

WildSafeBC Year End Report 2016

Rossland - Trail & Area

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Columbia Basin **trust**



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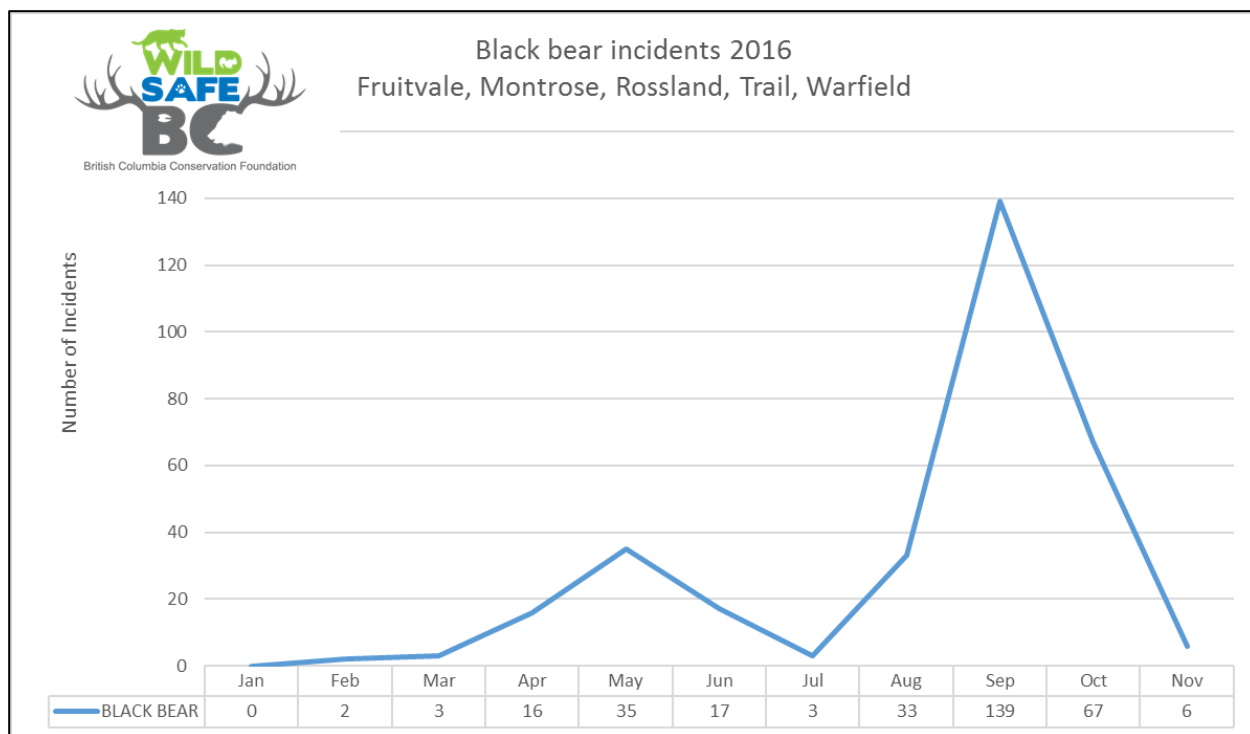
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Executive Summary

This year was the first year for the new WildSafeBC (WSBC) Community Coordinator Desiree Profili. 2016 saw a high level of wildlife activity early in the program with multiple bear attractant issues and deer issues in June. July was quieter for animal activity and reports, this allowed for the focus to be on education and prevention. There was an increase of activity in August, which was earlier than last year mostly due to a hot spring and early fruit ripening including a minimal and early huckleberry crop.

By midsummer, Warfield and Fruitvale/Montrose were also added to the area covered by WSBC. This resulted in a considerable increase in the number of issues and in the total area serviced. In August cougar issues were identified in all 4 communities and this was managed by using the media to increase awareness. There was also an increase in black bear and coyote reports. This year there were 20 bears destroyed between all four communities according to the Conservation Office Service (COS).

