refuge

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
June 3, 2013 13-10

FEDERAL DUCK STAMP AND JUNIOR DUCK STAMP ART WORK TO BE ON DISPLAY AT THE JACKSON HOLE & GREATER YELLOWSTONE VISITOR CENTER

The Jackson Hole & Greater Yellowstone Visitor Center will feature two special exhibits from Tuesday, June 11 through Saturday, June 15, displaying the top entries from the 2012 Federal Duck Stamp and 2013 Junior Duck Stamp contests. The displays travel to various locations throughout the country to promote the Duck Stamp programs and their roles in conservation. The Visitor Center, located at 532 N. Cache Street, is open daily from 8:00 AM to 7:00 PM.

Federal Migratory Bird Hunting and Conservation Stamps, commonly known as "Duck Stamps," are pictorial stamps produced by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. The stamp was established in 1934 as a federal license required for hunting migratory waterfowl. The Migratory Bird Hunting Stamp Act mandates that all waterfowl hunters 16 years of age or older purchase a stamp. The sale of stamps, however, is not restricted to hunters. All citizens can purchase the stamp, which can be used as an annual season pass for national wildlife refuges charging entrance fees.

The first Federal Duck Stamp was designed by Jay "Ding" Darling at President Franklin D. Roosevelt's request. In subsequent years, other noted wildlife artists were asked to submit designs. The first contest in 1949 was open to any U.S. artist who wished to enter. This is the only art competition of its kind sponsored by the U.S. Government. Images of each stamp from 1934 to present day can be viewed at *www.fws.gov/duckstamps/federal/stamps/fedimages.htm.*

Federal Duck Stamps are vital tools for wetland conservation. Ninety-eight cents out of every dollar generated by the sale of Federal Duck Stamps goes directly to purchase or lease wetland and associated upland habitats for inclusion in the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's National Wildlife Refuge System. The stamps are often purchased by conservationists as a means to support the protection of habitat. The Federal Duck Stamp program has been called one of the most successful conservation programs ever initiated and is a highly effective way to conserve America's natural resources.

The first Junior Duck Stamps were produced in 1989. The Junior Duck Stamp Conservation and Design Program is a dynamic arts curriculum that teaches wetlands and waterfowl conservation to students from kindergarten through high school. The program incorporates scientific and wildlife management principles into a visual arts curriculum. Participants complete a Junior Duck Stamp design at the completion of their studies, using visual arts to convey what they have learned. Through this program, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service introduces the Federal Duck Stamp program and the National Wildlife Refuge System to participants and educates new generations of citizens about the importance of waterfowl and wetlands conservation.

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Later this summer, the Jackson Hole & Greater Yellowstone Visitor Center will display the top entries in the 2013 Wyoming Junior Duck Stamp Program. Each spring, students submit their artwork to a state or territory contest, with top entries moving on to a national competition. More than 27,000 students enter state Junior Duck Stamp art contests each year. The winning design from the national contest is used to create the Junior Duck Stamp for the following year. Proceeds from the sale of Junior Duck Stamps support conservation education, and provide awards and scholarships for the students, teachers and schools that participate in the program. The Wyoming winners from four age categories are scheduled to be on display at the Visitor Center from July 26 – August 26.

More information on the two conservation programs can be found at the following Internet locations:

- Federal Duck Stamp Program: *www.fws.gov/duckstamps/*
- Junior Duck Stamp Program: *www.fws.gov/juniorduck/*

– FWS –

U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

National Elk Refuge News – June 10, 2013

Visitor Center Offers Fun Opportunities to Learn About Birds

National Elk Refuge volunteer Margaret Lozar helps a young duck impersonator with her final fitting of props that simulate air sacs, webbed feet, contour and down feathers, hollow bones, a bill, and nictitating membranes.

School ended for Teton County, Wyoming students on Friday, but not before nine classes of second graders from Davey Jackson Elementary School were able to enjoy an end–of–year field trip to the National Elk Refuge. The trip capped off the children's studies of Jackson Hole animals and was their second excursion to the Refuge this year to observe and learn about area wildlife.

