

# WildSafeBC Annual Report 2023

## Trail

Prepared by: Nadia Pettigrew  
WildSafeBC Trail Coordinator



## Executive Summary

This report describes the activities of the WildSafeBC Trail Program between May 15, 2023 and November 10, 2023. This program covers the City of Trail (Figure 1). WildSafeBC acknowledges that this area is within the traditional and unceded territory of the Sinixt, Ktunaxa and Syilx Peoples and strives to work collaboratively and respectfully with all Indigenous Nations to protect wildlife and keep communities safe.

In recent years, black bears have been the most reported wildlife in Trail; therefore, education this season focused on black bear awareness. While interacting with the public, the WCC also heard many reports of coyotes, raccoons and skunks.

The WildSafeBC Community Coordinator (WCC) performed outreach activities intending to prevent conflict with wildlife in the community. The following list summarizes key program deliverables throughout the season:

- Six WildSafe Ranger Program presentations reached 132 youth.
- Door-to-door education reached over 130 households by leaving door hangers and approximately 20 in-person conversations with residents.
- Six nights of bin tagging and 17 households were reached by receiving bin stickers, and those with garbage out but no bin received a door hanger the next day.
- Three display booths at the Trail Incredible Market, reached approximately 225 participants.

Key challenges this year included low reporting of incidents to the British Columbia Conservation Office Service (COS) by the public, lack of access to bear-resistant waste receptacles, inconsistent trash pickup times, improper management of garbage between collection days by residents, mismanaged and unsecured fruit trees attracting wildlife into city limits, and food-conditioned bears.

WildSafeBC thanks the City of Trail, the BC Conservation Foundation, Columbia Basin Trust, and the Province of British Columbia for funding this program.



Figure 1. WildSafeBC Trail program coverage area.

**Table of Contents**

Executive Summary ..... 2

Highlights from the 2023 Season ..... 4

    WildSafe Ranger Program..... 4

    Display Booths ..... 4

    Door-to-Door Education and Bin Tagging ..... 5

    Social Media and Press ..... 5

    Collaborations ..... 5

Challenges and Opportunities ..... 6

Acknowledgements..... 7

**Table of Figures and Tables**

Figure 1. WildSafeBC Trail program coverage area. .... 3

Figure 2. The WildSafeBC Community Coordinator delivering a WildSafe Ranger Presentation at Rossland Summit School in 2023..... 4

Figure 3. WildSafeBC display booth at the Trail Incredible Market during the 2023 season. .... 5

Cover Photo: WildSafeBC Display booth at a community event, 2023.

## Highlights from the 2023 Season

### WildSafe Ranger Program

The WildSafe Ranger Program (WRP) introduces youth to the concept of human-wildlife conflict and engages them with ideas around the importance of respecting wildlife and managing attractants to help “keep wildlife wild and communities safe”. One school and two summer camps participated in the WildSafe Ranger Program during the 2023 season (Table 1; Figure 2). These program sessions reached 132 youth who received WildSafe Ranger Program materials to take home and share with their families.

Table 1. Schools and community camps that received the WildSafe Ranger Program in 2023.

School or Camp	Grade/Age	Classes (#)	Students (#)
<b>Glenmerry Elementary</b>	Grade 3	1	22
<b>Glenmerry Elementary</b>	Kindergarten	2	35
<b>Camp Cowabunga</b>	Ages 6-8	2	39
<b>Summer Adventure Camp</b>	Ages 9 - 12	2	36
<b>Total</b>		<b>7</b>	<b>132</b>



Figure 2. The WildSafeBC Community Coordinator delivering a WildSafe Ranger Presentation at Rossland Summit School in 2023.

### Display Booths

Three WildSafeBC display booths were held at the Trail Incredible Market. The WCC was able to engage with approximately 225 participants at these events, which provided an opportunity to introduce both tourists and residents to WildSafeBC messaging, make connections with local businesses and community organizations, and answer questions (Figure 3).





Figure 3. WildSafeBC display booth at the Trail Incredible Market during the 2023 season.

