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Theodore Roosevelt National Park News Release

Immediate Release

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VOLUNTEERS SELECTED FOR ELK REDUCTION PROGRAM

Letters are in the mail to 240 potential volunteers who will assist Theodore Roosevelt National Park with its elk reduction program this fall and winter. Packets were mailed on Tuesday to a fraction of the people who had applied to volunteer for the program.

“The response to our request for volunteer team members was excellent,” said Superintendent Valerie J. Naylor. “We look forward to a successful elk reduction effort this fall.”

Volunteers will work as members of teams with up to 4 volunteers led by National Park Service employees. The teams will be using firearms to shoot cow elk in the park between November 1, 2010 and January 21, 2011. Shooting will be restricted to Tuesday through Thursday to minimize disruption to normal park operations and weekend visitation by the public.

A total of 5,269 individuals applied for the volunteer work. Because applicants could apply for multiple weeks, the actual number of names considered was 29,225. However, due to the number of applicants, nobody will be able to volunteer for more than one week. The 240 potential volunteers were randomly selected using a computer program.

The people who received packets have until September 5 to return all of the required paperwork to the park. If potential volunteers do not return their paperwork or decide not to participate, the park will go through another selection process to fill any vacant slots. Anyone not notified by September 20 can assume they were not selected for the elk reduction effort this year.

The park received applications from 46 states and the District of Columbia. North Dakotans accounted for 46% of the applicants, while 31% of the applicants were from Minnesota.

Of the potential volunteers selected so far, 48% are from North Dakota and 28% are from Minnesota. The final breakdown will likely change as some volunteers drop out and alternates are selected.

All volunteers must certify that they are in excellent physical condition and have good shooting skills. When they arrive at the park, they must also pass a shooting proficiency test or they will be disqualified from participating in the program.

“As people fill out their paperwork, they have to understand that this is difficult work that includes several hard days in the field under strenuous hiking and weather conditions,” said Naylor. “It won’t be just another walk in the park.”

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