Davey Jackson Elementary School, located along the Refuge's southern boundary, affords a wonderful view of the property owned and managed by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. The second grade classrooms are located on the school's second floor, giving the students an outstanding elevated view of the nearby preserved habitat.

While the focus of the students' February visit to the Refuge was wintering elk, the spring trip in late May centered on birds. Students rotated through stations to learn about bird characteristics, beak adaptations, and migration. The students also had an opportunity to observe birds and write in journals they've been keeping throughout the year.

A student climbs under plastic wrap used to represent a glass window during his race through a bird migration obstacle course. Other hindrances along the route included a predator, fragmented habitat, invasive species, and bright city lights.

National Elk Refuge volunteer Bob Dicken offers assistance with binoculars (top photo) while a classroom teacher helps a student with his journal entry (bottom photo), both part of a station where children watched birds, listened to bird songs, and recorded their observations.

This week, both Federal Duck Stamp and Junior Duck Stamp art work will be on display at the Jackson Hole & Greater Yellowstone Visitor Center. In the spirit of the traveling exhibits, Refuge volunteers have organized a "Duck Day" for Friday, June 14 from 10:00 AM to 4:00 PM, offering some of the same learning stations to the public. Participants can navigate through the bird migration obstacle course, don props that allow them to learn about duck adaptations, and challenge themselves to pick up various sources of food with an assortment of tools to learn about different shapes and sizes of beaks. Friday's programs are free of charge and guaranteed to be fun!

For information on the Duck Stamp exhibit or activities, please visit http://1.usa.gov/1boQmKe or call the Refuge administrative offices at 307.733.9212.

U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

National Elk Refuge News – June 18, 2013

Refuge Activities Accompany Duck Stamp Exhibits

A participant in the migration obstacle course navigates under a simulated power line during her timed trip between two points.

Two traveling Duck Stamp exhibits made a brief stopover at the National Elk Refuge last week, letting visitors enjoy beautiful artwork while learning about U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service conservation programs. Both Federal Duck Stamp and Junior Duck Stamp art work were on display at the Jackson Hole & Greater Yellowstone Visitor Center from June 11 through June 15.

While the exhibits were at the Visitor Center, refuge volunteers staffed the display area and explained to visitors the significance of the two programs. The first, the Federal Duck Stamp program, is the only art competition of its kind sponsored by the U.S. Government. Duck Stamps are a vital tool for wetland conservation since ninety–eight cents out of every dollar generated by the sale of the stamps goes directly to purchase or lease wetland and associated upland habitats for inclusion in the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service's National Wildlife Refuge System. The second program, the Junior Duck Stamp curriculum, is a dynamic arts program that teaches wetlands and waterfowl conservation to students from kindergarten through high school.

In addition to staffing the exhibits, refuge volunteers rounded out the learning experience by organizing a "Duck Day" on June 14, inviting the public to participate in a variety of activities that focused on waterfowl. A total of 44 participants navigated through a bird migration obstacle course, avoiding mock predators, windows, buildings, and other obstacles while dealing with fragmented open spaces and invasive species.

Another "bird" blinded by blinking lights from antennas, radio towers, and wind generators skillfully dodges obstacles with his eyes closed on his travels through the migration obstacle course.

Participants of all ages enjoyed a station where they could try on props representing duck characteristics. Left: a senior talks with refuge volunteer Patsy Dicken while wearing two air sacs and a cardboard tube representing hollow bones. Right: a youngster enjoys helping her older sibling put on a bill to accompany her feathers and safety glasses representing nictitating membranes. A total of 67 "ducks" were dressed that day.

Two other active learning stations allowed guests to challenge themselves to pick up various sources of food with an assortment of tools to learn about different shapes and sizes of bills and beaks, or to try on props to learn about duck characteristics and adaptations. Nearby, another volunteer staffed a small table with magnifying glasses and water to demonstrate how a duck's contour feathers serve as a protective outer shell against wind and moisture.

Earlier in the week, a group of preschoolers from the Children's Learning Center stopped by for a reading of the 1941 children's classic, "Make Way for Ducklings," a picture book written and illustrated by Robert McCloskey. The book won the Caldecott Medal for McCloskey's illustrations, a prestigious award that recognizes the year's most distinguished American picture book for children. After the preschoolers listened to the story, they discussed the needs of the mallards in the story and their search for a safe location to raise their young.

