

2005 ROSSLAND BEAR AWARE REPORT

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

1.	INTRODUCTION	1
2.	COMMUNITY PROFILE	1
a.	Historic Situation	1
i.	<i>History of the local program, bear issues and problems.....</i>	1
ii.	<i>Statistical information on complaints, bears destroyed and bears relocated.....</i>	1
iii.	<i>Common attractants.....</i>	2
b.	Current Situation	3
c.	Bear/Human Issues and Problems	Error! Bookmark not defined.
3.	PROGRAM DELIVERY	4
a.	Campaigns	4
b.	Garbage raids.....	5
c.	Public presentations	6
d.	School presentations	Error! Bookmark not defined.
e.	Public displays	6
f.	Fruit tree replacement.....	7
g.	Fruit picking	8
h.	By-laws enactment	8
i.	Response to complaints by CO's	8
j.	Work with city officials.....	8
k.	Signs	8
l.	Media.....	8
m.	Cooperation with other organizations.....	9
4.	BARRIERS TO PROGRAM DELIVERY	9
a.	Financial	9
b.	Political	9
5.	ADDITIONAL INFORMATION	9
6.	VOLUNTEERS	10
7.	THE FUTURE OF THE BEAR AWARE PROGRAM IN _____	10
8.	ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	11

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Program Start Date: 23 May 2005

Program End Date: 19 November 2005

Area of Program Delivery: Rossland, BC

1. Introduction

Rossland is a town of 3500 people in the Selkirk Mountains of the Interior of British Columbia. The town sits at 3800 feet with an urban core and a rural area surrounding the core. This area is prime black bear habitat with grizzlies living in the adjacent drainage and high mountain area.

2. Community Profile

a. Historic Situation

i. History of the local program, bear issues and problems

Rossland has had an active Bear aware program since the summer of 1999. See previous reports for details.

ii. Statistical information on complaints, bears destroyed and bears relocated

	City of Castlegar				City of Rossland				Nelson District ¹		
	Total				Total				Total		
Year	03	04	05		03	04	05		04	05	
Attractant											
Garbage	50	31	24	105	39	7	2	48	39	28	67
Fruit	27	12	5	44	11	10	0	21	35	7	42
Compost	8	0	3	11	12	1	0	13	11	5	16
Bird Feeders	8	0	0	8	8	2	1	11	0	10	10
Garden	2	3	1	6	3	0	0	3	1	1	2
BBQ	0	2	1	3	0	1	0	1	7	2	9
Freezer	1	2	2	5	7	2	1	10	5	1	6
Pond Fish	1	2	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Rabbits	1	0	1	2	1	2	0	3	0	0	0
Pet Food	1	0	0	1	1	0	0	1	1	0	0
Nut Trees	4	0	0	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Crops	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Cooking Grease	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Pets	2	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	2	0	2
Hand Feeding	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	0	0	0
Livestock	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	9	5	14
Vineyards	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
Totals	107	52	37	196	92	26	5	112	111	59	183
Total Calls ³	118	68	24		94	42	13		189	67	

¹- Stats for the whole Nelson District (includes Nelson, Salmo, Blewett, Taghum, Kaslo, Ymir etc.)

²- Kaslo is part of the Nelson District

³- These totals are the total number of calls and do not match the totals above because more than one (or no) attractants were given per call

Black Bears shot in major West Kootenay Cities since 1998

Year	98	99	00	01	02	03	04	05
Trail	9	3	5	5	8	12	4	0
Rossland	6	1	6	14	5	14	5	4
Castlegar	29	35	42	19	19	30+	2	1
Nelson	NA	NA	7	7	18	20+		4
Kaslo						5	1+	0

In 2003, the numbers were high in most communities around BC due to the forest fires herding the bears into towns.

In 2005, it appears that in all communities around BC that the numbers of bear sightings and killings were down. This may have been due to the plentiful year for berries and other food sources.

