

WildSafeBC Fraser Valley Regional District

Annual Report

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October 15 2014



Figure 1 - Canada Summer Job students Samantha Fischer and Ashleigh Born at Mission Fest



Executive Summary

The goal of the WildSafeBC program is to reduce human-wildlife conflict through education, innovation, and cooperation throughout BC. WildSafeBC Fraser Valley Regional District (WSBC FVRD) strives to achieve this goal from Hope through to Mission. The Hope Mountain Black Bear Committee manages the Hope area and the remainder of the Fraser Valley; Agassiz, Harrison, Chilliwack, Abbotsford and Mission are served by the WSBC FVRD Community Coordinator Laura Chappell and during the summer months two Canada Summer Job Students.

Throughout the 2014 season WildSafeBC FVRD was able to contact nearly ten thousand people in the Fraser Valley Regional District via door-to-door visits, community events, and through school and club presentations. 2014 had the lowest number of human-wildlife conflicts in the Fraser Valley reported to the Report All Poachers and Polluters (RAPP) line in the three years Bear Aware/WildSafeBC has been in the area.

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Highlights

The Fraser Valley Regional District spans many communities; WSBC FVRD makes an effort to evenly spread time between communities, based on the needs of each community. This season a total of nearly 10,000 people were contacted in the FVRD, a thousand more people than last year. The contacts breakdown as follows:

Table 1

	Events	Presentations	Door-to-door	Total
Abbotsford	1,546	505	1,597	3,648
Chilliwack	865	161	496	1522
Cultus	234	106	0	340
Harrison	85	0	360	445
Mission	1,610	65	1,566	3,241
Agassiz	658	0	0	658
Total	4,998	837	4,019	9,854

Community Events

WSBC FVRD attended 29 events and contacted almost 5,000 people at events throughout the course of the season. Typical event set-up is a booth with a bear pelt, several skulls, and a collection of rubberized scat. Pamphlets, bookmarks, wildlife knowledge, and attractant management strategies are distributed. Events are a great opportunity to talk one-on-one with members of the community and to learn local concerns.



Figure 2 - Community Coordinator Laura Chappell at Canada Day in Chilliwack

In 2014 the following events were attended.

- Abbotsford Farm & Country Market (x6)
- Pike Minnow Derby
- Children's Festival
- Mission Canada Day
- Chilliwack Canada Day
- Agassiz Farm Fresh Market (x3)
- Jam in Jubilee (x3)
- Parks Day at Cheam Wet Lands
- Parks Day at Cultus Lake
- Mission Folk Fest
- Mission Fest
- Agrifair
- Great Blue Heron Reserve Society presents: Imaginature
- University of the Fraser Valley 40 Year Anniversary - Chilliwack
- Agassiz Fall Fair
- Garlic and Rockabilly Festival
- University of the Fraser Valley 40 Year Anniversary - Abbotsford
- Great Canadian Shoreline Clean Up
- Mission Fire Safety Fair
- Fraser Valley Bald Eagle Festival

Door-to-door

Door-to-door visits consist of the Community Coordinator, Canada Summer Jobs Student or a volunteer canvassing a neighbourhood with door-hangers and/or animal specific pamphlets; typically black bear or cougar. Information is left at every residence in the neighbourhood regarding attractant management. Door-to-door occurs when wildlife has been reported in the area or when the Conservation Service or the general public requests it. As illustrated in the maps bellow, areas close to green spaces and mountains receive the most door to door.

The maps bellow are of the areas in Mission and Abbotsford that received door-to-door, however Chilliwack and Harrison were also canvassed. A total of 4,019 houses were contacted in the Fraser Valley.