## Door-to-Door Education and Bin Tagging

Through door-to-door canvassing efforts, the WCC reached over 120 households with door hangers. These efforts also resulted in over 20 in-person conversations with residents who had concerns about the bears in their neighbourhoods. Areas that were prioritized for the door-to-door canvassing this year were those that had recent wildlife conflicts and where garbage was seen left outdoors or put out the night before collection.

Garbage bin tagging consists of placing a highly visible and removable sticker on top of containers set curbside the evening before garbage collection. The WCC performed 6 ix nights of bin tagging with 17 households receiving bin stickers. It is worth noting that many residents had visible unsecured bins on private property, or had garbage out in bags, without bins, that could not be tagged. These areas were revisited for door-to-door education to inform residents that unsecured garbage is a leading cause of human-wildlife conflicts in the community, leading to safety concerns and unnecessary harm to wildlife. The WCC recommends that the City of Trail requires residents to store their garbage in bins, rather than just bags.

## Social Media and Press

The WildSafeBC Rossland-Trail page gained 78 new followers in 2023 with 33 Facebook posts during the season. Posts that were most popular with page followers pertained to special events. The WCC also shared posts on the local Trail Community Facebook page to reach a wider audience.

## Collaborations

WildSafeBC Trail continued to collaborate with the local COS, including regular discussions and joint efforts in identifying areas to focus on for public education.

## Challenges and Opportunities

Challenges throughout the season included low reporting of incidents to the COS, lack of access to affordable bear-resistant waste receptacles, improper storage of waste bin between collection days, and inconsistent curbside garbage collection times.

The WCC notices that conversations with residents revealed many wildlife conflict reports that may not have been reported to the COS. Future WCCs should continue to focus education on the important of reporting human wildlife conflicts so the COS can take proper interventions before wildlife becomes human-habituated.

Garbage continues to be a major attractant in the community with many residents failing to securely store their waste bins or bags between collection days. Many residents are waiting until the morning of collection to put their garbage on the curb; however, garbage is left accessible to wildlife between collection days. With the recent addition of composting bins to the community solid waste pickup schedule, future education efforts should focus on how to better manage and secure garbage and other attractants on private property, which will result in a cleaner and safer community for people and wildlife.

Inconsistent collection times for garbage adds to this challenge and results in garbage bins being left on the curb for long periods each morning. Local bears have learned that garbage will be present before noon on these days, leading to food-conditioned bears.

Fruit trees also continue to be an attractant in Trail. This unnatural food source draws many species of wildlife into residential areas. Several areas have been identified as hotspots in the community and would benefit from increased education and fruit gleaning activities. To address the abundance of fruit in the community, Rossland has commissioned an App for fruit-gleaning purposes. The location of fruit and nut trees throughout Rossland is being mapped to make the App data functional for residents. Once fully utilized by the community, the App will aid in identifying potential problem areas early so education efforts can become more preventative rather than reactive. The addition of this App in Trail could be very useful.

Within Rossland and Trail, there has been increase in the occurrence of bears breaking into residents' homes and buildings. Education efforts next year should focus on how to address the root causes that lead to this behaviour. Food conditioning stems from garbage and fruit trees that are not sufficiently stored or managed. Recommending that the public lock their doors can also help reduce the chances of animals entering homes. Engaging residents in adopting best practices must continue as a priority for the region to keep wildlife wild and communities safe.

Further initiatives suggested for the 2024 season:

- Host electric fence demonstrations for residents.
- Continue education campaigns focusing on the hazards and solutions through social media, news articles, and workshops.
- Increase door-to-door canvassing and continue to focus on human-wildlife conflict hotspots.
- Continue with recommendations for replacement of fruit-bearing trees with non-fruit and non-nut bearing trees on public property and private property for interested landowners who do not harvest their fruit and nut trees.

- Host Bear Spray and Wildlife Safety Workshops.

## Acknowledgements

The WildSafeBC Rossland and Trail Coordinators are grateful for the generous support the program receives from its funders including the Cities of Rossland and Trail, the Columbia Basin Trust, the British Columbia Conservation Foundation (BCCF) and the Province of British Columbia. The WCC also thanks the BCCF team, the local B.C. Conservation Office Service team, and the Bylaw Officers for communication and shared knowledge of wildlife activity and advice.