

WildSafeBC Annual Report 2017

Town of Princeton

Prepared by Jessica Blue, WildSafeBC Community Coordinator



Ministry of
Environment



Executive Summary

The Town of Princeton took part in the WildSafeBC program with a full coordinator position for the first time in 2017. The program was delivered from late May to the end of September by the WildSafeBC Community Coordinator (WCC), Jessica Blue. Jessica attended a week long training session in Kamloops which provided the information, skills and toolkit materials for the delivery of the WildSafeBC program.

The 2017 Princeton WildSafeBC program included the delivery of proactive messaging regarding the management of wildlife attractants through the mantra of “keeping wildlife wild and community’s safe”. Jessica delivered the program through a number of methods including public displays, door-to-door canvassing, media releases, garbage tagging and Junior Ranger presentations. The 2017 WildSafeBC program directly engaged over 500 people within the Princeton community and achieved a broader reach through social media pages including the WildSafeBC Princeton Facebook page and the WildSafeBC Instagram page.

Princetown has a significant history of human-deer and human-bear conflicts and therefore deer and bear were a particular focus for outreach with the community.



Figure 1: WCC Jessica Blue delivering information pamphlets



Figure 2: Canada Day booth display

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Highlights from the 2017 Season

The Town of Princeton was successful in its application to be included in the WildSafeBC program for the 2017 season. The funding partners for the program included the Town of Princeton and the Ministry of Environment which provided funding for 450 hours to deliver the program. Additionally the Town of Princeton provided resources and office space to support the 2017 program.

In early May, Jessica Blue was employed as the WildSafeBC Community Coordinator (WCC) for Princeton. The WCC attended a week long training session in Kamloops held by the British Columbia Conservation Foundation (BCCF). During this training week, the WCC undertook training seminars in wildlife biology, attractant management, program delivery, public interactions and delivery of presentations. BCCF provided the WildSafeBC Princeton program with a complete tool kit of materials for delivery of the program which included equipment for a display booth, educational pamphlets, garbage tags, signage and Junior Ranger kits.

The WCC delivered the program through a number of methods including public displays, door-to-door canvassing, media releases, garbage tagging and Junior Ranger presentations. The WCC attended monthly deer counts with Councillor Rosemary Doughty to develop accurate regarding the Princeton deer population numbers.

Additionally, the WCC developed a Wildlife Hazard Assessment report in her first month of the program, which provided an assessment of information gathered through the community engagement and Bylaw Officer Stephanie Palmer to present areas of concern for wildlife within the town of Princeton.

The 2017 WildSafeBC program directly engaged over 500 people within the Princeton community and achieved a broader reach through social media pages including the WildSafeBC Princeton Facebook page and the WildSafeBC Instagram page.

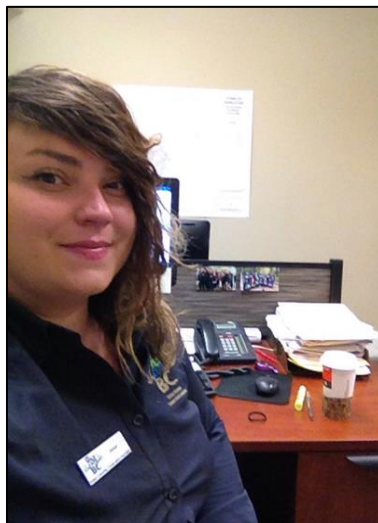


Figure 3: WildSafeBC Community Coordinator Jessica Blue

Public Displays

Educational displays at public events proved to be an effective way for the WCC to engage one-on-one with a broad range of community members. Attending public events allowed the WCC to listen to stories and concerns of community members and to provide educational messaging for reducing human-wildlife conflict. The WCC attended several events throughout the 2017 season including the Tourism and Trade Show, Canada Day celebrations and the Princeton Fall Fair. Over 150 people were engaged by the WCC through public displays and event attendance.



Figure 4: Public displays and interactive activities

Presentations

The WCC delivered educational presentations to a wide range of audiences that reached over 120 residents during the 2017 program. The primary messaging of all educational presentations was human-wildlife conflict reduction; however they also include wildlife safety information and the Junior Ranger program. Presentations were delivered to the following audiences:

- John Allison Elementary
- Vermilion Forks Elementary
- Fun Zone
- BC Goes Wild weekend

BC Goes Wild Weekend

WildSafeBC Princeton took part in the 2nd annual BC Goes Wild weekend on the 16th and 17th of September. The celebration is held during third weekend in September when incidents of wildlife conflict activities peak. The WCC hosted a scavenger hunt and activities booth at the Swan Lake Bird Sanctuary. The event was advertised through the WildSafeBC Princeton Facebook page and was well attended by families within the community.