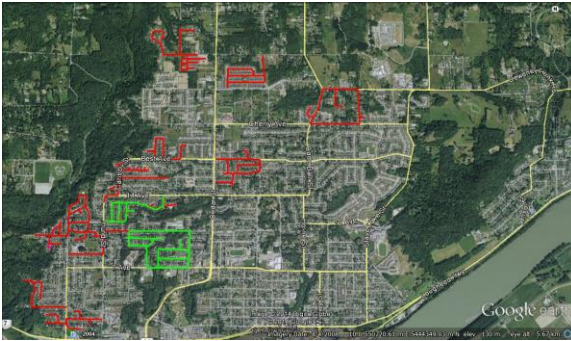


Figure 4 - Red and green lines show door-to-door in Mission



Figure 3 - Red and green lines show door-to-door in Abbotsford

Presentations

School, club, camp, and library presentations made up 837 contacts this season. Presentations allow for easy and efficient dissemination of information to large groups in a short amount of time.



Figure 6 – Presentation to a Rotary Club in Chilliwack



Figure 5 – Presentations to Girl Guides in Abbotsford

The following groups, received presentations:

- A.D Rundle Middle School Outdoor Education
- Abbotsford Christian Elementary
- Abbotsford Library
- Cultus Lake Park
- Clearbrook Library (x2)
- Great Blue Heron Reserve Society
- Sumas First Nations
- Rotary – Chilliwack Friday Afternoon
- Mission Leisure Centre
- Girl Guides
- Boy Scouts
- Vedder Middle School
- Auguston Elementary

Garbage Tagging

For four weeks or four cycles of garbage pickup WSBC selects four samples of one hundred houses to monitor. The number of houses leaving out garbage or compost cans on the curb the night before garbage collection is counted to determine the effectiveness of different WSBC strategies, with each neighbourhood receiving a different strategy.

Neighbourhood One is the control group. No education is administered.

Neighbourhood Two receives door-to-door visits, this neighbourhood is canvassed with pamphlets and door hangers.

Neighbourhood Three is tagged, this neighbourhood has a bright yellow sticker stating “WARNING – Garbage placed out early is a bear attractant” applied to any garbage or compost bins left out the night before collection.

Neighbourhood Four receives both door-to-door canvassing and tagging.

This year we monitored a totally of 800 houses, four hundred in Mission and 400 in Abbotsford.

For the 2014 season we chose new neighbourhoods from 2013 and used smaller stickers. Also, we chose neighbourhoods in close proximity to each other to decrease socioeconomic variables between areas. The following graphs show the results from the 2013 and 2014 campaigns.

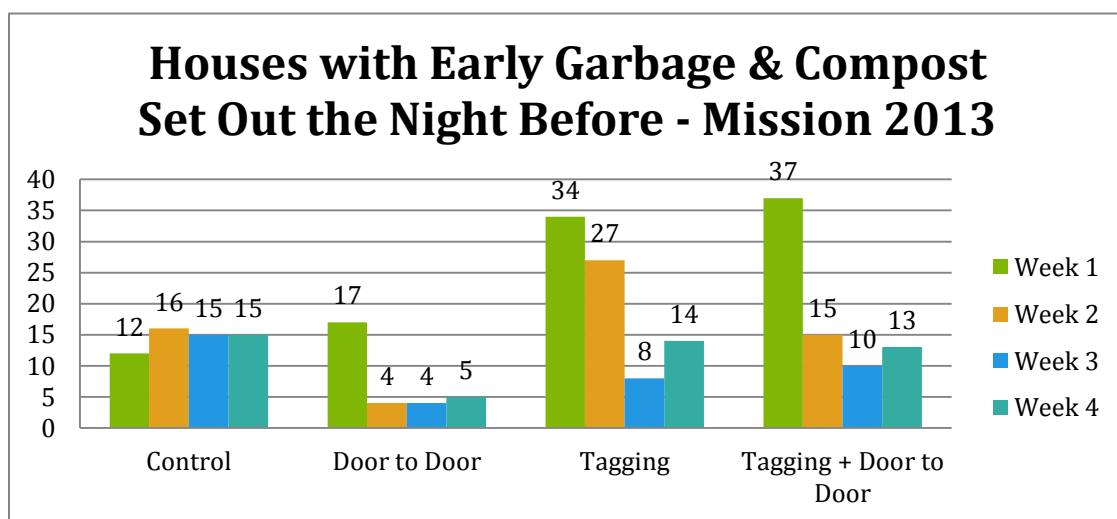


Figure 7 – Mission 2013 ‘s garbage tagging went as expected, each neighbourhood contacted by WSBC showed signs of improvement in the number of bins left out the night before collection.