Later this summer, more art work will be on display at the Visitor Center when the Wyoming winners of the Junior Duck Stamp contest will be on display. Students in all 50 states have the opportunity to participate in the Junior Duck Stamp curriculum and enter the contest. The Wyoming winners from four age categories are scheduled to be on display at the visitor center from July 26 – August 26.

The same two siblings use a more appropriate tool than the clear plastic tongs they tried first to pick up "bugs." The activity focused on beaks and bills.

U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

National Elk Refuge News – June 25, 2013

Summer Camp Sampler Includes Visit to Refuge

While National Elk Refuge volunteer Cindy Templeton shows students photos of some early homesteads in the Jackson Hole valley, volunteer Margaret Lozar lets the same children experience what the inside of a homestead may have smelled like by passing around a container filled with sod and charcoal.

Over 70 students got a glimpse of homesteading earlier this month through a visit to the historic Miller House and a series of activities that centered on early Jackson Hole history and the establishment of the National Elk Refuge. Six groups of students visited over a two–day span as part of a summer camp sampler offered by Systems of Education and Teton 10.

Systems of Education is a community–wide system involving parents, families, schools, community organizations, philanthropists, and businesses to align goals and mobilize resources to ensure every child in Teton County has a strong foundation for lifelong learning, from early education in pre-school years to high school graduation and beyond. A Systems of Education working group, concerned about summer learning loss, was approached by the Teton County School District and asked if they could create programs for students that don't qualify for summer school but need additional experiences over the summer to serve as enrichment programs.

With the task at hand, the group looked at working with existing programs and day camps to expand learning opportunities to other students over the course of a three–week period. The objective of the summer sampler program was to introduce youth and their families to several quality programs at an affordable rate so families could then enroll in their own programs that appeal most to their children for the remainder of the summer and into the following school year. The varied experiences would also give the students exposure to outdoor experiences in Teton County. The Jackson Hole Children's Museum, Presbyterian Church of Jackson Hole's JOY Summer Camp, and Teton Science Schools stepped up to the challenge of increasing their capacities and accommodating 75 more children during the three–week period.

Systems of Education started advertising the summer sampler during parent teacher conferences in February, prioritizing children that had the least amount of exposure to summer camps. Of the students selected, 70% had one month or less of any kind of summer programs; 25% had no previous exposure to any kind with summer camps or programs. Determining that cost may have been a factor in the lack of previous summer camp experience, Systems of Education worked with an initiative called Teton 10 to secure funding. Teton 10 is a Jackson Hole effort to get youth and teens outside, promote an active lifestyle, connect to their community, and confidently engage in outdoor opportunities.

The program is a project of the Bridger-Teton National Forest Children's Forest and is administered by Teton Science Schools and Center of Wonder. With $17,000 in scholarship money secured, students could participate in the three–week summer sampler program for an affordable price.

The National Elk Refuge participated as one of the community resources that provided experiences for the students. Refuge volunteers organized a series of activities, first discussing the rigors of packing up and leaving a home in the eastern United States over a century ago for an unknown destination further west. Students filled out booklets helping them imagine what the adventure may have been like and what difficulties early pioneers might have experienced. The lesson took place inside the historic Miller House, a home that was large for its time and is sometimes referred to as Jackson's first "trophy home." Students sat on the back porch of the historic house, a scale that was much more representative of a one–room homestead. Inside the back porch, students placed signs representing a bed, a wood stove, a chair, and other objects around

As part of the lesson, students were tasked with listing what they would have packed as they moved out west and what they would have left behind. One student, thinking about what was most important to take along, simply wrote, "memories."

Binoculars enabled the students to see coyotes, bald eagles, and an osprey which they hadn't seen with their naked eyes.

the room to imagine the limited space inside a typical homestead compared to that of a modern–day home.

From there, students moved outdoors to discuss the establishment of the National Elk Refuge and the purpose of the National Wildlife Refuge System. After using binoculars to take in the views and look for wildlife, the students passed around skulls, antlers, horns, and furs while talking about animals found in the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem. The learning experience focused on the needs and adaptations of animals, stressing the importance of adequate habitat and the role of the National Elk Refuge in the Jackson Hole valley.