Figure 5: Junior Ranger day with Fun Zone



Figure 6: BC Goes Wild weekend event poster

Door-to-Door

The WCC undertook approximately 100 hours of door-to-door canvassing within the community of Princetown, which included contacting home owners in residential suburbs and business operators, particularly in the restaurant sector. The door-to-door approach allowed the WCC to engage in in-depth conversation with over 100 members of the Princeton community regarding the key human-wildlife conflicts concerning the community and to provide critical information and education materials.

Garbage Tagging

The WCC undertook garbage tagging within a small sub-section of Princeton during the 2017 season. As the Princeton community is in its first season of the WSBC program, garbage tagging was trialed by the WCC. The WCC liaised with bylaw representatives prior to these trial garbage tagging activities to develop an approach for key locations to visit.

Princeton Deer Counts

The WCC participated in the ongoing urban deer counts undertaken during the 2017 season. Deer continue to be the major source of conflict in the Princeton area. The WCC promoted the use of the Wildlife Alert Reporting Program (WARP) to record deer sightings and presented these records during educational presentations.



Figure 6: Princeton deer counts

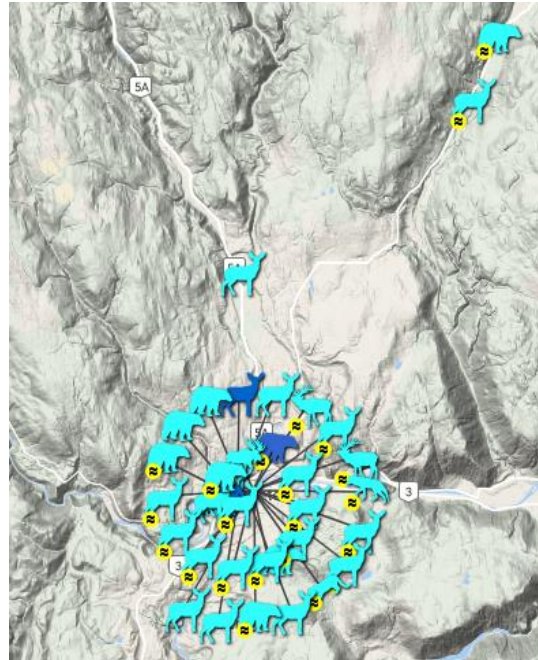


Figure 7: Princeton WARP records May to September

Challenges for the 2017 Season

Fires threatened Princeton this summer and made it difficult to commute to town due to road closures. However, the WCC was able to work from home via computer to catch up on emails, social media, lesson plans and communicate with community members. The WCC was on evacuation alert for two weeks and was limited to deliver the WildSafeBC program.

The WildSafeBC Princeton Facebook page was well received in the first year of the program, however many community members began using the Facebook page to report wildlife sightings and conflict. The WCC encouraged the use of WARP and the RAPP line to report wildlife sightings however the messaging will take time before practices within the community begin to change. Further education through door-to-door canvassing, public presentations and media promotion will assist this change. Additionally the WCC worked with the Town of Princeton to encourage the promotion of WARP and the RAPP line through their website and public communications.

Enforcement of bylaws and Wildlife Act is made difficult in the Town of Princeton due to a lack of resources. Particularly, the lack of Conservation Officers Service (COS) within Princeton makes it difficult when encouraging residents to report human-wildlife conflict. The closest COS is in Merritt and has to travel to respond to issues of conflict.

Goals for the 2018 Season

Looking forward to 2018, WildSafeBC Prince hopes to continue to collaborate with the Town of Princeton to “keep wildlife wild and communities safe” through the following activities:

- Broaden the delivery of the WildSafeBC program to reach more residents within the Town of Princeton.
- Expand the delivery of the Junior Ranger program to include more students and regular classroom visits, as well as providing Junior Ranger kits for participants.
- Continue to encourage the use of WARP and the RAPP line for reporting human-wildlife conflict.
- Continue to assist with urban and agricultural deer management within the region.
- Monitor the outcomes of the Wildlife Hazard Assessment and work with the Town of Princeton and community stakeholders to reduce wildlife attractants.
- Continue to work with the Town of Princeton and community stakeholders to develop the Bear Smart application.
- Work with funding partners to expand the WildSafeBC Princeton program to allow additional hours for program delivery.

Acknowledgements

WildSafeBC is grateful for the generous support the program receives from the Town of Princeton sponsorship. I would like to thank the sponsors: Town of Princeton, the Ministry of Environment and the British Columbia Conservation Foundation. A sincere thank you to every helpful member of town of Princeton, it has been a pleasure working with all of you who have made this job run smoothly. A big thanks to the Mayor and Council members of Princeton including the administrative clerks, Bylaw Officer - Stephanie Palmar, Recreation Tourism and Cultural Coordinator - Nadine McEwen, Lori Thomas - Visitor Centre Coordinator, Vermilion Forks Field Naturalists, Provincial Coordinator Frank Ritcey, BC Conservation Officer Service, and fellow mentors across the province. If I missed anyone thank you for all your wonderful support! It has been a memorable season and I look forward to working with you all in the future.