

# WildSafeBC Annual Report 2016

## Fraser Valley Regional District

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Ministry of  
Environment



## Executive Summary

2016 was a very successful year for the WildSafeBC (WSBC) program in the Fraser Valley Regional District (FVRD). The WildSafeBC Community Coordinator (WCC) and Ambassadors (WCA) attended many events and gave numerous presentations throughout the FVRD. In addition, there was ample outreach through door-to-door education and monthly garbage tagging in the major cities of the FVRD.

The occurrences of bears getting into residential garbage this years have decreased, but frequency of bears getting into fruit trees/berry bushes has increased. Managing attractants of all kinds has been on the forefront of conversation with residents followed by wildlife safety.

Many residents were happy to see the WildSafeBC program back in their community this year and look forward to its return year after year.



Figure 1 - WSBC Booth at Kilby Historic Site

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## Activities from the 2016 Season

There are many communities within the FVRD for the WSBC program to cover. The WCC and WCA attempt to reach all communities for community events, presentations and door-to-door education. This year WSBC was able to contact 12,181 people (Table 1) to spread the WildSafeBC message to 'keep wildlife wild and communities safe' so that we can reduce human wildlife conflict.

**Table 1- Where and how many people were contacted in the Fraser Valley Regional District in the 2016 season**

<b>2016</b>	<b>Events</b>	<b>Presentations</b>	<b>Door to Door</b>	<b>Total</b>
Abbotsford	4028	165	1365	<b>5558</b>
Mission	2536	70	800	<b>3406</b>
Chilliwack	226	118	816	<b>1160</b>
Cultus	351	40	468	<b>859</b>
Harrison	129	0	272	<b>401</b>
Dewdney	0	170	0	<b>170</b>
Deroche	15	0	0	<b>15</b>
Harrison Mills	291	0	0	<b>291</b>
Agassiz	171	0	0	<b>171</b>
Chehalis	0	150	0	<b>150</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>7747</b>	<b>713</b>	<b>3721</b>	<b>12181</b>

## Community Events

WildSafeBC made a point of attending as many community events as possible this year. These displays allow residents to approach the WCC and receive information as well as give information that WCC can use to provide better advice to other residents in the area. The displays usually consist of an interactive display, which includes a bear pelt, skulls, scat, tracks, claws, and informational pamphlets. There is often an art table where children can paint and color while the WCC or WCAs talk to the parents about attractant management.



This season WSBC attended 42 community events with a total of 7,747 people contacted (Appendix A).



Figure 2 - Chilliwack Ambassador Kelly Corley-Smith educating the public at the BerryBeat Festival

## Presentations

Presentations have always been a great success for WSBC. It is a great way to reach out to a large audience and convey a consistent message to all of them. It also brings up more discussion within the group and new ideas can be formed. Presenting to school groups is a proactive approach to reducing human-wildlife conflicts for generations to come. Children also bring home this messaging to their parents. 18 groups were presented to this season with a total of 713 people contacted (Appendix B).



Figure 3 – Ambassadors Alexandra Selinger and Kelley Corley-Smith presenting at SPCA Summer Camp

## Door-to-Door

Door-to door outreach is a great way to get to the communities who may be struggling with human-wildlife conflicts. Most times it only takes a few people to leave their garbage out or let the fruit rot at the bottom of a tree to cause a bear to move into the community. On many occasions the WCC has been contacted by concerned neighbors reporting their neighbors for leaving their garbage out. WSBC is also contacted by the Conservation Officer Service (COS) when there is a neighborhood they have set a trap in. The Wildlife Alert Reporting Program (WARP) gives the WCC and WCAs an idea where there has been heavy



human-wildlife conflict so that they may go into the surrounding neighborhoods and educate residents about attractant management. 3694 people were reached this year through door-to-door education in the FVRD.



Figure 4 - Ambassadors Kelley Corley-Smith and Alexandra Selinger doing door-to-door outreach at Cultus Lake

## Garbage Tagging

Due to garbage being the number one attractant for bears in BC, every month garbage inspections and tagging were performed. Garbage tagging consists of the WCC or WCAs going out at 10:00 pm the night before curbside collection and place a bright yellow “Wildlife Attractant” sticker on the garbage cans put out too early. This year, garbage tagging

was carried out in Abbotsford, Mission and Chilliwack. The neighborhoods within these cities are selected by conflict history as seen on WARP.



Figure 5 - Ambassador Alexandra Selinger placing a "wildlife attractant" sticker on a garbage can in Chilliwack

## Social Media

Social media is used to convey to the public when WSBC will be at events in the FVRD. It is also a great alternative way for residents to contact the WCC about wildlife concerns. The FVRD Facebook page is on every label, which is attached to the pamphlets and garbage tags. Local wildlife news is also shared on Facebook.



## BC Goes Wild

This year WSBC introduced a new program called BC Goes Wild. BC Goes Wild is a province wide event, which takes place on the third weekend of September. The program supports residents to get out into nature and be safe and responsible at the same time. There were events running on Saturday and Sunday across the province. In the FVRD the WCC hosted an event at Sasquatch Provincial Park on Saturday and another event at Hicks Lake Provincial Park on Sunday. Scavenger hunts, wildlife searches, crafts, and presentations catered to all ages. A province wide coloring contest and photography contest were also offered with a chance to win great prizes.