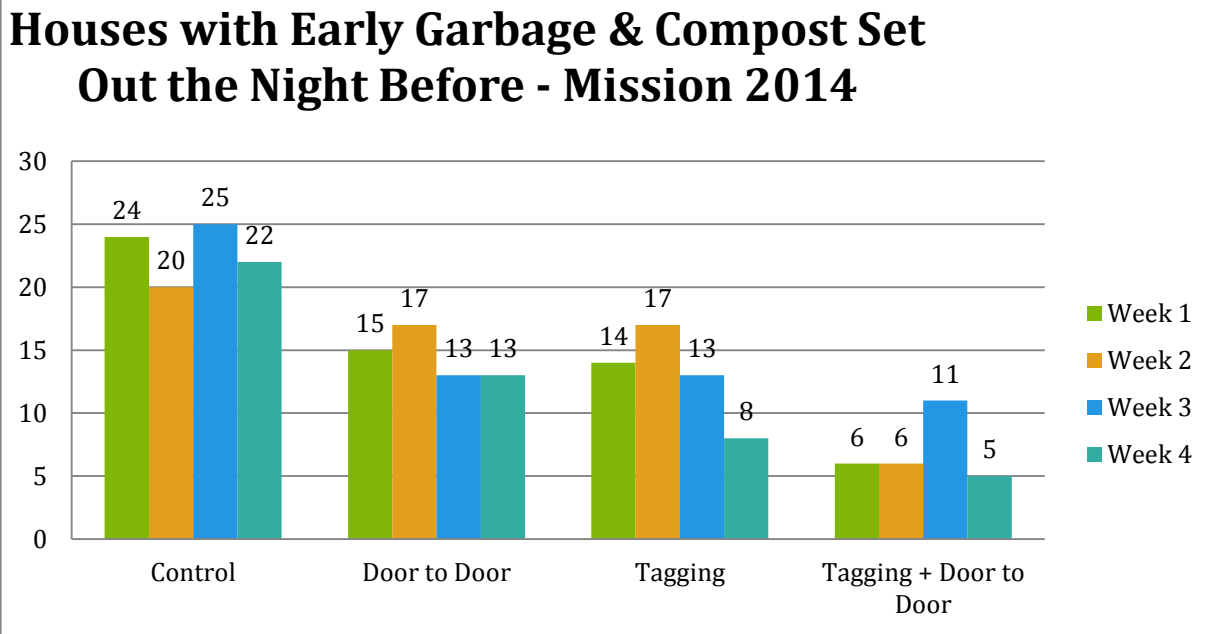


Figure 8 – Mission 2014 ‘s garbage tagging was not as successful as it was in the previous year. The numbers stayed consistent regardless of WSBC FVRD efforts. Week four shows improvement however this is due to collection night changing and people forgetting to put their garbage out.

