

# WildSafeBC Annual Report 2020

## Kamloops

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## Executive Summary

This report describes the activities of the WildSafeBC (WSBC) Kamloops program for the 2020 season. The program coverage area includes the City of Kamloops and is located in the traditional territory of the Secwepemc First Nations (Figure 1). Bear reports have been relatively low this year, however unsecured garbage has remained a source of conflict. There were also notable conflicts with coyotes in Barnhartvale, Westsyde and Aberdeen. These were related to dogs off leash and unsecure livestock. Deer have been the most reported species to date this year and 206 of the 234 reports from January 1 to October 31 2020 were associated with dead, injured, or orphaned deer. There were also reports of deer accessing fruit trees and livestock feed. The WCC is aware there have been additional deer conflict associated with vegetable gardens and fruit trees that were unreported.

This year, the COVID-19 pandemic meant that WSBC had to adjust their operations to keep everyone safe, while continuing to deliver the program effectively. In Kamloops, schools were closed from March until early September and annual events were cancelled, which altered the typical delivery of the Kamloops WSBC program. The WSBC Community Coordinator (WCC) focussed their efforts on bin tagging and door-to-door education in neighbourhoods that showed high conflict in the past and were recommended by the BC Conservation Officer Service (COS). Social media, media releases and interviews with CFJC-TV were utilized to spread messaging. The WCC also assisted the City of Kamloops with the multi-unit dumpster decal project and loaner garbage bin lock project.

From May to September, the WCC gave 4 presentations to a total of 30 participants that focussed on wildlife safety and awareness, and bear spray use. Through door-to-door messaging, 341 residents were reached and educated on proper attractant management and wildlife safety and awareness. A total of 403 garbage bins were tagged throughout the City of Kamloops. The WCC attended 3 events interacting with 196 people. Facebook followers on the 'WildSafeBC Kamloops' page increased from 601 followers in 2019 to 819 in 2020 and had a total reach of 81,848 through 30 Facebook posts. Coverage by the WCC ended early in mid-September and Provincial staff continued to provide in-kind support of the program by attending City Bear Working Group meetings, maintaining the WildSafeBC Kamloops Facebook page, and acting as point of contact for local COS and media. This included late season bear activity and multiple lynx sightings on the North Shore.

Improperly managed garbage and fruit trees continue to be a source of wildlife conflict in Kamloops. While some residents are familiar with conflict and how to prevent it, others are less aware of the risks of wildlife conflict. Continued outreach is needed to provide education on how to manage wildlife attractants and how to stay safe when in wildlife country. In 2021, bin tagging is recommended for areas that did not receive this education this year. Additionally, the WCC should continue to grow the following of the 'WildSafeBC Kamloops' Facebook page and support the City of Kamloops as they explore further ways to secure their solid waste and potentially introduce organics diversion. To foster collaborations between the COS, WSBC, the City, and other stakeholders, continued participation in the Bear Working Group will also be beneficial. Moving forward, these initiatives will help 'keep wildlife wild and communities safe'.