This year the Junior Ranger program was expanded and the Junior Ranger kits which included coloring books, tattoos, buttons, bookmarks and membership cards were a huge hit at all events. Also added to our toolkits was a BC-Goes-Wild adult coloring sheet that was created this year by the Rossland-Trail WildSafeBC Coordinator (WCC). The WildSafeBC Facebook page has also been a great way to spread information about recent events and wildlife news in neighbourhoods or on hiking trails. The page reached approximately 700 people a week with a high of 6,500 one week.



Black bear incidents in the area, 2016

Events

This year was filled with a number of fun and educational events. The summer started with Trail's annual Teddy Bear Picnic which is an event centered on childhood educational information resources. The bears in the display were a big hit, as were the informative coloring sheets. The next major event was Canada Day; this was a busy day as there were two main events one at Beaver Creek hosted by Trail and Fruitvale in the morning and the afternoon was spent at Rossland's Canada day event at the Rossland Museum. Other events through the summer included "A Night at the Museum", a children's carnival/fundraiser, the Rossland Fall Fair and four afternoons at the Rossland outdoor market.



Figure 1 Teddy Bear Picnic 2016

BC Goes Wild Weekend

This was the first year of for the “BC Goes Wild Weekend” events. WildSafeBC’s BC Goes Wild Weekend was full of awareness activities including three provincial contests: a BC Goes Wild Animal Count Contest, a Photo Challenge, and a Colouring Contest. Locally, there were two events planned for the weekend, a wetland exploration in Oasis and the “Fruit Pick and Press” in Rossland. While the weather interfered with the planned wetland exploration walk, the “Pick and Press” organized in Rossland was successful in all respects. There were approximately 20 community fruit pickers on the Friday evening and Saturday of the weekend. There were also 25 to 30 people who pressed fruit into juice on the Sunday. With more advanced planning and advertising, all our events will be even more successful next year.



Figure 2 BC Goes wild weekend - Oasis Wetland 2016

Presentations

The first presentation of the year was to Trail's City council to bring them up to date on WildSafeBC's activities. The other general education presentation of summer was also very well received. It was a presentation to the Rotary club in Trail. In November, there are presentations planned for the Fruitvale and Trail Sparks and Brownies at their annual camp out.



Figure 3 Rotary Presentation October 2016

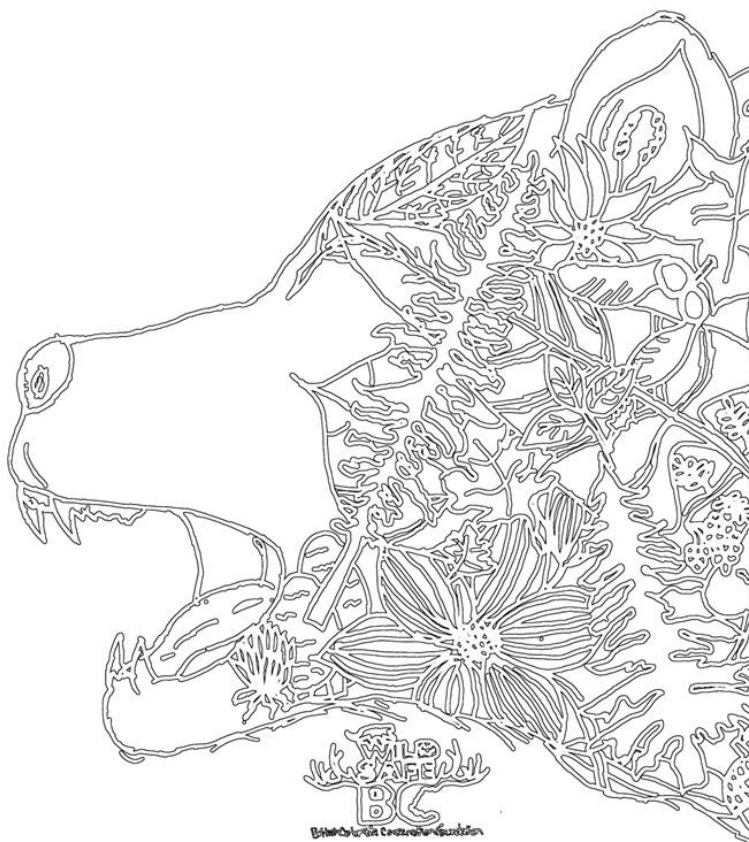


Figure 4 Rossland Fall Fair September 2016

School Presentations

This was one of the most rewarding parts of the year. The presentations started with the really young children in Rossland and Fruitvale's Strong Start programs which included parents, and went all the way through to grade 5 students at Rossland Summit School and Glenmerry Elementary.