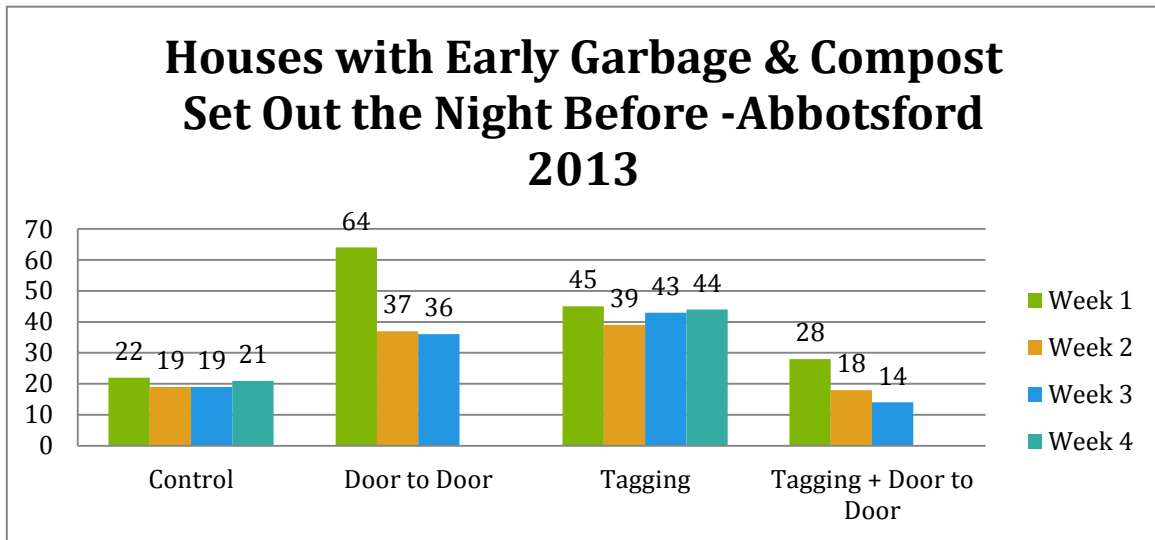


Figure 9– Abbotsford 2013 – The average number of cans out per neighbourhood is higher than Mission

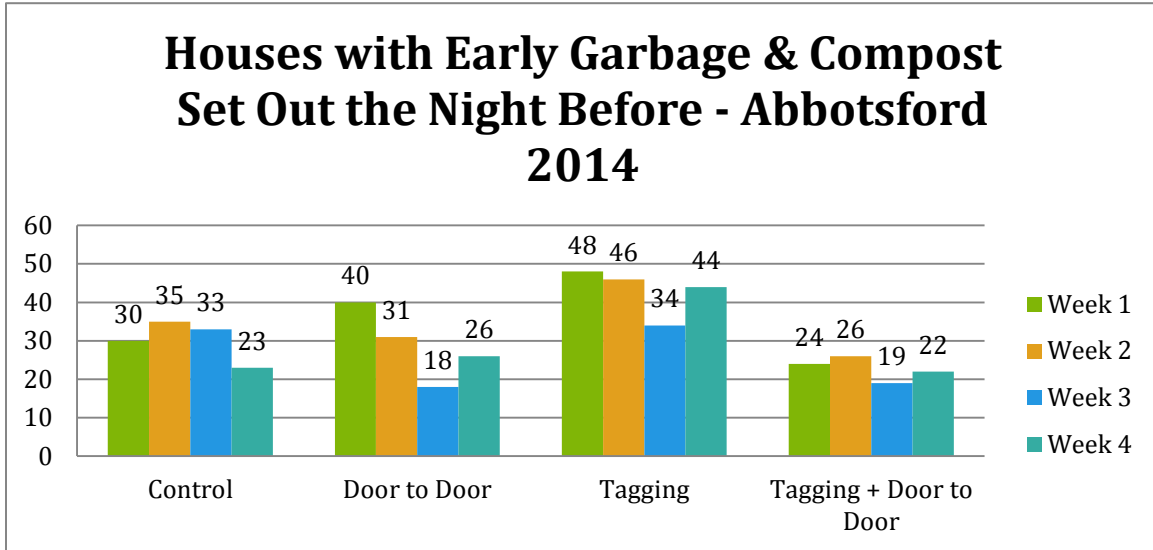


Figure 10 - Abbotsford 2014 showed minor improvements in Tagging + Door-to-door and in Tagging but the most effective method was Door-to-door

Challenges

The Fraser Valley Regional District is a large area with a diverse population. The challenges varied by region, but there were common themes.

Size

The sheer size of the area makes it difficult to stay abreast of all the wildlife conflicts and to canvass entire areas, making prioritizing crucial. The Wildlife Reporting Alert Program (WARP) and information from locals help to decide how best to distribute time. Summer students are imperative as a single community coordinator would be unable to manage an area this size.

