

## DIRECTIONS:

The Anthony Creek feed site, part of the Elkhorn Wildlife area, is easy to reach on snow groomed, paved roads. Take exit 285 off Interstate 84 at North Powder, between La Grande and Baker City, Oregon. Travel 8 miles west on North Powder River Lane, following the brown "wildlife viewing" signs.



## NEWS RELEASE

Current Date: October 20, 2009  
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## Subject: *19 Years of Talking Elk*

(Haines, Oregon) Horse whisperers have become celebrated in our modern international culture. People who seemingly can speak to horses, communicating in undetectable methods to as viewed through most human eyes, and developing a relationship that is appreciated by both the human and the equine.

In the far northeastern corner of Oregon you will find two such women who have not only developed an ability to listen to horses, but also have come to study the whispers of Rocky Mountain elk! Alice Trindle and Susan Triplett have been offering elk-viewing tours via horse-drawn wagon for 19 years. With the average life-span of the Rocky Mt. elk being between 11 and 15 years, there is little doubt that all the winter inhabitants at the Anthony Creek feed site have

been born and raised with the activities of the wildlife tours.

According to Triplett, "We have come to know many of the animals, and have given the returning bulls names that we think match the configuration of their antlers or their behavior. Over the years we have watched Scoop-loop, Swigglehorn, North & South, Curious George, and of course the famous Dennis, grow into nice branch-antler bulls." While some animals are harvested by hunters every year, it seems that many of the well-known bulls are quite good at out-smarting the humans during hunting season!

T&T Wildlife Tours has been observing the behaviors of this herd of approximately 250 Rocky Mt. elk, and passing along their recollections to over 1,500 people during the short season between December and March. Trindle reflected, "Similar to horsemanship, we try to educate ourselves about the biology and lifecycles of the elk, and couple that with what we are observing, to develop a rich narrative. We do try to 'listen' to elk, not only verbally, but with their body language. We watch their tremendous awareness of their surroundings, and even though they may meet over 100 people in a day, they still notice things that are out of the ordinary."

With the presence of wolves in northeastern Oregon, coupled with the apparent growth in cougar and bear populations, Trindle and Triplett conclude that it will be an interesting elk-viewing season. "We will be very anxious to observe the cow to calf ratio at the Anthony Creek feed site operated by the Oregon Department of Fish & Wildlife", Susan Triplett commented. "We typically have quite a high calf survival rate, and last year the size of the calves indicated a very healthy summer foraging in the Elkhorn Mountains", she concluded.

The horse-drawn wagon, which is equipped with a wheelchair lift, takes people to within five feet of the herd. Other common visitors to the site include wild turkeys, many raptors such as Red Tail and Rough-legged hawks, and bald eagles. Coyotes, fox, and bobcats have also been spotted quite regularly. The tours will begin December 19, 2009 and run weekends through the end of February. Special holiday tour dates are scheduled for the day after Christmas through January 3, 2010. Call 541-856-3356 or the Union County Tourism office at 1-800-848-9969 or Baker County Visitor Center at 1-800-523-1235.

(Photos available in jpeg format.)

Website: [www.tnhorsemanship.com/wildlifetours/](http://www.tnhorsemanship.com/wildlifetours/)