In total, there were 18 presentations between the two schools and each presentation was different. One focused on camping safety as the class was headed for an overnight field trip, the kindergarten (K)-3 presentations were focused on what to do on the playground if they encountered a bear as a sow and two cubs had taken to spending time on the school grounds during the day. The presentations for the older classes ranged from how animals adapt to their environment to what species are protected in our areas. The common theme to all presentations was about controlling attractants and changing our behaviour as humans to keep wildlife wild and communities safe. The take home Jr. Ranger 'kits' for each student were a big success and there was great feedback from parents about the wealth of information they learned as a family by going through the kits after school. The presentations will continue in November with 3 more K to K/1 classes in Glenmerry and three K classes at Webster school in Warfield. These presentations are so popular we have some prescheduled by principals for September of 2017.



Keep wildlife wild, and communities safe!

Figure 5 WildSafeBC Adult Coloring Sheet 2016

Garbage Tagging

Garbage tagging had a targeted approach this year. Garbage tagging was carried out in areas with known compliance issues. This included areas in Warfield and multiple locations in Trail (the Gulch, Second Ave., Glenmerry townhouses, as well as Topping Street and Daniel Street). Even using this targeted approach the garbage tagging yielded low results. This may be due to timing (reviews done from 9-11pm). This will be changed to later in the evening or around 4 am in the morning for next year.

Door-to-door Education

During the summer, door-to-door education or canvassing was completed in random areas of all four communities of Rossland, Trail, Warfield, and Fruitvale. As well, targeted canvassing was used in conjunction with and on the recommendation of the COS and the City by-law officers. Once areas were identified to have an animal presence or an attractant issue the WCC was contacted and information and messaging was tailored to the identified issue. For example, if the issue was unpicked fruit then the information on the Community harvest was provided or when backyard livestock or pets were injured then information on electric fencing was provided.

Bear in area signs

The “Bear in Area” signs were very well used this year as an educational and awareness tool. These signs were requested by all four communities either by residents or members of city staff. With only two signs for the summer it was difficult to keep up with the demand from all four communities. Bear sightings occurred in many areas at similar times and included popular hiking/walking trails in town, as well as school grounds and neighbourhoods. More signs have already been provided for 2017. Cougar, and even Coyote in Area signs in the future would also be of benefit.

Media

The media was very helpful and receptive to information throughout the summer (six print articles and four radio interviews so far in 2016). Both print and radio were utilized to get the message out about controlling attractants and to help make the public aware when an area was frequented by bears, cougars or coyotes.

2015 Challenges

As a new coordinator, the main challenge for this year was simply the learning curve. With many challenges facing our communities it was always a challenge as to how to allocate time between various immediate issues and general opportunities for educating the public. Some of the challenges the program faced were:

- Finding volunteers to help with Harvest Rescue (BIG thank-you to Sita Lawson in Trail for helping with this).
- The early ripening of fruit and low production of wild berry crops which created a higher number of bear sightings and encounters. This resulted in 181 black bears reported in Trail, 30 black bears reported in Rossland, 34 black bears reported in Fruitvale and 12 black bears reported in Warfield (source WildSafeBC’s WARP program)
- Educating people on how WARP works and its importance as a wildlife and attractant management tool.



Figure 6 WARP map of Trail (June)

Goals for 2017

WildSafeBC is looking forward to strengthening the existing partnerships as well as working together to find new solutions to reduce human-wildlife conflict. The list below provides detail of our goals for the 2017 season:

- Expand school presentations to include grades 6-12
- Continue to work with partner communities on become Bear Smart communities
- Work with local in-town campgrounds on becoming Bear Smart facilities
- Reach out to more interest groups to broaden audiences for presentations
- Advertise and start planning earlier for events such as the pick and press and BC Goes Wild Weekend as well as fencing and bear-spray workshops

Acknowledgements

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Thank you to the WildSafeBC office staff in Kamloops and Frank Ritcey for your support during this 1st year.