

Total Solar Eclipse - August 21, 2017

National Elk Refuge Event Overview

Internal Planning Document

Objectives

- Provide for safety of employees and visiting public during the rare natural event and in the days immediately preceding and following the event.
- Protect wildlife and habitat that could potentially be impacted due to a large influx of visitors.
- Collaborate with the Town of Jackson, Teton County, federal agencies, and other relevant organizations to streamline support functions and lessen community impacts.
- Coordinate timely and accurate public information.

Key Messages to Share with the Public

- Cell and internet service in all areas may be inconsistent or not available due to a high volume of users. Text messages may be more reliable than phone calls, especially when trying to contact 9-1-1 for an emergency.
- In an emergency, you may send a text message to 9-1-1. Simply text the number 911; in the message, include your location, the nature of your emergency, and if you need police, fire, medical, or search and rescue response. Do not use abbreviations. Be prepared for a delayed response.
- Stock up on groceries or make dining reservations in advance, as restaurants will likely be crowded.
- Fill your gas tanks. We are expecting additional demand and congestion on the roadways.
- Visit the banks / ATMs early, as ATMs may run out of cash due to a visitation surge.
- Lodging accommodations are limited. Hotels, camping, and RV camping are near capacity. Visitors may need to look outside of Jackson and Teton County for accommodations. Be sure to have your accommodations arranged prior to arrival.
- Area roadways will likely be congested; regular routes may be subject to temporary restrictions. Variable traffic signs will provide up-to-date information on specific roadways. Visit www.wyoroad.info for additional information.
- Be prepared for heavy bicycle traffic. Remember to share roads, trails, and pathways and be courteous to other users, including any emergency service vehicles that may be using pathways for emergency response routes.
- The hospital and urgent care facilities are increasing staffing to handle heavier than normal walk-in and emergency visits. Fill your medical prescriptions in

- advance and have an extra supply of any medications.
- August is prime fire season. Be extremely careful with cigarettes, campfires, recreational burns, and parking a vehicle on dry grass. Know and respect any burning restrictions for the area you are visiting. Campfires must be completely extinguished: doused, stirred, and cold to the touch. Report any signs of smoke immediately. Fireworks are not allowed.
- Residents should stock up on essentials including groceries, medications, water, tarps, emergency generators, and camping equipment. The more self-sufficient you can be, the better. Emergency response times will be affected with the additional visitors.

General Information

Where can I find information on the internet about Refuge restrictions during the eclipse?

The National Elk Refuge has an informational page on its web site dedicated to the total solar eclipse at <http://bit.ly/2tgZiom>.

Additionally, a comprehensive eclipse-dedicated web site, <http://tetoneclipse.com>, has been developed for the Town of Jackson and Teton County, Wyoming and is an excellent resource for visitors to the area for the celestial event.

What activities will be allowed on August 21?

The only change in regulations will be a closure of Refuge fishing access on August 21. Otherwise, it will be business as usual on the Refuge during the eclipse. The same standard year-round regulations will be valid during the period preceding, during, and after the eclipse.

Key year-round regulations include:

- National Elk Refuge access is restricted to open public roads and trails designated as “authorized routes.” All other foot, vehicle, bicycle, and horse travel is prohibited. This includes travel between the Refuge and adjacent National Forest lands. You must be on an authorized route at all times while within the Refuge boundary.
- Visitor use is not allowed on the Refuge between legal sunset and sunrise, other than vehicle traffic on the road to a designated location.
- Overnight parking/camping on the Refuge Road (including pullouts) is not allowed.

Will public facilities remain open?

Both the Miller House and Jackson Hole & Greater Yellowstone Visitor Center will remain open during regular business hours on August 21. Staff can encourage visitors to step outside during the totality phase (11:34 - 11:37 AM) if they have appropriate viewing eye protection. The administrative offices will also be open during regular business hours.

A visitor center staff member may be assigned to the upper viewing deck to ensure we don't exceed capacity, though the cover on the deck doesn't make this an optimal viewing location.

What are key times to note?

- 10:16:43 am - Start of partial eclipse
- 11:34:55 am - Start of total eclipse
- 11:37:10 am - End of total eclipse
- 1:00:21 pm - End of partial eclipse
- Duration of totality - 00:02:15

Event Management

What additional measures will the Refuge take in order to manage the event?

A small incident management team will be coordinating operations and communication for the Refuge. We will have one to two people stationed in the Emergency Operations Center in Adams Canyon south of town, which is serving as the Incident Command Post for eight incident management teams, including federal agencies, Town, and County.