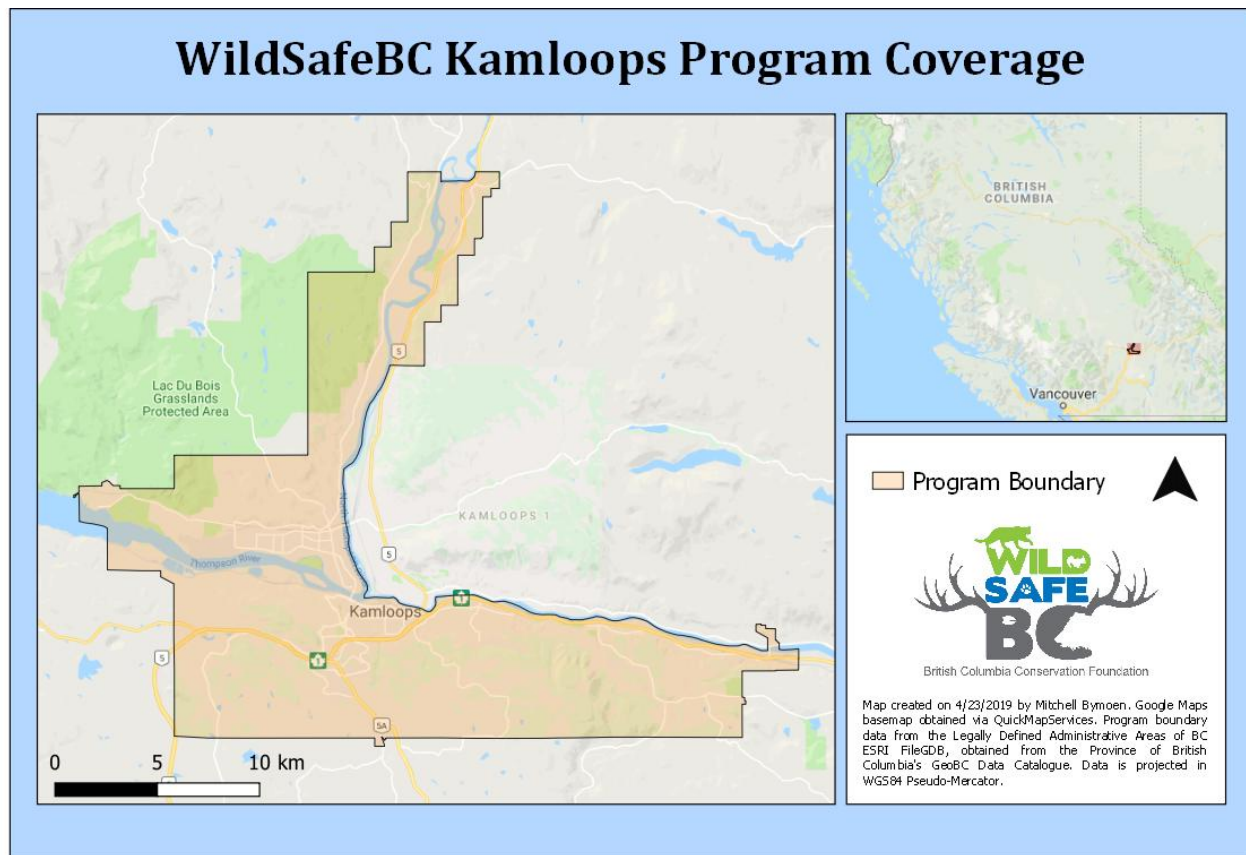


Figure 1. The WildSafeBC Kamloops program coverage area.

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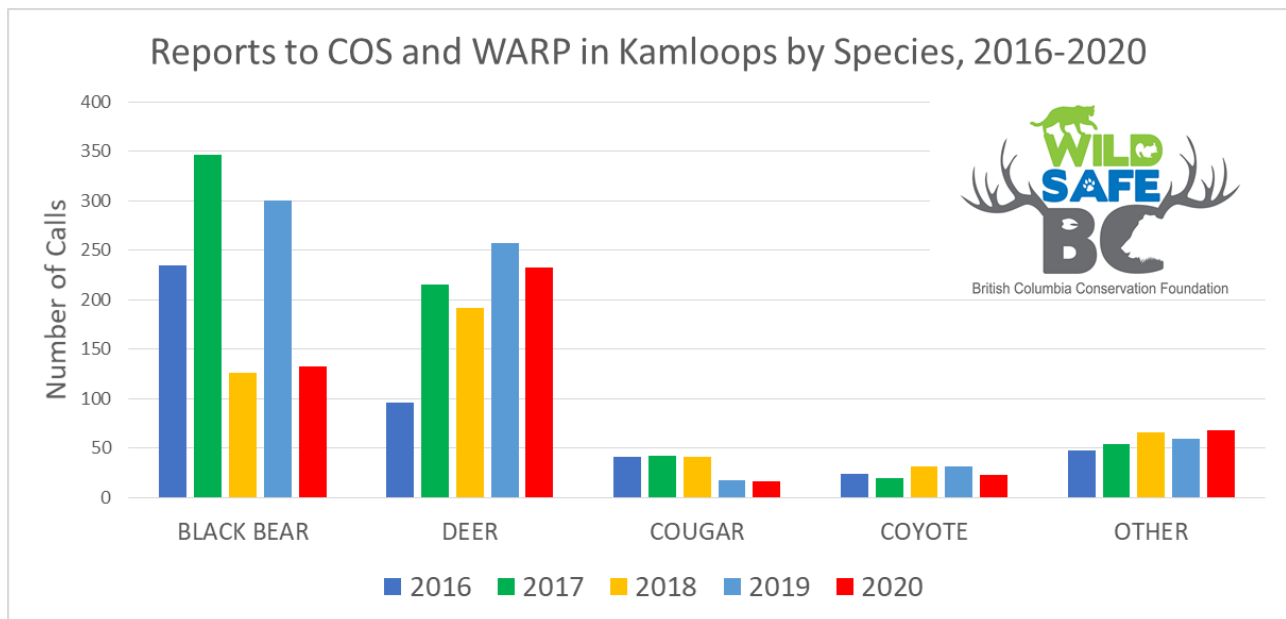
**Cover Photo:** The WildSafeBC Kamloops Community Coordinator at the Kweseltken Farmers' and Artisan Market located at the Kamloopa Powwow Arbour on September 13, 2020. Photo by Gerard Hales.

