

WildSafeBC Golden Annual Report 2014



Photo: Peter Sulzle

Executive Summary

The WildSafeBC program aims to reduce human-wildlife conflict throughout British Columbia. The program was delivered in the Town of Golden in 2014 by WildSafeBC Community Coordinator (WSCC) Sarah Jane Osadetz. Bears were the most active animal in town throughout the season, however there were conflicts with many other species including skunks, coyotes, and cougars.

The WSCC organized many activities and events throughout the season to spread the WildSafeBC messaging to a variety of interest groups. Of note were door-to-door visits, presentations to local organizations and schools, and attendance at outdoor markets and events. Volunteers were also recruited for an apple gleaning program, which proved to be very successful.

The greatest challenge in 2014 was encouraging Golden residents to properly manage their waste; large numbers of residential garbage containers frequently and repeatedly attracted wildlife into town. A second challenge was working within the allotted time frame and budget to effectively deliver the program in an area with such high wildlife activity.

This year-end report summarizes the activities, successes and challenges of the program in 2014, and provides recommendations for future WildSafeBC initiatives that stem from this year's experiences.

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Highlights of the Program

Events and Displays

Attendance at special events throughout the season was a great way to reach out to the community and discuss prevention of human-wildlife conflicts with a variety of ages and backgrounds. Events attended by the WSCC this year include the Golden Farmers' Market, Canada Day celebrations, Community Sign-up Night, and Live Kicks.

WildSafeBC was also in attendance at the 1st Annual Golden Apple Festival, a collaborative two-day event with Wildsight Golden, Golden Food Bank, and Metis Nation Columbia River Society. The event showcased methods of reducing human-wildlife conflict while harvesting and storing apples. Prior to the festival, flyers were delivered to over 1500 homes. Organizers and volunteers went door-to-door to discuss apple picking and proper management of fruit around the home. As a result, over ten weeks of apple gleaning was coordinated in the community. The gleaning campaign culminated in a celebration at the Golden Apple Festival. The festival included numerous family activities and workshops including demonstrations on making apple juice and cider. Over 500 people attended the free event and the feedback was very positive. A second festival is planned for 2015.

Presentations

There was much interest from a variety of groups in Golden regarding wildlife biology and conflict resolution. Presentations were tailored to include pertinent information related to the particular location and audience, as well as any other specific requests. This year the WSCC delivered presentations at the Rotary Club of Golden, Lady Grey Elementary School, Golden Secondary School, Early Child Development Educators, School District #6 Home Learning Group, and preschool classes.

Door-to-Door and Garbage Tagging

The WSCC used both door-to-door visits and garbage tagging campaigns (where bright attractant warning stickers are placed on waste containers that are put out on the curb the night before collection) during 2014. In one evening in June, the WSCC observed over 50 waste containers knocked over during a tagging campaign (presumably due to visits from wildlife). During the same time period, over 75 containers were left outside prior to the pick-up time. Improperly stored garbage remains the number one issue within the Town of Golden.

Home Ambassador Program

The WSCC and Jordan Peterson (owner of VP Waste Management) devised a contest for residents in 2014. The contest entailed residents signing up to become a “Home Ambassador” in order to win free recycling and garbage collection services for 2015. As a Home Ambassador, a resident was required to adopt best practices and recommendations from WildSafeBC from May through November to reduce wildlife attractants around the home. Based on each household’s particular needs, the WSCC provided education and training in various aspects: use of bear spray, use of WARP (WildSafeBC’s Wildlife Alert Reporting Program), adherence of Bylaw 1257 (Attractant/Waste Management Bylaw), and use of the Conservation Officer Reporting line to report wildlife sightings or conflict. Once the education and training was complete, the resident was entered into a draw. Two winners will be drawn at the end of November.

Media

Numerous forms of media were used to reach audiences in Golden; Facebook, the Golden Star, and EZ Rock Radio were used as the main platforms for communication.

Challenges to the Program

The WSCC was new to the program in 2014, therefore there was a large amount of training to complete and knowledge to acquire at the beginning of the season. In addition, working within a limited time frame and budget was a continuing challenge. This is especially due to the fact that conflicts with bears due to poorly managed attractants were consistent throughout the summer and into the fall.