"We saw the wheels turning during some of the lessons," said Margaret Lozar, one of the volunteers that organized the lessons. "Some of the older students asked questions that showed they were really thinking about some of the key information – and maybe for the first time," she explained. "It was good exposure to a part of their community."

The students ranged in age from grades 1–6.

Students crowd around Refuge volunteer Joe Lozar to get a closer look at the elk hide he pulled out for the students to see and feel.

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
National Elk Refuge

PO Box 510
Jackson, Wyoming 83001

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
June 26, 2013 13-11

Lori Iverson
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EASTMAN EXCAVATION TO BEGIN WORK ON WATER MAIN LEAK

Eastman Excavation of Jackson, Wyoming will begin work this week to repair a water main break just north of the Jackson Hole & Greater Yellowstone Visitor Center at 532 N. Cache Street. The Visitor Center is owned and operated by the National Elk Refuge.

The area north of the Visitor Center has a high water table, and rain and melting snow can create standing water conditions in the spring when the ground becomes saturated. However, National Elk Refuge and Town of Jackson maintenance workers determined the source of standing water this spring was compounded by a leak in the underground water pipe system and investigated to determine its origin. The National Elk Refuge solicited bids and awarded the repair work to Eastman Excavation last week. Estimated repair costs total $6,500.

Repair work is expected to be completed by early next week. For safety reasons, people are asked to stay clear of the North Park area until crews are finished and the work completed. Large equipment will be staged and operating for the duration of the project. The Visitor Center will remain open during the regular summer hours of 8:00 AM to 7:00 PM while the work is completed, with no water shutoffs to the building expected.

For further information, please call the National Elk Refuge administrative offices at (307) 733.9212.

– FWS –

National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior
Grand Teton National Park

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Bridger-Teton National Forest

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Interagency News Release

For Immediate Release
July 12, 2013

First Significant Fire of the Season in Jackson Hole Requires Response by Two Teton Interagency Fire Engines

Two Teton Interagency Fire engine crews responded to a report of a half-acre fire on the northern boundary of the National Elk Refuge at approximately 8:30 PM on Thursday, July 11. Fire investigators are following a lead that the source of ignition may have been fireworks discharged from the Gros Ventre Campground that lies just across the Gros Ventre River in Grand Teton National Park.

Teton Interagency Dispatch Center received notice of the Gros Ventre Fire and summoned initial attack resources to respond. A Grand Teton National Park ranger assisted in locating the best access route to the fire, which was not near park or refuge roads. Despite high humidity and cool evening temperatures, the Gros Ventre Fire burned quickly through dry grass and sagebrush. A wetting rain on Thursday evening helped crews contain the fire shortly after 10:00 PM. Teton Interagency Fire manager Mack McFarland described the fire behavior as more active than expected for this time of year. “Even with rain and high humidity last night, it was notable for so early in our fire season.”

This marks the first significant fire incident for the 2013 season, and serves as a reminder that vegetation is becoming much dryer across the greater Jackson Hole area as summer temperatures increase and humidity decreases. Fire danger is currently rated as moderate, but nearby areas, including Yellowstone National Park, have increased to a high fire danger rating. The National Weather Service is predicting the Jackson area may see temperatures near 90 degrees by next week.

Fireworks are prohibited in Grand Teton National Park, the National Elk Refuge, the Bridger-Teton National Forest, across Teton and Sublette counties, and on Wyoming state lands. It is critical that everyone comply with this regulation, especially given the dry conditions and high temperatures throughout Jackson Hole.

Along with the fireworks prohibition on public and county lands, campers are reminded that unattended or abandoned campfires can easily escalate into wildfires. Campers and day users should never leave a fire unattended and always have a shovel on hand and a water bucket ready for use. All campfires must be completely extinguished before leaving a site by wetting and stirring the wood and ashes until they are cold to the touch.

With the already active fire season across the country, local residents and visitors should exercise extra caution and practice heightened fire safety at all times. Area residents and visitors are requested to report a fire or smoke by calling 911 or Teton Interagency Dispatch Center at 307.739.3630.

