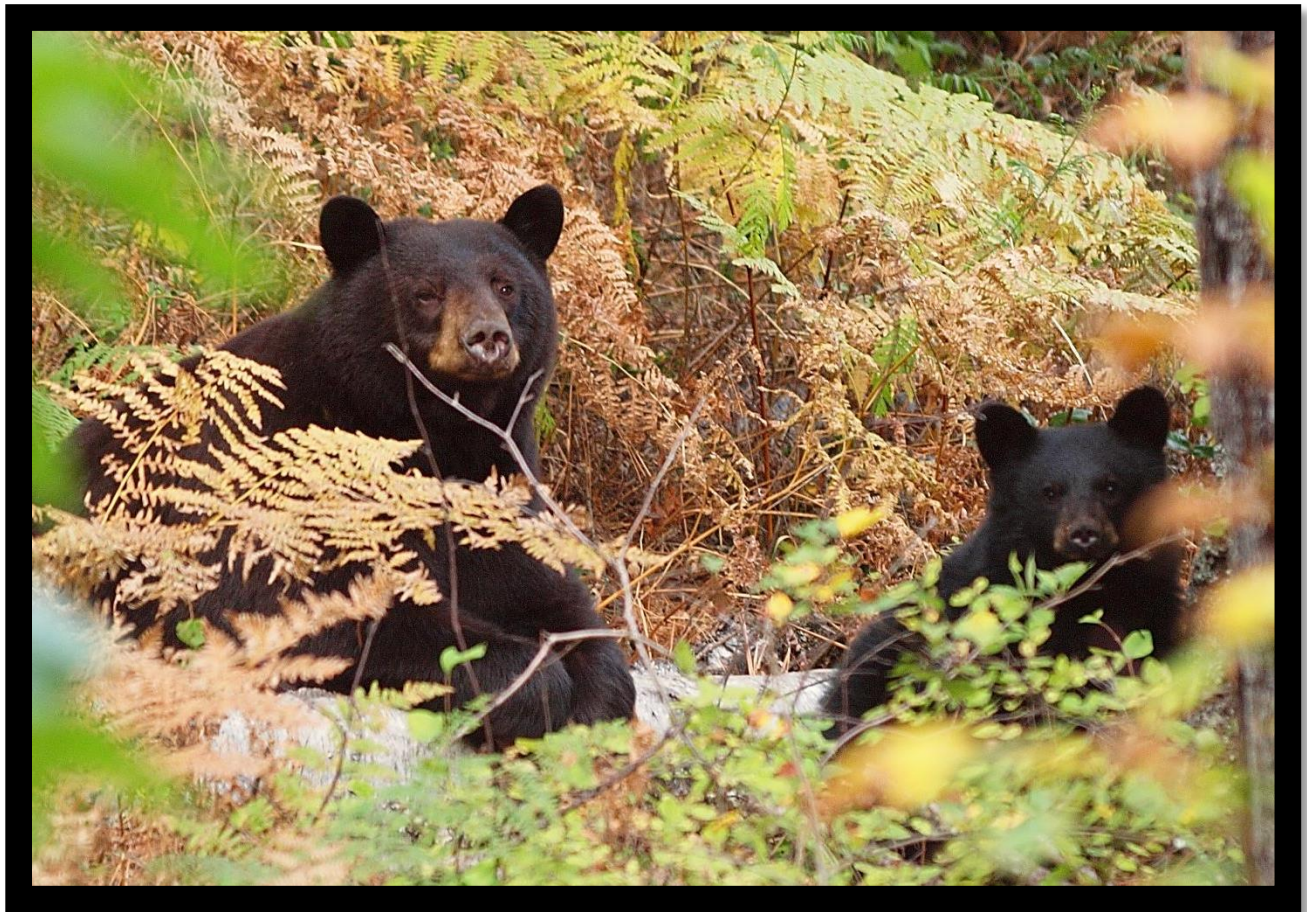


Nelson and RDCK Areas E and F 2014 Annual Report



By J. A. Siderius, Ph.D.,

November 6, 2014.



BRITISH COLUMBIA
CONSERVATION
FOUNDATION

Columbia Basin **trust**

Executive Summary

Nelson, Areas E and F WildSafeBC, a program of British Columbia Conservation Foundation (BCCF), received funding from Columbia Basin Trust (CBT) and the Regional District of the Central Kootenay (RDCK) in 2014. WildSafeBC is a provincial program that strives to “keep wildlife wild and communities safe.” Joanne Siderius, the WildSafeBC Community Coordinator delivered the program with the assistance of three volunteers.

As part of our educational efforts to reduce human-wildlife conflict, WildSafeBC:

- attended local farmer’s markets and local festivals,
- tagged curbside garbage in Nelson,
- talked to kids at four schools, the Nelson Beavers, the Balfour Covenant Church kids camp and
- sponsored a talk by wildlife biologist Dr. Michael Proctor about the Blewett Grizzly Bear population.

Several on-line, print, and Facebook postings and articles, and several radio and a TV interview kept the program in the public eye. We also worked with predator electric fencing projects and worked to make bear-resistant garbage cans available to residents of the communities of the area.

Table of Contents

Executive Summary 1

Highlights 3

Challenges 5

Goals for 2015..... 6

Acknowledgements 6



Highlights

Nelson and RDCK Areas E and F had a very productive year educating people about the causes of and solutions to human-wildlife conflict. The following is a brief synopsis of our activities in 2014.