However, Rossland's numbers remained high due to 3 bears being shot at the new development sites at Red Resort. Bears were attracted to lunches been left out by 'out of town workers'. In addition garbage containers used at work sites were not bear proof.

iii. Common attractants

Cause of Conservation Officer calls for bear sightings:

Attractant	2004	2005
Fruit	10	0
Garbage	7	2
Bird Feeders	2	1
Freezer	2	1
Rabbits	2	0
Compost	1	0
BBQ	1	0
Hand Feeding	1	0

Note:

Rossland residents (in the town itself) are in general conscious of managing their attractants. It would also seem that they are reluctant to call the CO's because of a perception that the bears

will be shot. For this reason this table of findings is limited in that it paints a rosy picture of attractant management. Through conversation and phone calls directly to Bear Aware we have found that there is still further work to be done in fruit picking, compost management and bird feeder removal in that order. In the future I would recommend that we devise a system to record anecdotal information and calls/emails to Bear Aware as well as to the CO's.

b. Current Situation - 2005 Goals for Rossland Bear Aware

- ❖ Implement a monthly newsletter for Rosslanders. Each edition will have news and information presented in a unique and humorous way. The aim is to concentrate on a specific aspect of bear education in each edition. For example, composting and birdfeeders.
- ❖ Work alongside developers to ensure bear-smart planning for garbage management and new resident education.
- ❖ Further field study work on bear hazard assessments in light of new property development.
- ❖ Work alongside the city to ensure bear-smart planning for garbage management and management of fruit trees on city property.
- ❖ Make sure all six criteria are met for Bear Smart Community status and obtain Bear Smart Status for the community.
- ❖ Work with Regional District, Allan Davies and the City of Rossland to bear-proof recycling and garbage truck area on Cascade Highway .
- ❖ Ensure passage of the bear bylaws through city council
- ❖ Research Rosslanders' awareness and perception of the bylaw
- ❖ Continue lobbying councilors towards its implementation.
- ❖ Continue community education program
- ❖ Continued presence at public events
- ❖ School programs involvement with media releases
- ❖ Public speaking at selected events
- ❖ Fundraising through sale of t-shirts and wrist bands and playing cards
- ❖ Continue volunteer recruitment and coordination.

3. Program Delivery

Table to Summarize Program Events, Presentations, and Displays .

Event/ Presentation/ Display	Date	No. of people	No. of Volunteers	Volunteer Hrs used
Display and table at Golden City Days	September 11 and 12, 2005	500	15	40
Workshop on Bear Proof Composting	September 12	12	1	4
Display and table at the opening of the Red Mtn Bike Park	Jul 6, 2005	80	2	6
Display and table at BC Rivers Day	September 25, 2005	400	1	4
Volunteer meeting for general public	June 29, 2005	8	2	3
Council Meeting	Jun 13, 2005	20	1	2
Proposal to Council	Oct 13, 2005	20	1	2
Volunteer Action meeting	July 29, 2005	12	3	10
School Presentations	May 24 ,25, Oct11, 2005	200	1	20
Interview with Shaw cable	Jun 8, 2005	2000?	1	1
Workshop on Bear Safety	Jul 1, 2005	15	1	4
Display in library	Jul 4, 2005	500	2	6
Library presentations to children	Jul – Aug	100	2	10
Rogue Tree Removal	July - Aug	N/A	3	12
Garbage Tagging Raids	Jul 12, 13 & Sep 13, 14	N/A	6	48
Newsletter	Wed, Aug 10, 2005	600	3	12
Fruit Picking	Aug - Nov	N/A	6	50

a. Campaigns

Door to door campaigns were carried out for the following reasons:

- ❖ Bear Activity has been reported in the area – advice and leaflets given.
- ❖ To work with residents to manage or remove fruit trees.
- ❖ Remind residents of managing garbage in bear country.

Approximately 50 houses visited.

b. Garbage raids

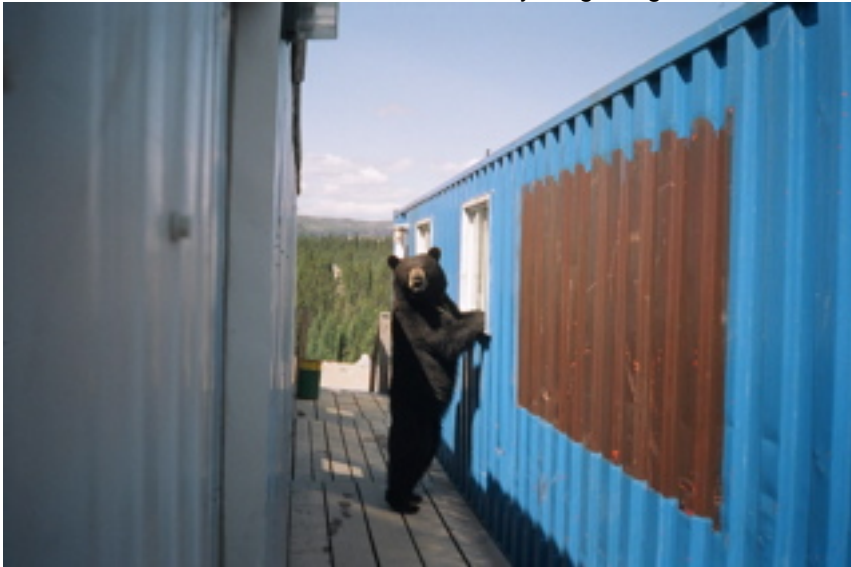
Four garbage raids were carried out. Two in July and then the follow up raids occurred in September.