For more fire information, please visit www.tetonfires.com.

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U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
National Elk Refuge

PO Box 510
Jackson, Wyoming 83001

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
July 15, 2013 13-13

Lori Iverson
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TWO PROGRAMS SCHEDULED FOR THE WEEK OF JULY 22 AT THE JACKSON HOLE & GREATER YELLOWSTONE VISITOR CENTER

The National Elk Refuge will be hosting two free programs at the Jackson Hole & Greater Yellowstone Visitor Center during the week of July 22 to recognize the Grand Teton Association's Membership Week. The Grand Teton Association is a nonprofit organization that operates sales outlets in a number of federally–operated visitor centers and contact stations throughout the area, with sales supporting educational, interpretive, and research projects by their partnering organizations. The Jackson Hole & Greater Yellowstone Visitor Center, located at 532 N. Cache Street in Jackson, serves as one of the association's largest sales outlets.

On **Tuesday, July 23**, the Teton Raptor Center will be offering an hour-long program at 2:00 PM, featuring a live bird demonstration. The Teton Raptor Center is a nonprofit organization that takes in injured, ill, and orphaned birds of prey year-round and provides veterinary care and rehabilitation in an effort to return raptors to the wild. On previous visits to the Visitor Center, Raptor Center programs have included a hawk, eagle, owl, and falcon. Guests to next week's program can view and photograph raptors up close and learn about their habits, characteristics, and rehabilitation.

National Elk Refuge Facilities Maintenance Worker Amanda Soliday will give a search and rescue demonstration at 10:00 AM on **Friday, July 26** with the help of her search dogs, Roscoe and Otis. Soliday, Roscoe, and Otis volunteer with the Wyoming K-9 Search and Rescue program, a nonprofit organization committed to training competent search dog teams and assisting local, state, and federal authorities in search and rescue situations. Roscoe and Otis, 8 year-old and 1 year-old golden retrievers, respectively, have multiple certifications for different types of search work. Along with giving search demonstrations, Soliday will explain the steps necessary to begin early training with a search and rescue dog.

Both programs are family–friendly and free of charge.

Current or new Grand Teton Association members will receive a 25% discount off all purchases throughout the week at any of the association's locations. The Grand Teton Association also operates a small store at the refuge's historic Miller House located ¾ mile north of the refuge's entrance at the end of East Broadway Avenue. To learn more about the Grand Teton Association and membership benefits, please visit *www.grandtetonpark.org* or speak with Visitor Center staff.

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U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
National Elk Refuge

PO Box 510
Jackson, Wyoming 83001

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
July 18, 2013 13-14

Lori Iverson
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NATIONAL ELK REFUGE STAFF ENHANCED

Two new staff members have joined the National Elk Refuge, filling vacancies critical to the refuge's overall operation.

Cris Dippel has been selected as the new Deputy Refuge Manager of the National Elk Refuge and reported to his new position on June 16. Dippel replaces Paul Santavy, who moved to the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service's Mountain–Prairie Region in December 2012. In his new role, Dippel will be leading refuge operations and maintenance, including biological, range management, law enforcement, fire management, and facilities management programs. Dippel will also serve as a collateral duty Law Enforcement Officer at the National Elk Refuge.

Dippel has been with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service since 1989. In Colorado, he served as Refuge Manager of a National Wildlife Refuge (NWR) Complex, which includes Browns Park and Ouray national wildlife refuges and the Colorado River Wildlife Management Area. During his last two years, he spent much of his time working with oil and gas leases in the Ouray (northeastern Utah) area.

His extensive U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service experience includes biologist and managerial positions at Tetlin and Alaska Maritime NWR in Alaska, Kauai NWR Complex and French Frigate Shoals (Hawaiian Islands NWR) in Hawaii, Hart Mountain National Antelope Refuge in Oregon, and Cabeza Prieta NWR in Arizona. Prior to his full–time work with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Dippel earned a B.A. degree in Environmental Biology at Greenville College in Illinois in 1984 and a M.S. from Emporia State University in Kansas in 1986.