## Highlights from the 2020 Season

### Wildlife Activity

Reports made to the BC Conservation Officer Service (COS) through the RAPP line (1-877-952-7277) and online form (<https://forms.gov.bc.ca/environment/rapp/>) are available to the public through WildSafeBC's Wildlife Alert Reporting Program (WARP). Data is updated daily and this report for the Kamloops program includes data from January 1, 2016 to October 31, 2020 (Figure 2). From January 1, 2020 to October 31, 2020 there were 474 wildlife reports and the most reported species were deer, black bears, and coyotes (Figure 2). Bear reports have been relatively low this year however, garbage remains a source of human-bear conflicts. There were notable conflicts with coyotes in Barnhartvale, Westsyde and Aberdeen. These were related to dogs off leash and unsecure livestock.

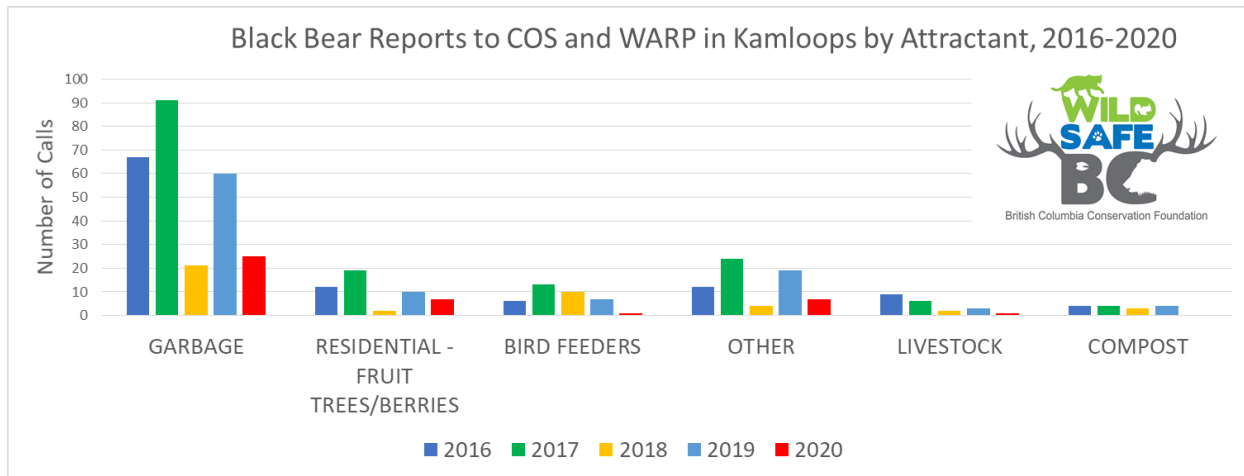
Deer have been the most reported species to date this year. Of the 234 reports from January 1 to October 31, 2020, 206 reports were associated with dead, injured, or orphaned deer. There were also reports of deer accessing fruit trees and livestock feed. The WCC was also informed of deer conflicts associated with vegetable gardens and fruit trees.



**Figure 2. Wildlife reports made to the Conservation Officer Service (COS) and the WildSafeBC Wildlife Alert Reporting Program (WARP) from January 1, 2016 to October 31, 2020.**



There are many natural and anthropogenic attractants that increase the potential for human-wildlife conflict. The most reported attractants in Kamloops are garbage, followed by residential fruit trees and berries (Figure 3).



**Figure 3. Reports made to the Conservation Officer Service (COS) and the WildSafeBC Wildlife Alert Reporting Program (WARP) by attractant from January 1, 2016 to October 31, 2020.**

## WildSafeBC COVID-19 Mitigation

All of the activities performed this season followed safety guidelines provided by the Province, WorkSafeBC and/or the BC Conservation Foundation's Safety Coordinator. The WCCs were required to provide safety plans if they were organizing events where people would congregate. Wherever possible, in person activities were replaced with video conferencing. WildSafeBC adapted and modified requirements as the Province moved from Phase 1 to Phase 3. The WCCs worked closely with their local communities to ensure that all local requirements and restrictions were respected.