Seven additional U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service law enforcement officers will be detailed here from other refuges as well as one wildland fire engine and crew.

It will be critical to keep communication and coordination tight by reporting through a designated communication chain in order for everyone – from field staffers to incident management interagency leadership teams – to all be aware of changes and potential communication errors.

Please refrain from sharing information you receive from other agency personnel without having it properly vetted and sent through an established communication chain. Since we'll be coordinating communication with multiple agencies and jurisdictions, we'll have the greatest degree of success for consistent messaging and providing for public safety through a set communication system.

Incident Reporting Procedures

Will there be more law enforcement available?

There will be an increased presence of law enforcement and emergency services on the National Elk Refuge and in Grand Teton National Park. The Jackson Police Department and Teton County Sheriff's Office may have additional officers depending on availability and funding. However, emergency response times will likely be affected. The ability to respond to non-emergency situations may be compromised.

What if someone has a medical emergency?

Have them call or text 9-1-1. Callers should state their name and specific location, then say they are calling to request an ambulance for a medical emergency. If the dispatcher answers the phone by asking, "Can you please hold?" the caller should state, "I am calling with a medical emergency and requesting immediate assistance." This will help dispatchers as they prioritize calls.

What if someone needs vehicle assistance?

Requests for non-emergency requests (flat tire, engine trouble, etc.) will be prioritized and responded to as soon as possible. Accidents, especially those that involve injuries, will be a higher priority.

What if someone needs to report a wildfire?

They should call or text 9-1-1 or call the Teton Interagency Fire dispatch center at (307) 739-3630. This dispatch number is specific to fire only.

Refuge Parking Options

Can visitors park in the pullouts during the eclipse?

Visitors cannot park along the Refuge Road on August 21. They can, however, park in any of the public pullouts on the Refuge Road or Flat Creek Road beginning at sunrise. There is no time limit for parking in the pullouts as long as it's within the general time regulations of sunrise to sundown. Visitors should park as tightly as possible to maximize space.

Where can visitors park other than roadside pullouts?

The two gates on either end of the Miller House complex should be closed on the evening of Sunday, August 20. The south gate (closest to the Miller House) will open between 9:45 and 10:00 AM on the morning of August 21. Visitors will not be allowed to line up on the Refuge Road in anticipation of the gate opening. Once the gate is open, visitors can park in the Miller Barn area.

Can people set up lawn chairs in the pullouts or Miller House parking area?

Yes, as long as they are immediately adjacent to the vehicle and are not impeding additional parking or obstructing traffic.

Can people have alcoholic beverages while watching the eclipse?

Open containers in vehicles, consumption of alcohol in vehicles, and public intoxication are not allowed.

What if people other than visitor center users park in the visitor center parking lot on August 21?

Though it's signed as visitor center parking only, we know other users occasionally park there during business hours. This may be more likely to occur on the day of the eclipse. We are hoping visitors will be respectful of all parking regulations throughout the area. It will not, however, be a law enforcement priority and may have to be an inconvenience we concede to that day.

Personal Preparedness

What should I do to get ready?

Expect travel through town to be congested and slow-moving. Plan to have your errands completed in the days preceding the eclipse, such as having your gas tanks full, groceries in place, and prescriptions/medications on hand.

How will I get to work if I'm on duty that day?

Parking in many locations will likely be challenging. You're encouraged to bike, walk, or carpool to your duty station if you will be working that day to help minimize traffic.

We have eclipse glasses purchased for all our permanent, volunteer, and seasonal staffs. We will identify any equipment and supplies needed in the field, such as orange safety vests, and have them available several days prior to the eclipse.

What else will be needed that day?

Expect rapidly changing conditions and explain to visitors this may be the case. New news may soon become old news as the situation changes. Flexibility will be key to success and frustration levels. Be proud of how well we work with our interagency partners! This is key to our current planning and no doubt the successes we'll see during this busy time.

Additional Resources

- The official Town of Jackson and Teton County, WY solar eclipse site: tetoneclipse.com
- Grand Teton National Eclipse Information: www.nps.gov/grte/planyourvisit/2017-solar-eclipse.htm
- Bridger-Teton National Forest Eclipse Information: <http://bit.ly/2sXN14F>
- Multiple eclipse topics: Eclipse2017.nasa.gov
- For eye safety information: <https://eclipse.aas.org/eye-safety>
- For learning what's required for taking photos of the sun during an eclipse: Mreclipse.com