Also new to the National Elk Refuge staff is Law Enforcement Officer Bryan Yetter. He joined the refuge staff in January 2013, coming from the National Park Service. During the past few months, Yetter has been on a work detail, completing training required by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. In addition to working in National Park Service positions at Lake Roosevelt National Recreation Area, Glen Canyon National Recreation Area, and North Cascades National Park, Yetter is a veteran of the U.S. Navy.

"These are key vacancies in our small staff that we were fortunate to fill," explained Refuge Manager Steve Kallin. "Both of our new staff members come to us with experience and skills that will be a tremendous asset to our programs."

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National Elk Refuge

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
July 25, 2013 13-15

ART WORK TO BE ON DISPLAY AT THE JACKSON HOLE & GREATER YELLOWSTONE VISITOR CENTER

An exhibit featuring the top entries in the 2013 Wyoming Junior Duck Stamp Program has moved to the Jackson Hole & Greater Yellowstone Visitor Center this week, featuring the art work of winners from four age categories. The art work was on display at the National Museum of Wildlife Art earlier this month and will be featured at the Visitor Center from July 26 through August 26. The Jackson Hole & Greater Yellowstone Visitor Center is located at 532 N. Cache Street in Jackson.

The Junior Duck Stamp Conservation and Design Program is a dynamic arts curriculum that teaches wetlands and waterfowl conservation to students from kindergarten through high school. The program incorporates scientific and wildlife management principles into a visual arts curriculum. Participants complete a Junior Duck Stamp design at the completion of their studies, using visual arts to convey what they have learned.

Each spring, students submit their artwork to a state or territory contest, with top entries moving on to a national competition. More than 27,000 students enter state Junior Duck Stamp art contests each year. The winning design from the national contest is used to create the Junior Duck Stamp for the following year.

This year, judging for the Wyoming Junior Duck Stamp contest was held at Seedskadee National Wildlife Refuge near Green River, Wyoming. Bailey Schupp, age 12, from Pinedale, WY took the top honor with Best of Show. A virtual gallery featuring art work from the contest is located at *www.fws.gov/seedskadee/jrduck/2013/*.

Proceeds from the sale of Junior Duck Stamps support conservation education and provide awards and scholarships for the students, teachers and schools that participate in the program. Through the Junior Duck Stamp program, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service introduces participants to both the Federal Duck Stamp program and the National Wildlife Refuge System and educates new generations of citizens about the importance of waterfowl and wetlands conservation.

The Wyoming Junior Duck Stamp Program Art Work Tour Schedule for the remainder of the contest year includes these state locations:

- August 29 – October 28, 2013: White Mountain Library, Rock Springs
- November 1 – December 16, 2013: Northwest College, Orendorff Building, Sinclair Gallery, Powell
- December 21, 2013 – February 10, 2014: Wyoming Game & Fish Department Office, Casper
- February 14 – March 17, 2014: Wyoming Game & Fish Department Headquarters, Cheyenne

More information on the Junior Duck Stamp Program can be found at *www.fws.gov/juniorduck/.*

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U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

National Elk Refuge News – July 26, 2013

Two Programs This Week Draw Large Crowds

Top: In addition to being Program Director for the Teton Raptor Center, Jason Jones is a master falconer and professional handler.

Below: A youngster in the front row doesn't miss a thing as he carefully listens to all the details during Jones's presentation.

Two programs at the Jackson Hole & Greater Yellowstone Visitor Center entertained audiences of all ages this week, with a number of animals sharing starring roles in the educational presentations.

On Tuesday, Jason Jones of the Teton Raptor Center presented an hour–long program, featuring four birds from the non–profit organization. The Teton Raptor Center takes in injured, ill, and orphaned birds of prey year–round and provides veterinary care and rehabilitation in an effort to return raptors to the wild. Tuesday's program included a Great Horned Owl, a Harris Hawk, a Saker Falcon, and a Golden Eagle, which Jones brought out one at a time. With bird in hand, Jones gave some background on each raptor and discussed its characteristics and habits. A crowd of 180 people participated in the program, including a number of children from day camps and organizations from throughout the community.

