

WildSafeBC Annual Report 2014

City of Kamloops



Photo: Peter Sulzle

Prepared by:
Danielle Cross
WildSafeBC Community Coordinator



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Executive Summary

Kamloops had another busy human-wildlife conflict year in 2014 keeping the Kamloops WildSafeBC Community Coordinator (WSBCCC) on the go throughout the city. The WSBCCC attended a number of events, delivered presentations to the general public and school groups, tagged garbage in multiple neighbourhoods, and conducted door-to-door canvassing in the city. All of these activities in addition to social media work, a TV appearance and the launch of the Junior Ranger Program helped to deliver our message of “Keeping wildlife wild, and communities safe.”. Furthermore discussions with the City of Kamloops regarding additional tools for reducing human-wildlife conflicts such as a fruit tree replacement program were initiated.

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Highlights from the 2014 Season

In addition to the numerous annual events and functions attended by the Kamloops WildSafeBC Community Coordinator (WSBCCC) each year in the city of Kamloops some new events such as a WildSafeBC speaker series and initiatives including the WildSafeBC Junior Ranger Program and a Fruit Tree Replacement Program were undertaken. All activities were aimed at continuing to brand the relatively new WildSafeBC program and to 'keep wildlife wild and communities safe.'

Events

Attending various events across the city gives the WSBCCC an opportunity to talk one-on-one with local residents about their personal wildlife concerns and provide the public with WildSafeBC educational materials such as species specific brochures. Events attended this year in Kamloops included:

- Clean Air Day,
- Canada Day,
- United Way Carnival,
- Costco Safety Week,
- World Rivers Day, and
- Farmer's Markets.

Canada Day continues to be the largest event for WildSafeBC in Kamloops.



Figure 1. 2014 WildSafeBC Kamloops booth set up 2014.

Presentations

The WSBCCC in cooperation with City of Kamloops Parks Department put on a new four part speaker series this year (Figure 2). The objective was to introduce more residents to WildSafeBC and the numerous nature parks available within Kamloops while providing attendees with a greater understanding of the species that commonly come into conflict with local residents.

2014 Wildlife Speaker Series

Presented by WildSafeBC and the City of Kamloops

The Bear Facts
August 19, 6:30-7:30 pm
Kenna Cartwright Park, Main Entrance

Coyote Wild
September 9, 6:30-7:30 pm
Peterson Creek, Downtown Entrance

Snakes 101
Guest speaker Frank Ritcey
September 23, 6:30-7:30 pm
Tranquille Creek Pine Park, Parking Lot

Oh Deer
October 7, 6:30-7:30 pm
Pineview Valley Park

Please wear appropriate footwear and clothing for nature parks.

For more information, call 250-828-3317 or 250-319-2582 or visit www.kamloops.ca/parks

Figure 2. 2014 WildSafeBC Speaker Series poster.

Other presentations this year included:

- People In Motion summer camp group, and
- Learn to Camp Program in partnership with Parks Canada.

School Program

Delivering WildSafeBC messaging to schools was impeded in 2014 by the BC teachers' strike. The following school presentations were completed with a total of 474 students being reached:

- Parkcrest Elementary (Grade 3),
- My World Discovery Daycare (Pre-K),
- Thompson Community Services (two presentations to Adult Education),
- Sun Peaks Elementary (Kindergarten/Grade 1),
- South Sa-Hali Elementary (Grade 1 and Grade 2),
- Rayleigh Elementary (Kindergarten, Grade 1, Grade 1/2, Grade 2/3, Grade 3, Grade 4/5 and Grade 5/6),and
- Summit Elementary (Kindergarten, Grade 1, Grade 2/3, Grade 3, Grade 3/4 and Grade 6/7).

Garbage Tagging

Garbage tagging efforts were increased in Kamloops this season and included the following neighbourhoods:

- Lower Sa-Hali,
- Upper Sa-Hali,
- Barnhartvale,
- Juniper,
- Brocklehurst,
- Valleyview, and
- Aberdeen.

Tagging was conducted later at night than in previous years and proved to be more effective in discovering violators of the City of Kamloops' Bylaw 40-61, 515 which states that no resident may place waste containers out prior to 4am on pick up day between April 1 to November 30. Over 400 containers were tagged this season. Only a couple of streets in Juniper were visited on multiple occasions and it appeared as though stickers had made a difference as less cans were put out than prior tagging nights. It is recommended that using the city TEMPEST program next year the WSBCCC compare neighborhoods between years to determine if tagging is improving compliance with the existing bylaw and if there are repeat offenders year after year that should be reported to bylaw officers.

Door-to-door Canvassing

Door-to-door canvassing was conducted in Upper Sa-Hali around Waddington Drive and in Aberdeen near Pacific Way Elementary. These areas were suggested by the local Conservation Officers as a result of recent and continuing bear activity. It should be noted that Upper Sa-Hali had the most extensive container set out violations of any neighborhood garbage tagged this year and has been a problem area

for the Conservation Officer Service for years. Approximately one hundred residences were contacted via door-to-door canvassing this year. In an attempt to increase the efficiency of this highly effective method for delivering WildSafeBC messaging the WSBCCC attended a Wildlife Conservation class at Thompson Rivers University to solicit student volunteers. Approximately a dozen students signed up to volunteer but in the end none of them participated in the volunteer day.