## WildSafe Ranger Program

The WildSafe Ranger Program introduces youth to the concept of human-wildlife conflict. The program was delivered to a children's group and their chaperones, 13 in total, in the Lac du Bois grasslands on September 12. The five children in attendance received WildSafe Ranger kits and a copy of the Pepi7se Snake Activity Book (a Tk'emlúps te Secwépemc publication).

## Presentations to Community Groups

The WCC delivered three presentations this year. There were two wildlife awareness and safety presentations delivered to ten participants via Zoom to Kamloops Immigrant Services on August 12. City of Kamloops employees, seven in total, participated in a Wildlife Awareness and Safety presentation with bear spray practice on August 20 (Figure 4).



**Figure 4. City of Kamloops employees participating in a Wildlife Awareness and Safety presentation with bear spray practice on August 20, 2020.**

## Public Displays and Events

The WCC attended three events in 2020. The first event was for World Snake Day on July 16 at the Batchelor Nature Park in Batchelor Heights. This was a great opportunity to talk to 32 residents about snake awareness and safety. On August 8, 109 residents attended the WSBC booth at the Kamloops Farmers' Market (Figure 5). Many discussions took place with locals and tourists of all ages and a wide range of wildlife interest. The last event attended was on September 13 at the Kweseltken Farmers' and Artisan Market at the Kamloopa Powwow Arbour (cover photo). There were 55 people that approached the booth to discuss many aspects of wildlife and the WildSafeBC program.



**Figure 5. The WildSafeBC Kamloops Community Coordinator at the Kamloops Farmers' Market on August 8, 2020. Photo by Gerad Hales.**



## BC Goes Wild

BC Goes Wild is a campaign to celebrate wildlife in BC and it occurs in September which is typically the month when human-bear conflicts are at their highest in BC. The WCC participated in the Fifth Annual BC Goes Wild celebration by delivering the WildSafe Ranger Program on September 12 (Figure 6) and the public Kweseltken Farmers' and Artisan Market on September 13 as previously mentioned. The children's event had presentations from representatives of the Grasslands Conservation Council, WSBC and the Thompson Nicola Invasive Plant Committee. The children learned about invasive weeds, biodiversity and wildlife that can be found in the grasslands. Activities included a WildSafe Ranger Program presentation, animal charades, a weed pull and a scavenger hunt.



**Figure 6. The WildSafeBC booth set up in the Lac du Bois grasslands to help celebrate the 5th Annual BC Goes Wild provincial celebration. Photo by Jo-Anne Hales.**

## Door-to-Door Education and Bin Tagging

Door-to-Door education focused on areas that were of high concern and requested by the Conservation Officer Service. Specific messaging on managing attractants, wildlife activity and feeding wildlife was delivered to homes in Sahali, Dufferin, Juniper Ridge, Dallas and Barnhartvale (Figure 7). Attached to door hangers were pamphlets on rats, bears, coyotes and/or deer. A total of 437 homes received wildlife safety and awareness messaging through door-to-door education.

Garbage bin tagging consists of placing a highly visible and removable warning sticker on top of containers set curbside the day before collection (Figure 8). Several neighborhoods in Kamloops received bin tagging education this year. The City of Kamloops “Bear Smart Bylaw” is in effect from April 1 to November 30. The bylaw states that carts should not be placed on the curb prior to 4:00 am on collection day.

A total of 403 bins were tagged in the following neighbourhoods this year:

- Aberdeen (321 bins tagged) – canvassed 6 nights
- Barnhartvale (34 bins tagged) – canvassed 3 nights
- Dufferin (38 bins tagged) – canvassed 3 nights
- Juniper Ridge (10 bins tagged) – canvassed 2 nights

It is significant to note that Aberdeen had 99 bins tagged on August 5 and by August 26, 35 bins were tagged. Of those 35 bins, 13 were repeat offenders.



