

# WildSafeBC Annual Report 2015

## Kamloops

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## Executive Summary

2015 was another successful year for the Kamloops WildSafeBC program with numerous community events, public displays and presentations. The WildSafeBC Community Coordinator (WCC) and Ambassador (WCA) also went door-to-door in many neighbourhoods and tagged garbage in all collection zones within Kamloops.

WildSafeBC continued to be involved with the Kamloops Bear Smart Committee and helped with report writing and information gathering. This year bear warning signs were posted throughout the city to remind residents of wildlife in the area. As in previous years, the media helped to spread the word about wildlife safety and reducing human-wildlife conflicts.

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Figure 1. Doug Burles giving a bat lecture as a part of the speaker series

## Events

This year the WCC and WCA attended many events throughout the city. These events allowed the coordinator and ambassador to talk to the public about human-wildlife conflict in a relaxed and engaging manner. At larger events like Canada Day and the Community Carnival, a bean bag toss game was used not only to entertain, but as a way to then invite people into the tent to learn more about wildlife. Events in 2015 included:

- Animal Encounter Day – BC Wildlife Park
- Father's Day – BC Wildlife Park
- Canada Day\*\*
- Community Carnival
- Rib Fest
- Overlanders Day
- Farmers Market – Kamloops
- Children's Art Festival
- BC Rivers Day

\*\* Canada Day was more manageable having two people. We were able to talk to twice as many people, as well as have an interactive game for children to enjoy.

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## Presentations

This year the WCC and WCA presented to several youth groups, daycares, and other organizations. Throughout the month of August the WCC and WCA teamed up with the City of Kamloops Parks Department to continue the speaker series from last year. This years' featured talks were bears, cougars/coyotes, bats (with bat house building), and snakes. Presentations this year:

- ESL presentation – Immigration Services
- Eureka Science Camp – Ages 9-12
- SPCA Camp – Juniors and Intermediates
- Boys and Girls Club – Ages 5/6, 7/8, 9-12
- Speaker Series
- Valemount Summer Camp – Ages 5-8, 9-12
- Kiddies Korner Daycare
- Girl Guides



Figure 2. Junior campers at Eureka Science Camp learning about skulls and animal tracks

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## School Program

Beginning in the 2015 school year, the Junior Ranger Program was rolled out across the province. Most school presentations were done using the Junior Ranger format, where we signed the students up as Junior Rangers to help spread the word about reducing human-wildlife conflict. These presentations allowed the students to engage further with the information and proudly display their official Junior Ranger pins after the presentations. They also received a pencil, sticker, ruler, ID card and oath card in the Junior Ranger packages. These presentations were given in small groups to allow the student's time to ask questions. School presentations included:

- Bert Edwards Elementary – outdoor Rivers Day event
- Westmount Elementary
- Juniper Ridge Elementary
- Homeschool group
- Kay Bingham Elementary
- Park Crest Elementary
- RL Clemitson Elementary



Figure 3. Outdoor Junior Ranger presentations with Bert Edwards Elementary School.



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## Garbage Tagging

This season garbage tagging was completed in almost every neighbourhood in Kamloops. The downtown area, as well as Heffley Creek, had the highest number of offenders. However, it should be noted that the homes in downtown Kamloops that have garbage pickup in alleyways seem to be limited for storage of garbage bins; therefore, bear resistant locks for this area could help considerably. Upper and Lower Sahali also continue to have garbage problems. The following neighbourhoods were visited:

- Lower/Upper Sahali
- Aberdeen
- Downtown
- Barnhartvale
- Juniper
- Brocklehurst
- Valleyview
- Dallas
- Heffley Creek

## Speaker Series

Following the success of the 2014 Speak Series, the WCC and WCA organized another series for 2015. This was planned in partnership with the City of Kamloops Parks Department and most of the talks were held on City of Kamloops park grounds. The series included talks about bears, cougars/coyotes, bats and snakes. Another series is already in the works for the 2016 year.

## Door-to-Door Canvassing

Door-to-door was much more efficient having an ambassador. It allowed both the WCC and WCA to visit twice as many residents at each location compared to last year (only 100 were contacted in 2014 season). For example, in June, 234 houses were visited, in July 147, and in August 197 were visited, with a total of approximately 578 houses visited this summer.

Canvassing seemed to be most effective in Batchelor Heights, Juniper Ridge, and Upper Sahali. However, canvassing in Brocklehurst and Barnhartvale was difficult as many residents felt the messaging was repetitive and unnecessary. This summer the following neighbourhoods were visited:

- Brocklehurst
- Barnhartvale
- Upper/Lower Sahali
- Aberdeen/Dufferin
- Batchelor Heights
- Juniper Ridge

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## Kamloops Bear Smart Committee

This year the City of Kamloops continued to maintain Bear Smart status. The WCC and WCA were involved in the committee, helping to collect data on bear calls and edit reports for committee meetings. Throughout the year the meetings provided great opportunities to hear from many influential people in Kamloops, such as the Conservation Officer Service (COS), bylaws, city planners and city councillors. These meetings gave the WCC and WCA a new perspective on how important this work is for the community as a whole.

## Bear in Area Signs

This year WSBC purchased warning signs to educate residents about bears in their neighbourhoods. “Warning: Bear in Area” signs were posted around the city based on the Wildlife Alert Reporting Program (WARP) reports and were moved every few days to keep the message fresh. These signs have proven to be very effective reminders and the WCC has heard from numerous people who appreciate seeing the signs.



Figure 4. WildSafeBC Provincial Coordinator leading a snake walk during the speaker series.



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## Media

As in previous years, the media played an integral role in helping to spread the message about reducing human-wildlife conflict through interviews, web promotion, and news releases.

- CFJC Interview on garbage tagging
- City of Kamloops web page- speaker series
- News release on speaker series
- Posts on Facebook page to raise awareness
- Interview with TRU radio about bat houses and the speaker series



Figure 5. Booth set up at Animal Encounter Day at the BC Wildlife Park

## Challenges to the Program 2015

- Need more communication with the COS and Bylaws and Sponsor
- Still need an option for residents to secure their garbage – bear-resistant locks
- Due to the start date of this position, things like farmers market applications were difficult to meet the deadlines; as a result to signing up late we were only able to attend a few markets



Figure 6. Public display at the Children's Art Festival.

## Goals for 2016

- Have a loan out program or distribute bear-resistant locks to high bear conflict areas
- Work with the city to improve our Bear Smart Status
- Continue educational talks for Eureka Science and Boys and Girls Club in the summer
- Obtain more educational materials on bats to use at next year's speaker series.
- Reduce number of fruit trees planted around the city
- Remove fruit trees from tree coupons
- Develop a volunteer base to help deliver the program, specifically door-to-door and garbage tagging
- Increase number of followers on Facebook
- Maintain a positive relationship with parks and the city to continue the speaker series and other events
- Implement a green cone project in high bear conflict neighbourhoods, such as Juniper Ridge
- Integrate composting information into presentations and displays





Figure 7. Booth set up at Father's Day at the BC Wildlife Park

## Acknowledgements

On behalf of the WildSafeBC program, we would like to thank the City of Kamloops, the Ministry of Environment, and the British Columbia Conservation Foundation for funding this year's program and activities. We would also like to acknowledge the various media outlets that ran stories to help spread the WildSafeBC message.

Special thanks to Emily Lomas of the City of Kamloops; Frank Ritcey of the WildSafeBC program; Barb Waters, Roseanna Niedziejko, Tami Kendall and Jen Bellhouse of the British Columbia Conservation Foundation; and the WSBC Volunteer, Andrew Corks.

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 our communities safe!