The WSCC worked to create an environment of open discussion and dialogue with residents in order to spread WildSafeBC’s messaging; however, there remain a significant number of homes that need to foster changes in how their attractants are managed. Management of residential waste is the number one source of conflict in Golden.

An increase in the budget and working hours available for the program (especially during fall months) would be helpful to continue to build relationships within the community. It would also provide the necessary resources to help increase residents’ compliance with Golden’s bylaws and WildSafeBC’s recommended practices.

Goals for 2015

The following is a list of recommendations for WildSafeBC initiatives in future years:

- Continue to promote the Home Ambassador Program.
- Increase the ability of residents to lock up and store garbage effectively through different product options.
- Request an investment from the Town of Golden for a bear-resistant bin pilot project (up to \$10,000 per year).
- Increase participation and attendance at the Golden Apple Festival.
- Increase volunteer engagement in Golden for WildSafeBC events and displays.
- Refine the Wildlife Hazard Assessment (ongoing).
- Work in conjunction with VP Waste Management, the Conservation Officer Service, and the Town of Golden Bylaw Office to support the WildSafeBC's messaging.
- Continue to present to a wide variety of audiences and increase participation in the conversation and advocacy for recommended wildlife attractant practices from WildSafeBC.

Acknowledgements

WildSafeBC would like to thank the Town of Golden, Columbia Basin Trust, and the Ministry of Environment for financial support.

Thank you to the many volunteers that helped with the Golden Apple Festival including the Golden Food Bank, Wildsight Golden, and the Metis Nation Columbia River Society. Thank you to the Golden Farmers' Market for supporting non-profit organizations at their events at no charge. The Golden Star and EZ Rock's Elliot Campbell provided communications support all summer long. Thank you to the British Columbia Conservation Society, Jordan Peterson of VP Waste Management, Tammy Burkin of Off the Wall, Alex Desjardins (CO), Jeremy Baylis (Bylaw), Jon Wilsgard (Town of Golden sponsor), Rocky Mountain School District 6, and many others who have come together to make this a memorable and celebrated season.

Finally, thank you to the Golden residents who are changing their behaviour and managing attractants responsibly.

Appendix: Photographs



Figure 1. WildSafeBC Community Coordinator Sarah Jane Osadetz knocking on doors as part of a door-to-door campaign.



Figure 2. Golden Apple Festival organizers Sarah Jane Osadetz (WildSafeBC), Donna Attewell (Wildsight), Stephanie (Golden Food Bank), and Denise Porter (Metis Nation). Photo by Brenda Smith.

Golden Apple Festival
October 3 & 4th

Celebrate Harvest Season!
Join us at the Center for Peace & St. Andrew's United Church
Bring your apples to make juice or cider!

Friday, October 3rd
Apple Harvest
Pick | Get apples picked | Get apples delivered to your door

Saturday, October 4th
Learn. Play. Celebrate.
12pm - 5pm
Children & Youth Contests
Entertainment | Face Painting
Wildlife Education & Conflict Prevention
Apple and Garden Harvest Food Workshops
Golden Farmers' Market

MUSICIANS:
Pablo Euphoria | Dave L'Hirondelle | Travis Jobin
Levon, & Ariana

BBQ & Workshops & Live Music
6 - 9pm
Beef Stew | Veggie Stew | Bannock Served
Silent Art Auction - Theme: Harvest Season & Apples
LIVE MUSIC FEATURING:
Carl Trinkwon and the Masters of Nun
John Jenkins Two-Man Trio
Sarah Jane Osadetz

Contact:
250 344 8695
goldenapplecelebration@gmail.com

An event organized by:
WildSafeBC

Figure 3. Promotional poster used for the Golden Apple Festival. Design by Sarah Jane Osadetz.



Figure 4. Golden Apple Festival. Photos by Sarah Jane Osadetz.



Figure 5. Proposed lawn sign for Home Ambassador Program. Design by Sarah Jane Osadetz.



Figure 6. Home Ambassadors Leslie Adams and Gardie Newmann with WildSafeBC Community Coordinator Sarah Jane Osadetz. Photo by Lily Bethel.



Figure 7. WildSafeBC booth at the Canada Day celebrations. Photo by Lily Bethel.



Figure 8. WildSafeBC display at Live Kicks event in Spirit Square. Photo by Sarah Jane Osadetz.