**Figure 7. A WildSafeBC volunteer delivering Door-to-Door education. Photo by Jo-Anne Hales.**



**Figure 8. A garbage bin set out to early receives a bin tag. Photo by Gerard Hales.**

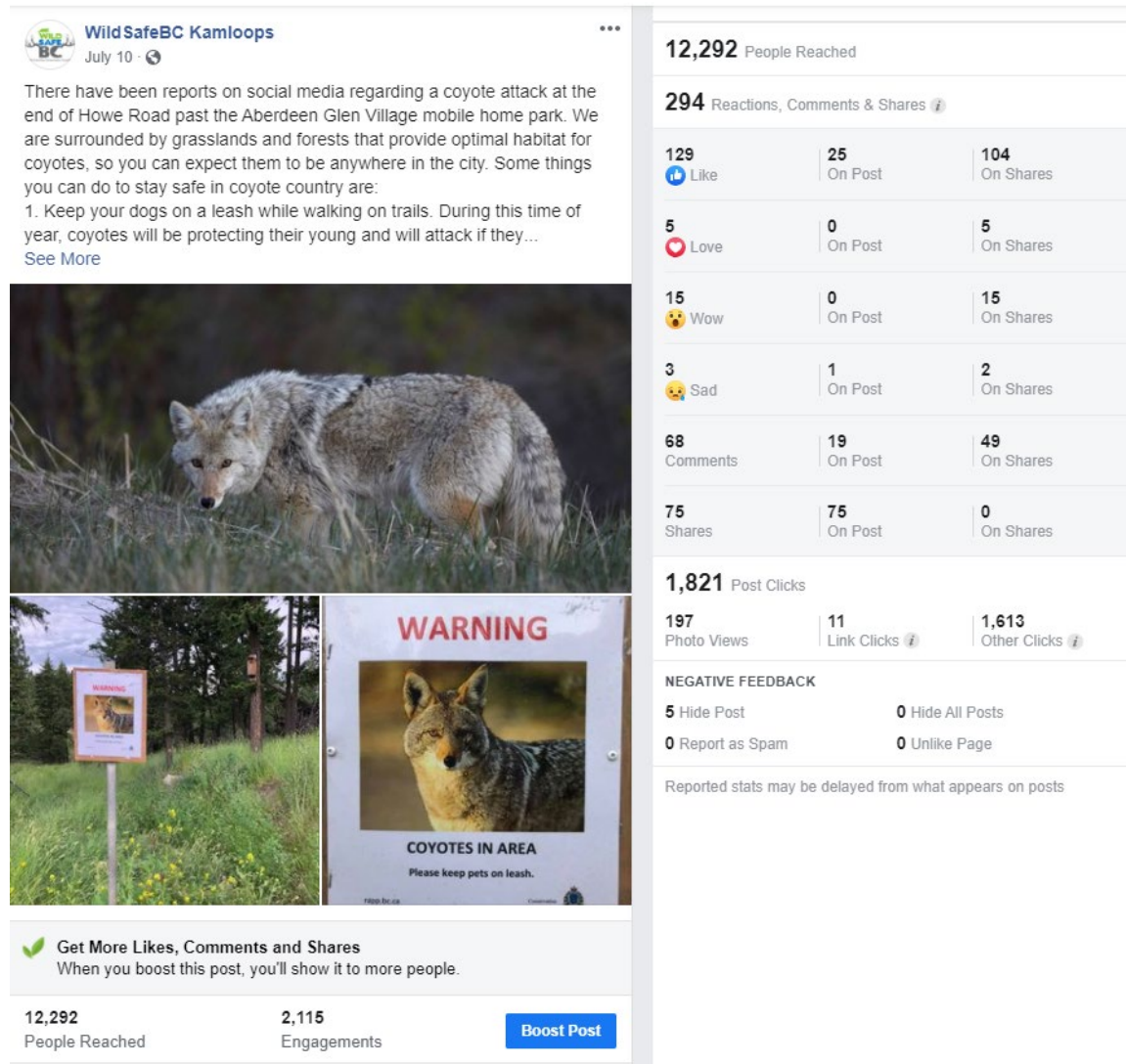
## Social Media and Press

The WCC and/or the Provincial Coordinator participated in nine media releases/interviews in the 2020 season:

- Skype Interview with CFJC about bears coming out of hibernations with Vanessa Isnardy – April.
- Interview with Kamloops this Week regarding bears coming out of hibernation with Vanessa Isnardy – April.
- City of Kamloops media release welcoming the new WildSafeBC Kamloops Coordinator – May.
- Phone interview with Castanet and subsequent news release - June.
- Phone interview with CBC with Vanessa Isnardy focusing on coyote and deer activity – July
- Interview with RadioNL about coyotes with Vanessa Isnardy - July.
- Interview on CFJC-TV in response to a rattlesnake encounter in Cooney Bay.
- Interview on CFJC-TV promoting the WildSafeBC Business Launch Program.
- Interview on CBC Kamloops with Vanessa Isnardy regarding lynx sightings on North Shore - October

The WCC increased Facebook followers from 601 in May to 819. Early in the season, requests were sent to local community groups, and if accepted, were added to the Kamloops WildSafeBC Facebook page. Permission was given by the community groups to share WildSafeBC posts on their pages. This collaboration was an effective way to increase the reach of the program's messaging. In total, the WCC created 30 posts that reached 81,848 people. The post that received the most reaches (12,215) was in regard to coyote safety and awareness in response to a coyote-dog conflict (Figure 9).