Figure 6 - Family attending WildSafeBC weekend

## Challenges of the 2016 Season

Being that the WSBC program in the FVRD covers many communities, challenges were presented throughout the season. Every challenge was dealt with by the WCC and WCAs to ensure a positive outcome. The common challenges that were seen in all the communities this year were size, a short season, fruit trees & garbage, and unwilling residents.

### Size

The FVRD is 13,335.28 KM<sup>2</sup> and is home to roughly 280,000 people. Being that this area is so large it posed a challenge to reach all of the residents in the FVRD. This challenge was approached by breaking the FVRD down into three main areas: Mission, Abbotsford, and Chilliwack. With the WCC being assigned to Abbotsford and each WCA being assigned to Mission and Chilliwack it made reaching the residents much easier. Also, by prioritizing the areas of most concern through the use of the WARP map, resident reports, and COS reports WSBC was able to get to all the areas with high human-wildlife conflict.

### Short Season

Being that the FVRD has a temperate climate, the season when bears are inactive is shortened. This year black bears were seen out as early as February with conflicts with bears getting into garbage in full swing by April. Also conflicts with bears getting into garbage are still present in December. Being that the WSBC season runs from end of May to the End of November many residents are left without information during the mild winter months. An earlier start date or extended season would benefit the communities with human-wildlife conflicts.



## **Fruit Trees & Garbage**

Garbage is the number one attractant for black bears across BC. In the FVRD Garbage continues to be a major source for conflict with bears. Many older houses in the FVRD have no enclosed garage making storage of garbage more difficult. Publications pertaining to DIY garbage enclosures were a major source of discussion this year with residents facing this issue. Promontory, Sumas Mountain, and green space areas of Mission continually show to be the highest conflict areas with bears and garbage. Mission has showed a reduction in garbage being put out early with the introduction of their new bylaw pertaining to put out time of garbage. The City of Chilliwack's lack of a bylaw pertaining to put out time of garbage will continue to hinder the effect of WSBC's outreach.

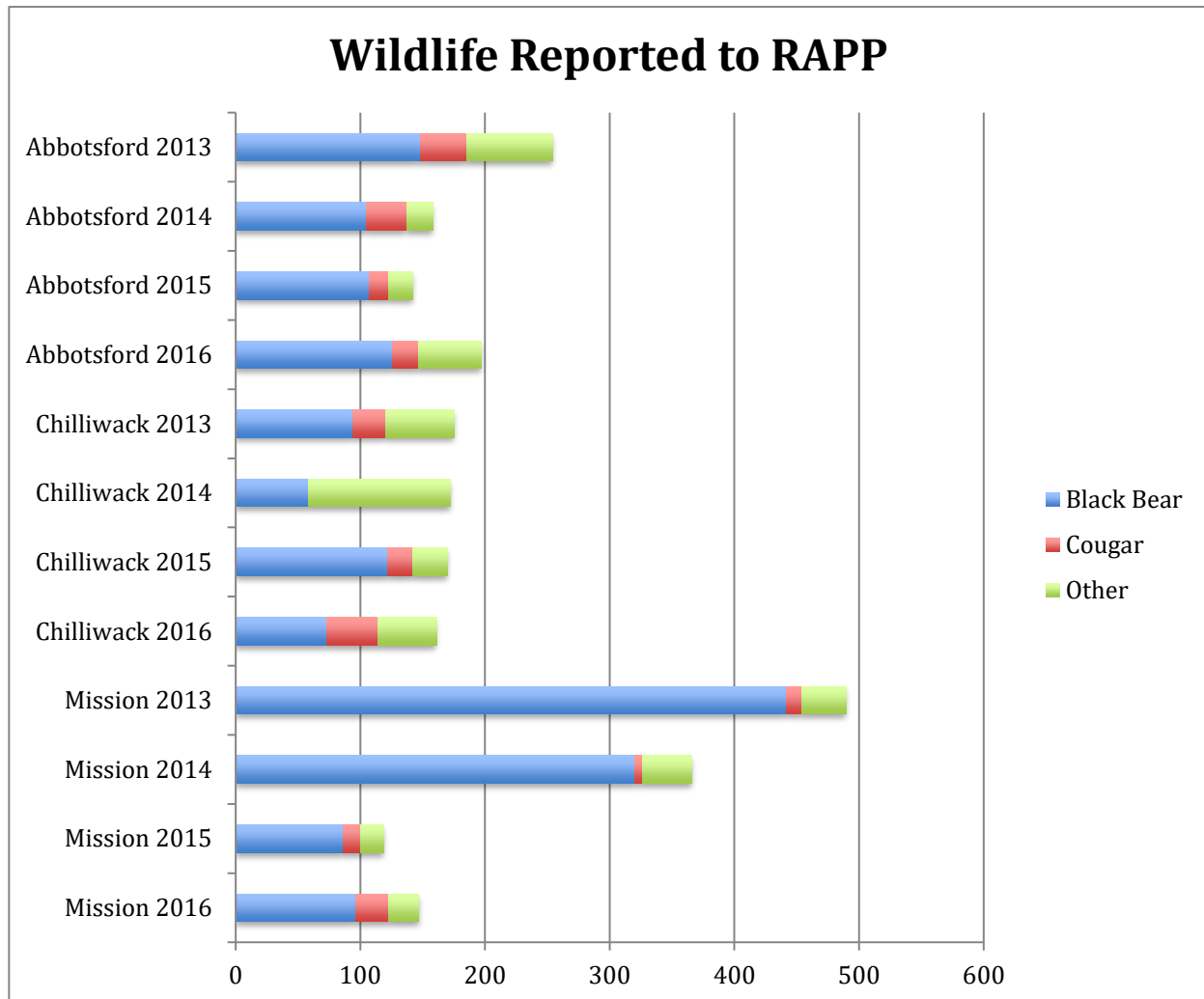
Many people in the FVRD have unattended fruit trees which attract wildlife into residential areas. More publications about gleaning groups may reduce the amount of conflicts with residential fruit trees.