Teacher Strike

The teacher strike cut the school year short in the spring and made it difficult to plan for the fall, decreasing the number of school presentations available. This season the focus shifted to childcare facilities and strike camps instead of schools.

Indifference

Mission and Harrison locals are both well-informed regarding wildlife attractants. Typically Harrison locals do not report, but do manage their attractants, as they do not want the wildlife harmed. Due to the lack of reporting it can be very difficult to ascertain the status of human-wildlife conflicts in the area.

Typically Mission locals report, but continue to leave attractants unmanaged. Mission requires a change in approach.

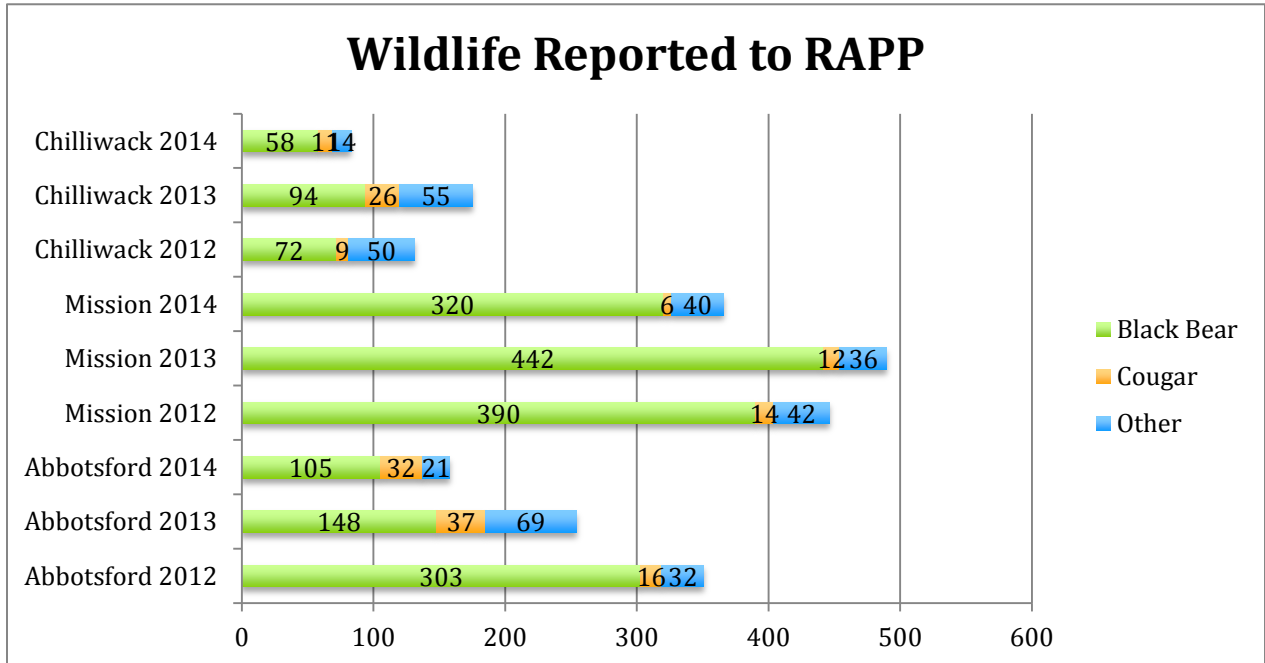
Education

People from Chilliwack and Abbotsford are frequently unaware of wildlife in the area and are often surprised by door-to-door or by seeing WSBC FVRD at events. In these areas WSBC FVRD needs to increase its visibility and should continue with door-to-door and events.

The Region

Wildlife conflicts are reported to the RAPP line and are available to the public on the WildSafeBC website. The overall number of wildlife conflicts reported in the Fraser Valley Regional District is the lowest it has been in the three years WildSafeBC/Bear Aware has been in the Fraser Valley.

The following graphs show the number of conflicts reported in the last three years.