WildSafeBC Junior Ranger Program

This year WildSafeBC introduced the Junior Ranger program at the Salute to Sockeye Festival. Kits were developed that included pencils, stickers, tattoos, buttons, an oath, and colouring sheet. Through the course of the Festival, 1,500 Junior Ranger kits were handed out to children that completed the program. An estimated 3,000 to 5,000 additional people visited the WildSafeBC booth during this time. The colouring sheet included in the kits was the same one used in a province-wide colouring contest to enhance awareness of attractant management and WildSafeBC.

Media

Kamloops WSBCCC appeared on CFJC Midday with Conservation Officer Andy MacKay to remind residents of the bylaws associated with bears and wildlife in Kamloops and explain the city's Bear Smart status. In addition the City of Kamloops extensively advertised on TV, radio, and through the local paper the risks of garbage to bears and the consequences of not abiding by the bylaws in place to manage our household wastes (By-law 40-61, 515). Other media activity this year included assisting with the development of the provincial WildSafeBC website and a contest on the Kamloops WildSafeBC Facebook page. Those who chose to 'like' or 'share' the page were entered to win a twenty five dollar gift certificate to a local restaurant

Fruit Tree Replacement Program

The City of Kamloops has a tree coupon program that allows Kamloops' residents an opportunity to receive a discount on purchased trees. This program was expanded to include fruit trees last year. The WSBCCC put forth a proposal to stop the inclusion of fruit trees in the program and to provide additional funds to residents looking to remove existing fruit trees to replace with a non-fruit bearing tree species. This proposal is under review.

Other Program Activities 2014

Kamloops City Nature Parks Department is in the process of installing 11 new bear resistant bins in Kamloops nature parks. The WSBCCC created a new sign to be put up at natural parks to educate users on potential dangerous wildlife in the area, how to avoid negative encounters, and a place to record dangerous wildlife sightings. Finally the WSBCCC for Kamloops is developing a plan outlining the high risk areas for bear-human interaction on public property associated with fruit bearing trees such as crab

apples. Fruit bearing trees on city property in higher risk areas will be sprayed with a fertilizer that reduces fruit production by up to eighty percent. This will result in less clean up for the city and reduced attractants and potential for wildlife conflicts.

Challenges to the Program 2014

In Kamloops, garbage and fruit trees continue to be the attractants that result in the greatest number of human-wildlife conflicts. In addition the number of bears destroyed in the city in 2013 and 2014 appears to be on the rise. There is a need for a bear-resistant bin option for Kamloops residents that is compatible with the current City of Kamloops automated pick-up system.

Due to the limited hours of Kamloops WSBCCC position and the size of Kamloops it is difficult to deliver all the aspects of this program to all the neighbourhoods and residents of Kamloops. In future an increase in hours and/or the addition of a WildSafeBC Ambassador would greatly improve the effectiveness and efficiency of the delivery of the WildSafeBC Program in Kamloops.

Goals for 2015

In 2015 WildSafeBC efforts in Kamloops hope to accomplish the following goals:

- Provide Kamloops residents with an affordable bear-resistant bin option that is compatible with the existing City of Kamloops solid waste collection system,
- Reduce fruit production by 80% on fruit producing trees located on city property as outlined in the proposal submitted by the WSBCCC,
- Build a base of consistent enthusiastic volunteers to assist with the delivery of the door-to-door campaigns,
- Acquire a WildSafeBC Ambassador for the City of Kamloops to assist with existing garbage tagging and door-to-door campaigns,
- Improve attendance at and continue to deliver WildSafeBC speaker series including more wildlife topics at additional city nature parks,
- Establish a fund to be used towards human-wildlife conflict issues within the City of Kamloops using portions of the fine monies collected as a result of violations to wildlife related bylaws in Kamloops,
- Increase the followers of the WildSafeBC Kamloops Facebook page,
- Promote greater use and awareness of the Wildlife Alert Reporting Program by Kamloops residents, and
- Create additional wildlife presentation options for schools beyond the popular bear aware based talks.

Acknowledgements

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A special thanks to the Conservation Officers in Kamloops, Andy MacKay, Jesse Jones, Kevin VanDamme and Rob Armstrong. Bylaw officers Jon Ramsay and Corina Buttuls for their assistance with WildSafeBC garbage tagging efforts this season. Kirsten Wourms City of Kamloops Nature Park Crew Leader for her enthusiasm and support with all WildSafeBC projects and interests in Kamloops nature parks. Also Greg Houghton from City of Kamloops Parks for his support of a fruit tree blossom removal program and the removal of fruit trees from the tree coupon program in Kamloops.

Finally, thank you to all those residents who made an effort this season to remove wildlife attractants from their properties. Let's 'keep wildlife wild and communities safe.'

