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# WILDSAFEBC VILLAGE OF CUMBERLAND ANNUAL REPORT 2016

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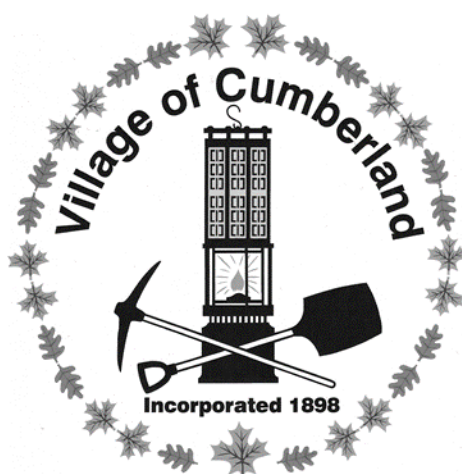
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Photo by: Jitze Couperus



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## Executive Summary

WildSafeBC Village of Cumberland began its first year of the program this May for a short season until the month of August. Although 2016 was a slow summer for human-wildlife conflict, wildlife activity began to pick up the most within the Village of Cumberland in the months of late summer. Reported wildlife conflicts this year included wildlife species such as black bears, cougars, deer, and racoon.

WildSafeBC ambassador, Angeline Seed, introduced residents to the WildSafeBC program and hosted various educational activities. Through community outreach, Seed offered information to residents on how to reduce human-wildlife conflict where the community lives, works, plays, and grows. The WildSafeBC Ambassador maintained a presence within the community through door-to-door canvassing, garbage tagging, social media, as well as educational presentations with community groups. Some of these community groups included: Cumberland Community School students, local daycares, and Cumberland Recreation Center children's summer programs.

Through innovation, cooperation, and education WildSafeBC Village of Cumberland was able to form partnerships with local groups and organizations. Local media organizations such as the Comox Valley Record, the CV Collective Magazine and 98.9 The Goat radio station allowed for the promotion of the newly started WildSafeBC Village of Cumberland program.



**Figure 1.** WildSafeBC Ambassador, Angeline Seed, at the Village Market day, 2016.



**Figure 2.** Bylaw Enforcement Officer, WildSafeBC and Conservation Officer at Cumberland Council Meeting, 2016.

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## Highlights from the 2016 Season

### Door-to-Door Canvassing and Garbage Tagging

Throughout the 2016 season, the WildSafeBC Ambassador visited neighborhoods that were currently experiencing human-wildlife conflict or that had previously experienced a large number of human-wildlife conflicts in the past years. In total, throughout the 2016 season, 397 homes were visited during the door-to-door canvassing and education. During the use of the door-to-door education, the WildSafeBC Ambassador was able to introduce the WildSafeBC program to residents and to introduce herself to the community. Residents were informed when a neighborhood was experiencing human-wildlife conflict or when larger predators such as black bear or cougar were reported within their neighborhood. The WildSafeBC Ambassador also used this as an opportunity to educate about wildlife species, attractant management and the WildSafeBC messaging of “keeping wildlife wild and communities safe.”

In addition to the door-to-door education offered to the community, the WildSafeBC Ambassador carried out weekly patrols of the Village of Cumberland, the night before garbage and compost collection, to tag any garbage or compost bins placed on the curb that evening. Garbage or compost left out on the curb the night before the day of collection received a “bear attractant warning” sticker upon their garbage or compost bin. Each patrol was conducted throughout the whole the community on nine occasions, and in total 85 garbage bins received a sticker during 2016. These garbage-tagging activities proved to bring about awareness about garbage and compost as a wildlife attractant and were witnessed to be effective in stopping residents from placing their garbage or compost out early.



Figure 3. WildSafeBC garbage tags on a compost bin tagged by the WildSafeBC Ambassador, 2016.

### Media

Through the support of local media outlets this 2016 season, WildSafeBC was able to promote the new WildSafeBC program within the community and the WildSafeBC messaging of human-wildlife reduction. The Comox Valley Record newspaper printed an article about the WildSafeBC Village of Cumberland Program as well as some tips for attractant management with wildlife. This article also featured a picture of the WildSafeBC Ambassador at a Village of Cumberland market day. Through this article, the WildSafeBC Ambassador was able to introduce herself and the program to the community and was also able to have the opportunity to inform the residents on how to reduce human-wildlife conflict.