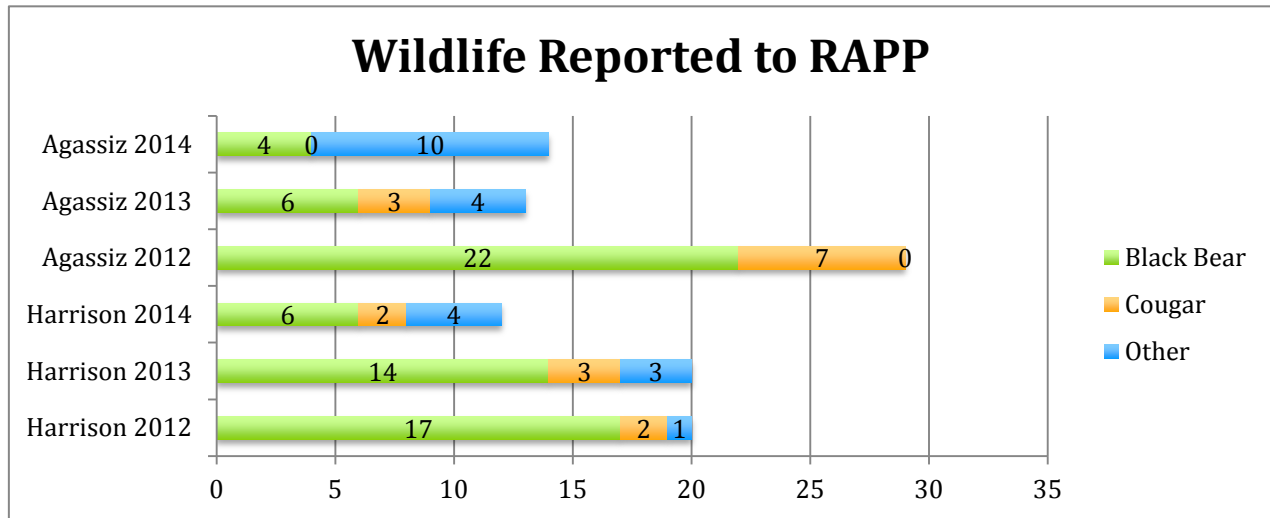


Figure 11

Figure 8 & 11- Black bears are the most reported animal in the Fraser Valley. Mission has the most reports followed by Abbotsford, Chilliwack, Agassiz and finally Harrison. These numbers represent the number of animals reported and do not necessarily reflect actual wildlife populations.

Goals for 2015

- Continue to build upon community partnerships and forge new relationships with community groups, local businesses, and other non-profit groups with the goal of making WildSafeBC a familiar and integral part of our community.
- Continue to offer educational presentations to a wide range of audiences, offering our existing human-bear conflict talks as well as developing new presentations targeting wildlife species that cause concern locally (cougars, coyotes, and raccoons).
- Use project funds to purchase new animal display items. The addition of a second set of display materials would allow for multiple events to be attended on the same day.
- Expand volunteer base across the FVRD, specifically in Mission.
- Continue to develop and expand upon methods to increase community awareness and compliance of wildlife attractant etiquette.
- Increase visibility in the local media.

Acknowledgements

WildSafeBC is grateful for the generous support the program receives from its sponsors, partners, and volunteers. Thanks to our sponsors: British Columbia Conservation Foundation, The Ministry of Environment, and Fraser Valley Regional District. A big thanks to Christina Vugteveen at the Fraser Valley Regional District, Shawn Gurney at the City of Abbotsford, Jennifer Meier at the District of Mission, Lydia Koot with the Hope Mountain Black Bear Committee, and the Village of Harrison. Thank you to the Conservation Officer Service, especially CO Don Stahl and CO Steve Jacobi for their advice and information. A huge thanks to the incredibly hard working and creative Canada Summer Job Students; Samantha Fischer and Ashleigh Born who were indispensable to this year's program. Thank you to Chilliwack Food Matters for working with WSBC to reduce attractants through gleaning. To all the volunteers who helped tag, went on door-to-door visits and helped at events we truly appreciate your help.