## **Unwilling Residents**

There were many times this year where both the WCC and WCAs were met with negative views on the WSBC program. Residents unwilling to keep their garbage inside until the morning of pick-up because it causes them an inconvenience proved to be a problem many times this year. By having neighbors comply with garbage set out times, this may encourage the unwilling residents to also take the time to place out garbage the morning of pickup.

## Wildlife Reports

Once a wildlife report has been made to the RAPP line, the reports will be made available to the public on the WildSafeBC website. Stats show the overall number of wildlife conflicts have decreased in the FVRD since the program began in 2013.



**Figure 7** - Wildlife sightings reported to RAPP since the WildSafeBC program began in 2013. Conflicts have decreased since the WildSafeBC program started in 2013. 2016 season will be added at the end of the season.



## Goals for 2017

- Encourage the City of Chilliwack to bring forth a bylaw to only allow for garbage to be put out the morning of pick-up.
- Create better relations with the park rangers in the area to promote better attractant management while camping.
- Create new relationships with community groups.
- Acquire second set of presentation materials to ensure multiple communities can be reach simultaneously.
- Acquire own bear pelt through a donation.
- Create new approaches to promote awareness of wildlife attractant management.
- Continue building the WSBC reputation within the FVRD.

## Acknowledgements

WildSafeBC in the Fraser Valley Regional District is very thankful for the generous support the program receives from its sponsors, partners and volunteers. Without their support the program would not have been able to build the reputation it has within the FVRD. Thanks to our sponsors: The BC Ministry of Environment, British Columbia Conservation Foundation, and the Fraser Valley Regional District. Our community

A big thank you to our community partners: Christina Vugteveen at the Fraser Valley Regional District, Shawn Gurney at the City of Abbotsford, Jennifer Meier at the District of Mission, Lydia Koot with the Hope Mountain Black Bear Committee. Thank-you to all the Conservation Officers in the FVRD for the information and advice.

A Huge thank you to the hardworking Canada Summer Job Students; Alexandra Selinger and Kelly Corley-Smith, who were indispensable to this year's program. To all the volunteers who gave assistance at our very busy events we truly appreciate your help.

Finally, WSBC would like to thank all the residents who made the effort this year to remove wildlife attractants from their property and encouraged neighbors to do the same.



## Appendix A – Events Attended

- Mission Farmers Market (x6)
- Kent School Carnival
- Cultus Lake Day
- Mission Children's Festival
- Family Fishing Day
- Cultus Lake Fishing Derby
- Family Safety Day
- Deroche Farmers Market
- Canada Day at Rotary Stadium
- Litter and Wildlife Day (x4)
- BerryBeat Festival
- Stave Lake Family Fun Day
- BerryBeat Festival
- Clearbrook Waterworks Event
- Cultus Lake Parks Day
- Chilliwack Library Info Table
- Pirate Day at Kilby Historic Site
- Agrifair
- Invasive Species Day
- Jam in Jubilee (x4)
- MissionFest
- Summer Carnival
- Sardis Library Info Table (x2)
- Animal Education Day
- BC Goes Wild (x2)
- Arbour Day
- Maan Farms Pumpkin Festival (x3)

## Appendix B – Group Presented To

- Little Mountain Elementary
- Abbotsford Christian Elementary School
- St. Andrew's Community Presentation
- SPCA Summer Camp
- Cultus Lake Amphitheatre - Sea to Sky Parks
- Little Wonders Montessori - Auguston
- Picnic in the Park
- Cultus Lake Amphitheatre - Sea to Sky Parks
- SPCA Summer Camp
- Cultus Lake Amphitheatre - Sea to Sky Parks
- Little Wonders Montessori - Gladys
- A.D. Rundle outdoor ed class
- Sardis Library
- Dewdney Elementary
- Chehalis School
- Great Blue Heron Reserve (Home School Program)
- Fraser Valley Free School
- Mission Cubs