Towards the end of the season, another article was printed in the Comox Valley Record newspaper as well as a radio interview with 98.9 The Goat. The purpose of both these interviews was to discuss the program this year and to inform the community about its progress. These interviews also served as a final reminder to the community about the attractant management of garbage, compost, fruit trees, and other common wildlife attractants, before the end of the season.

WildSafeBC also utilized Facebook as a platform to education and inform the community. This page was a great outlet for sharing information about wildlife species, how to reduce human-wildlife conflict, wildlife safety, and attractant management. The WildSafeBC Village of Cumberland Facebook page gained 26 “likes” this year in total.



### Presentations

WildSafeBC was present at two farmers' markets this season with the Comox Valley Farmers Markets (CVFM) and also attended four of the monthly Cumberland Village market days. WildSafeBC also attended three events at the Comox Lake Campground with the Cumberland Lake Wilderness Society with a public display and children's activities and games. The WildSafeBC ambassador partnered with the Cumberland Recreation Center and Valley Child to have an informational booth at their weekly Parent and Tot Pop-Up in the Park events as well. These events were all great opportunities to speak with the community about the WildSafeBC program, human-wildlife reduction, wildlife safety, wildlife species and to teach fun facts to children and engage them in some educational activities. Brochures, tattoos, bookmarks, and coloring books were distributed at these events and were always well appreciated.



Figure 4. WildSafeBC presenting to the Cumberland Community School's Rec and Read program, 2016.



Figure 5. WildSafeBC Ambassador speaking with the public at the Canada day event, 2016.

### Challenges from the 2016 Season

This 2016 season was not only productive but valuable; however, there were still challenges faced during the first year of the WildSafeBC Village of Cumberland program.

With an abundance of fruit trees within the Village of Cumberland including an old orchard on the outskirts of town, many fruit trees remain unmanaged and unpicked. This is a significant attractant in regards to wildlife.

Another major challenge for the program this season was the storage of garbage in the community in unsecured environments. A large portion of the village's homes do not have a garage or shed. Many residents store their garbage and compost collection bins outside their homes in unsecured environments and are opposed to suggestions of attractant management. Through a continuing effort of education, innovation, and cooperation, these challenges will be overcome.

Increasing the WildSafeBC Village of Cumberland Facebook page was a task that proved to be difficult while working with such a tight budget. Many of the popular community Facebook pages, as well as Facebook itself, charged for the service of advertising another organization's page.

### Goals for the 2017 Season

WildSafeBC Village of Cumberland is looking forward to the development and continuation of this program and to another proactive year in reducing human-wildlife conflict in the 2017 Season. The WildSafeBC program would benefit from implementing the following goals into the next season to aid the public in attractant management to keep wildlife wild and communities safe.

- Obtain data from the Cumberland Bear Initiative 2016 survey regarding which residents in the Village have fruit trees. Plan a door-to-door canvassing campaign to all these homes promoting that homeowners pick their fruit, seek assistance from their neighbors, or contact the local gleaning project LUSH Valley Food Action Society.
- Focus on the issue of garbage as a wildlife attractant within the Village of Cumberland by increasing our educational efforts on this subject with residents. Working closely with the Village of Cumberland to begin discussing future strategies to deal with this issue may also be helpful in reducing human-wildlife conflict in the community.
- Maintain and grow current partnerships with the Village of Cumberland, Conservation Officer Service and local organizations and groups.
- Increase the activity and community reach on the WildSafeBC Village of Cumberland Facebook page as a platform for education.
- Present to more community groups and organizations such as local mountain biking societies, Cumberland Forest Society and Rotary.
- Work with the Village of Cumberland to begin working towards achieving Bear Smart Status.



British Columbia Conservation Foundation



### Acknowledgements

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The local Conservation Officer Service provided helpful insight, communication, and guidance in the efforts to reduce human-wildlife conflict in the community. I would like to acknowledge and thank Conservation Officers Sergeant Mike Newton, Gordon Gubranson, James Hilgemann and Steve Petrovcic for all their supporting efforts.

I would also like to say a special thank you to Frank Ritcey of WildSafeBC, Jen Bellhouse, Shelley Nohels, Trina Radford and the employees of the British Columbia Conservation Foundation. Thank you for your endless support and assistance within this program.

Thank you to the volunteers that worked alongside this program this season and to the residents of the Village of Cumberland for their assistance in reducing human-wildlife conflict. Let's continue to keep wildlife wild and the community safe!