In the July raid we were surprised to find 20 residents leaving their garbage out which is a marked increase from last year. These were mostly residents leaving garbage in carports and paths (from their front doors leading to the front gate/entrance to the road).

The September raid found only 2 residents leaving their garbage out – a good improvement rate.

N.B. As much as we would have liked to attribute the success rate as being purely down to our garbage raids, we are also aware that the second raid was done at a time when there was more bear activity in neighborhoods. Residents are consequently better at managing their garbage.

WARNING! Better to have Bear Aware raid your garbage – than this fellow....



c. Public presentations

See Summary table.

d. Public displays

See Summary table and the following photograph of our parade at the Golden City Days:



e. Rogue Fruit tree removal

There have been and are still various ‘hot spots’ in the town, where fruit trees are left unmanaged – these trees are said to be ‘rogue fruit trees’. We decided to target the trees we had some measure of control over – the trees that were on city land. In conjunction with the city and volunteers we were able to clear

approximately 30 trees. I would recommend that next year we target even more on city land and actively visit residents that are not managing their trees.

f. Fruit picking

We have been very lucky in Rossland to once again have our fruit-picking program organized by one of our key volunteers – Woniya Cancilla. This task takes many hours of time and we are very grateful for her support. I would recommend that next year there should be one or two days organized to 'blitz' fruit. We could organize for vehicles to go round and collect fruit and we could juice or take to the dump on mass. This event could be advertised and we could recruit for help from the schools and other groups. See also further recommendations at the end of the report.

g. By-laws enactment

Ann Quarterman has spear headed a campaign to pass a Proposed Bear Aware Bylaw in Rossland over the past 5 years. Our initial intent was to gain momentum in this campaign and further pressure/convince councilors of its importance. This was particularly important, as we wanted to pass the bylaw before the council election in November 2005. However, the political situation in Rossland has been dominated by development in the town and we were unable to push our agenda. We will have to start the campaign again with the newly elected councilors.

h. Response to complaints by CO's

A good working relationship has been developed between Rossland Bear Aware and our two CO's Ben Beetlestone and Tobe Sprado. The relationship has been one of mutual benefit. Ben has been a Guest Speaker at a Volunteer Meeting and has been an email or phone call away when we needed advice or statistics to do with complaints. In return we have attempted to reduce the workload of the CO's by visiting residents on behalf of the CO's that needed some form of education/advice about bears.

i. Work with city officials

Ann Quarterman A good working relationship with city officials had already been developed and this continued this year. Various staff have been helpful in allowing us to;

- ❖ Print the newsletter
- ❖ Plan and co-ordinate garbage management with new developers
- ❖ Lay the foundations for and place our new garbage bins
- ❖ Manage rogue trees
- ❖ Erect signs

j. Signs

We have a large banner that was erected twice this year at the main entrance to town on Columbia.

We did make another sign this year. 'Speedpro Signs' in Trail kindly donated a large sign that we are using to advertise our fruit picking campaign.

We got a pretty positive sign that Mother Nature was on our side this year. The climate was perfect for the growth of berries in this area. The bears got fat and healthy, stayed in the mountains and subsequently didn't bump into people or get bullets pumped into them!

k. Media

We had a successful interview with Shaw Cable at the beginning of the season in which we gave general advice about managing attractants and staying safe around bears. In November Ann Quartermanan interview was given to BKR Radio outlining our proposal to the City for the Bear

Attractant Bylaw and for amending the Official Community Plan to include regulations to ensure developers maintain Bearproof properties before and after development.

Finally we got front page coverage in the Rossland Record when we recommended OCP changes and passing the bylaw.

I. Cooperation with other organizations

We have worked closely with the Regional District of Kootenay Boundary and Tim Dueck to deliver the Bear Aware message. In September Tim and I jointly presented a workshop on Bear Behaviour and Managing your Compost in Bear Country.

4. Barriers to Program Delivery

a. Financial

We are very grateful of the financial support the city has given us and we hope this will continue in the future.

b. Political

In the main the city have been very supportive of the program for previously mentioned reasons. However, a number of councilors could have been more supportive of our Proposed Bear Aware Bylaws. There is a re-election of Council occurring this week (mid Nov) and we are hoping the new councilors will be more in favour of the bylaw and it will be passed within the coming calendar year.