Friday morning, National Elk Refuge Facilities Maintenance Worker Amanda Soliday gave a search and rescue demonstration with the help of her search dogs, Roscoe and Otis. Soliday, Roscoe, and Otis volunteer with the Wyoming K–9 Search and Rescue program, a nonprofit organization committed to training competent search dog teams and assisting local, state, and federal authorities in search and rescue situations. Roscoe and Otis, 8 year-old and

1 year-old golden retrievers, respectively, have multiple certifications for different types of search work.

During Friday's presentation, Soliday had children hide behind trees and bushes to demonstrate basic search skills. The problems became more complex as Soliday hid other, smaller items in the grass. Despite complications from a brain tumor, Roscoe performed well and drew smiles and applause from the audience of 76 people. His shining moment came when Soliday took a hat off one of the children, then had the owner, along with three other children, step out onto the lawn. Without missing a beat, Roscoe smelled the cap, gave a few yelps, and, after only a few sniffs, ran directly to the hat's rightful owner.

Above: Roscoe tugs on a toy he receives as a reward for a successful find. Below: Roscoe receives plenty of lovin' as he takes a break from his search and rescue demonstration.

The programs this week were sponsored by the generous support of the Grand Teton Association, a nonprofit cooperating association that operates bookstores in visitor centers and contact stations throughout the Greater Yellowstone Area. The Association helps fund a wide variety of projects and programs for the National Elk Refuge, Grand Teton National Park, and the Bridger–Teton and Caribou–Targhee National Forests. Proceeds from all sales are returned to the federal agencies in support of art, education, and research.

This week, the Grand Teton Association celebrates its membership week. To learn more about membership benefits, visit *www.grandtetonpark.org/support-us/become-a-member/*.

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
National Elk Refuge

PO Box 510
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
August 1, 2013 13-16

Lori Iverson
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REFUGE MAKES PREPARATIONS FOR BISON AND ELK HUNTING SEASONS

Wildlife managers are preparing for two upcoming hunting seasons on the National Elk Refuge. Hunting programs on the Refuge are used as a management tool to achieve optimum herd size as determined through a cooperative effort between the National Elk Refuge, Grand Teton National Park, and Wyoming Game & Fish Department managers.

The 2013 bison hunting season on the National Elk Refuge will begin on August 15 and run through January 12, 2014. Bison hunting licenses are issued by the Wyoming Game & Fish Department. A Refuge–specific bison permit is required and is provided with the State license. Individuals who have not already applied and been selected for the 2013 season are not eligible to hunt bison this season.

The Refuge bison hunting season will be comprised of 12 hunt periods of varying length, with a number of weeklong breaks of non-disturbance incorporated into the season. This is intended to increase the success rate for hunters since bison, along with other animals, may learn to avoid an area with continued hunting pressure. Wildlife managers are using the hunt period structure as a tool to achieve herd objectives.

The 2013 Refuge elk hunting season will run from October 12 through December 15 and will consist of 10 consecutive hunt periods. Persons interested in hunting elk may begin applying for Refuge–specific permits beginning Wednesday, August 14. Applications for elk permits must be submitted electronically by September 25 to be entered into a computerized random draw. The results of the drawing will be posted on the application web site by September 26.

Application for National Elk Refuge elk hunting permits is done in cooperation with the Wyoming Game & Fish Private Lands Public Wildlife Access program. Hunters may initially apply for only one hunt period per hunt unit and must already have a valid Wyoming elk license to enter the electronic drawing. Elk hunters attempting to fill two valid licenses on the Refuge during the same hunt period do not need to apply for two Refuge permits.

Bison and elk hunting information, including general information, application procedures, regulations, maps, weapons restrictions, and access can be found on the National Elk Refuge's web page at *www.fws.gov/refuge/national_elk_refuge*. Printed copies of Refuge regulations can be picked up in Jackson at the Jackson Hole & Greater Yellowstone Visitor Center (532 N. Cache Street), Wyoming Game & Fish Department (420 N. Cache Street), or the National Elk Refuge Administrative Offices (625 E. Broadway Avenue). Printable versions (PDF) of the regulations and maps are available on the web site.

Persons traveling on Refuge roads, including Curtis Canyon and Flat Creek roads, are encouraged to familiarize themselves with hunt boundaries and be aware that hunters may be in the area.

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