- On May 28, we (in association with the Grizzly Bear Fencing Project) brought Dr. Michael Proctor, a prominent grizzly bear researcher, in to speak to over 45 Blewett residents about the Grizzly Bear population in the Blewett area ([Proctor talk](#)).
- WildSafeBC worked with three new volunteers who helped out with garbage tagging and attending events.
- The Nelson Facebook page attracted over 20,000 views over the season and over 300 “likes” on Facebook. Our postings included videos that drew attention to solutions for wildlife conflict, for example: [cougar video](#); [sow and cubs eat cherries](#); and [coyote](#).
- Our program put together a successful on-line video to demonstrate the effectiveness of predator electric fencing ([electric bears](#)).
- Nelson and area WildSafeBC again worked successfully with the media producing two media releases and over 10 media interviews (including Kootenay Coop Radio, EZ Rock, Mountain FM, CBC TV ([CBC TV](#)) and CBC radio) and several on-line and printed articles (for example: [Nelson Daily](#) and [Nelson Star](#)).
- WildSafeBC Provincial Coordinator F. Ritcey and Nelson coordinator J. Siderius gave a presentation to Nelson City Council to request that four new bear-resistant garbage cans be placed on city property ([Nelson Star](#)). There will be new bear-resistant garbage cans placed in town.
- WildSafeBC worked with the Grizzly Bear Electric Fencing Program and a CBT sponsored predator electric fencing program to put up predator electric fencing around chicken coops and fruit orchards to keep bears from gaining access to fruit, chickens and chicken feed. Fruit trees and chickens are major wildlife attractants in the communities of this program.
- We attended two Bear Conflict Management Group meetings (whose membership includes: Conservation Officer Service, Nelson City Police, Municipal staff, bylaw officers, biologists and the public) and a subcommittee of that group brought together to introduce bear-resistant cans to the Kootenays (in association with other WildSafeBC coordinators). Our proposed application to

make bear-resistant garbage cans available to those with no other solutions to storing household garbage will potentially go a long way to reducing human-wildlife conflict over garbage – the major wildlife attractant in the Kootenays.

- We attended events (including the Nelson Farmer's Market, Redfish Fest, and Shoreacres Fall Fair) with a display and talked to over 2,000 people about solutions to human-wildlife conflict.
- Our educational presentations included programs at four schools (L'École des sentiers-Alpins, Blewett School, Mt. Sentinel Secondary School and Redfish School); a talk and a hike with the Nelson Beavers; and a presentation to the Balfour Covenant Church kids camp.
- J. Siderius (along with other WildSafeBC coordinators) attended the Columbia Basin Environmental Education Network soiree with a WildSafeBC display. Our interaction with other educators at this event promoted our programs and allowed us to make new contacts in our communities.
- Our community outreach included door-to-door canvassing in 23 neighbourhoods where we talked to over 300 people about conflict with bears, cougars, and coyotes.
- We also conducted six garbage tagging efforts in Nelson.

Challenges

Even in a successful year, challenges present opportunities for learning and for improvement. The following is a discussion of some of our challenges in 2014:

- We attracted three new volunteers this year, but we need to work with more volunteers to achieve more impact in our educational efforts.
- Human-wildlife conflict occurs throughout the year. Currently, WildSafeBC community coordinator hours are in place from May to the end of November. If more time were available throughout the year we could work on wildlife conflict when it begins early in the year and into the winter to counter cougar and coyote issues.
- Our educational efforts target new residents to these communities but we still need to reach more recent residents to remind them that they are living with wildlife: especially with respect to bears, cougars, coyotes skunks and raccoons.
- Our educational efforts need to reach more “old-time” residents and make them aware of newer solutions to wildlife conflicts (for example, predator electric fencing and bear-resistant garbage cans).
- Currently, there is no distributor for bear-resistant containers in the Kootenays and yet household garbage is the greatest wildlife attractant in this area. Those residents who have no options for proper garbage storage have no solutions to keeping garbage from bears, skunks, raccoons, coyotes, or other animals.
- There is a great number of fruit trees in the area and much of the fruit is unusable or people are not interested in picking the fruit. We will continue to work with Harvest Rescue and continue education to convince people to replace fruit trees with usable fruit trees or with other native non-fruit bearing trees.

Goals for 2015

Our challenges and successes help to direct our goals for 2015. Following is a brief list of our goals for 2015:

- We should continue to work with the bear conflict management group to make bear-resistant garbage cans available in the Kootenays.
- We should strive to find more volunteers.
- We should continue to work with Harvest Rescue and continue to educate people about fruit as an attractant. We propose working with Georama or another garden centre to promote replacing “problem” fruit trees.
- We should continue to promote (and in some cases provide the expertise to construct) predator electric fencing as an option to protect chickens and fruit trees from bears and other wildlife.

Acknowledgements

Our program relies on funders, administration staff, municipal staff and elected officials, enforcement staff and the public. We cannot thank everyone but the following are those we wish to recognize for their invaluable contributions to the program. Nelson, Areas E and F WildSafeBC wishes to thank:

- CBT, the RDCK, MOE, and BCCF for funding this program;
- Jason Hawkes of the Conservation Officer Service for his support and pro-active approach to reducing human-bear conflict;
- Nicole Ward of the RDCK for her support and advice;
- Barb Waters, Frank Ritcey, Jen Bellhouse and Roseanne of BCCF for making sure all the cogs go around smoothly;
- Our volunteers: C. Allen, B. McConnell, and J. Tsai;
- The local media including: Kootenay Coop Radio, CBC Radio, Mountain FM Radio, EZRock, The Nelson Daily and The Nelson Star;
- And all the WildSafeBC community coordinators for their innovative ideas, sharing of ideas and support.



Figure 1 WildSafeBC activities in 2014 (all photos supplied by J. Siderius).