**Figure 9. The most popular Kamloops Facebook post of the season was in regards to coyote safety information as a result of a dog-coyote conflict.**

## Indigenous Awareness and Engagement

The WCC completed the following activities to increase Indigenous awareness and engagement:

- Introduced the Provincial WildSafeBC Coordinator Vanessa Isnardy via email to Tk'emlúps te Secwépemc (TteS) Chief and Council.
- Set-up the WildSafeBC booth at the Kweseltken Farmers' and Artisan Market.
- Shared WildSafeBC Facebook posts on the Tk'emlúps Community Information Facebook page.
- Distributed two TteS publications at community events. The publications, (1) Pepi7se Snake Activity Book and (2) Species at Risk: Pepi7se – Snake Awareness and Appreciation, highlight the cultural significance, appreciation and awareness of snakes.

## Special Initiatives

The City of Kamloops provided three bin locks to be used for a trial run this season in a high conflict area, this is in addition to two locks that were distributed in 2019. City of Kamloops employees will survey the residents to see if the locks were a success. The City is also completing research to determine which bear-resistant bins will work across the city and will be compatible with the collection trucks currently in use. There are five 95-gallon Rehrig bins being tested by residents in Kamloops. It is a priority for the City to provide bear-resistant bins to all Kamloops residents.

The multi-unit residential bin decal project was an initiative that was implemented this year in response to a discussion at the Bear Management Committee meeting in the spring. A total of 100 bins throughout the city were chosen to receive new bin decals to remind residents that Kamloops is a Bear Smart Community and highlighted the importance of keeping bins closed at all times to prevent wildlife from accessing garbage (Figure 10).



**Figure 10. Before and after new bin decals were applied on multi-unit housing bins, highlighting the importance of keeping bins closed at all times to prevent access to garbage. Photos by Jo-Anne Hales.**

## Challenges and Opportunities

Improperly managed garbage and fruit trees continue to be a source of wildlife conflict in Kamloops. While some residents are familiar with conflict and how to prevent it, others are less aware of the risks of wildlife conflict. Continued outreach is needed to provide education on how to manage wildlife attractants and how to stay safe when in wildlife country. The WCC recommends the following activities for 2021:

- Continued participation in the Bear Working Group
- Focus bin tagging in areas that did not received bin tagging education such as Westsyde and the North Shore.



- Continue to support the City of Kamloops as they explore further ways to secure their solid waste and potentially introduce organics diversion.
- Continue to develop relationships with COS and bylaw officers.
- Continue to increase the followers of the WildSafeBC Kamloops Facebook page.
- Promote the use and importance of bear spray when recreating.
- Promote greater use and awareness of the Wildlife Alert Reporting Program.
- Continue to develop relationships with Indigenous groups and other Kamloops community association groups.
- Reach out to local fruit-gleaning groups.
- Support the update and execution of the Kamloops Human-Bear Conflict Management Plan
- Utilize the WildSafe Business Pledge to increase awareness in the business community
- Host electric fencing workshops in more rural areas of the community (eg Barnhartvale)

## Acknowledgements

The Kamloops WildSafeBC Community Coordinator (WCC) would like to thank the City of Kamloops, BC Ministry of Environment and Climate Change Strategy and the BC Conservation Foundation (BCCF) for funding this project. A special thanks to City of Kamloops representatives for their assistance and support throughout the season. A huge thank you to the Provincial WildSafeBC Coordinator Vanessa Isnardy and the WildSafeBC Program Coordinator Heather Richardson for all of their guidance, knowledge and endless support. Thank you to the BC Conservation Officer Service for their direction and support of the program. Thank you to the residents of Kamloops, Facebook followers and media outlets for their stories, comments and broadcasts that helped spread important wildlife safety and awareness messaging in Kamloops. Lastly, the WCC would like to send an enormous thank you to all of the volunteers, Kamloops BCCF staff and fellow provincial WildSafeBC Community Coordinators for their encouragement and support. Each one of you make this program a provincial success.