5. Additional Information

Brief point-form outline of additional work done:

- ❖ Designed and published an informal and humorous, educational newsletter for Rossland called The Bearable Times.
- ❖ Purchased five new bear proof containers
- ❖ Actively created links with local commercial business' to promote Bear Aware and its aims.
- ❖ Purchased new TV and DVD used in presentations and displays and to set up an education booth for residents and tourists.
- ❖ Facilitated library talks to children.
- ❖ Golden City Days street parade (viewed by approx 500 people)
- ❖ Field research and compilation to complete a Bear Hazard Assessment Report.
- ❖ Liaised with Conservation Officers to fulfill the mandate of Bear Aware. This has included going out to visit numerous residential properties and overseeing the capture of 1 bear.
- ❖ Fielding and taking action on numerous calls from the local public.
- ❖ Display for the library.
- ❖ Rossland Bear Aware website. www.rosslandbearaware.org
- ❖ Forged links with new developers and the council to ensure pre-planning is incorporated in regards to bear corridors and bear proof garbage containers. This is still a project in process.

Bear Kills: *4 bears have been killed this season, all in the Red Mountain base development area. New developments at edges of existing towns are at high risk for attracting and habituating bears.*

Request for City Council: 1. Amend the OCP to include requirements for

developers to keep bear attractants at work sites secure while development is being built and to ensure that there is a waste management system in place that is Bearproof.

2. Pass the Bear Attractant Bylaw to have a way to currently enforce keeping bear attractants secure. This will aid in town in general and also will help with the high-risk areas at Red Mountain and at the Redstone Development until the OCP amendment is in place.

6. Volunteers

Volunteer Name	Hours Worked
Michelle d'Entremont	60
Marc Walton	20
Julie Garneau	60
Shahine Pourmokhtari	10
Al Davies	6
Neil Williams	2
Woniya Cancilla	80
Anne Skinner	2
Ernie Skinner	2
Eva Cameron	10
Brenda White	3
Barb Sabiston	5
Barry Williscroft	5
Richard Bredl	2
Helen Clugston	2
Tim Dueck	5

7. The Future of the Bear Aware Program in Rossland

The program in Rossland is extremely effective and should continue.

In terms of attractant management in the town itself the people seem to be getting the message about garbage. We need to now emphasize other attractants, especially the management of fruit trees. We have discussed various ways of improving peoples awareness and ability to pick and dispose of fruit.

Here are a few recommendations:

- ❖ Workshops, newsletter articles and advertisement educating the townsfolk in why and how to remove fruit. This should be done just before the season starts.
- ❖ Plan a day or two days when there will be a curbside pick of fruit – perhaps in conjunction with the council.
- ❖ Pursue more pickers from local high school. In addition use these volunteers to map all fruit trees in the town and then take action to canvass these people to see if they are managing their trees.

Attractant management in the resort areas and particularly the newly developed areas are of particular concern. An alarming amount of bear kills were made in these areas and we believe this was largely due to the lack of management by

the developers. In order to counter this we must prioritize following up on our proposal to council:

1. Amend the OCP to include requirements for developers to keep bear attractants at work sites secure while development is being built and to ensure that there is a waste management system in place that is Bearproof.
2. Pass the Bear Attractant Bylaw to have a way to currently enforce keeping bear attractants secure. This will aid in town in general and also will help with the high risk areas at Red Mountain and at the Redstone Development until the OCP amendment is in place.

Further work with Allan Davies and the RDKB to bearproof the recycling garbage truck area.

8. Acknowledgements

I would like to firstly acknowledge Ann Quarterman for her monumental effort in creating and then continuing to drive the Rossland Bear Aware Project. Her efforts in Rossland should not go unnoticed, as she has through her professionalism, hard work, common sense approach, personable manner and sheer dogged determination raised people's awareness of bear aware through the roof. In my time working with her she has been an excellent mentor and good friend. She has provided me with guidance and structure but also allowed me the freedom to make the program my own. Thank you Ann.

Joanne Siderius has been an excellent source of support and advice throughout the program. She has been very generous in sharing her biological expertise and her warm support. Thanks Joanne.

I'd like to thank all the volunteers, especially Julie and Michelle for their hard work and creative ideas that they brought to this year's program.

Lastly, I'd like to thank Jaque Drisdelle and the Bear Aware Team as a whole. The communication and sharing of resources has been most valuable.