

# ARROW-SLOCAN LAKES ANNUAL REPORT 2024



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*Keeping Wildlife Wild and  
Communities Safe*



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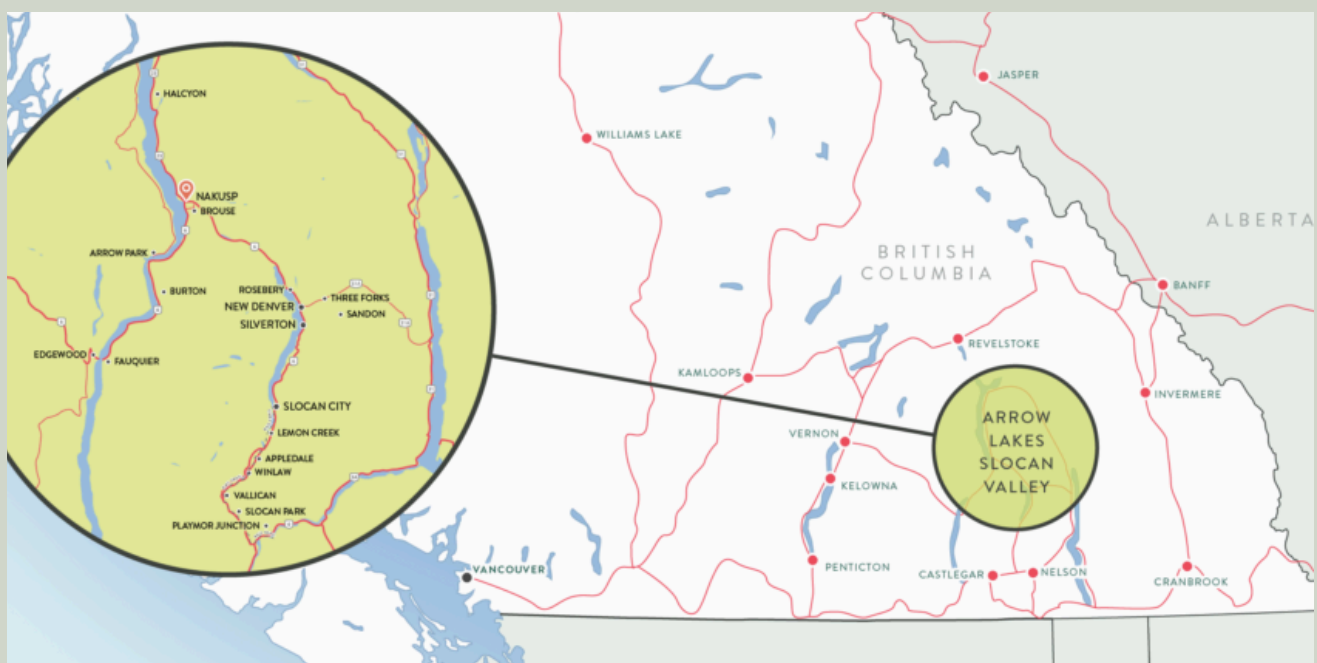
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# Executive Summary

This report describes the activities of the WildSafeBC Arrow-Slocan Lakes program for the 2024 season between May 15th and November 30th. The main goal of the WildSafeBC Community Coordinator is to assist communities in preventing human-wildlife conflicts through educational programs, collaboration, and community solutions. The following report summarizes key program deliverables over the course of the 2024 season, and will help shape the delivery of the program for the 2025 based on coordinator, community, and sponsor needs.

## Program Coverage Area

The WildSafeBC Arrow-Slocan Lakes program covers approximately 5,500 square kilometers and is located in the southeastern part of British Columbia, and is part of the Central Kootenay Regional District. It encompasses various communities along the Arrow Lakes and Slocan Lake, including areas like Nakusp, New Denver, Silverton, and Kaslo. The region is characterized by its stunning mountainous landscapes, dense forests, and numerous lakes, making it a popular destination for outdoor activities such as hiking, fishing, and camping.



**Figure 1.**

## 2024 Highlights

**259**

**Students Educated**

**1,166**

**Community Members Reached**

**3**

**Community Event Booths**

**9**

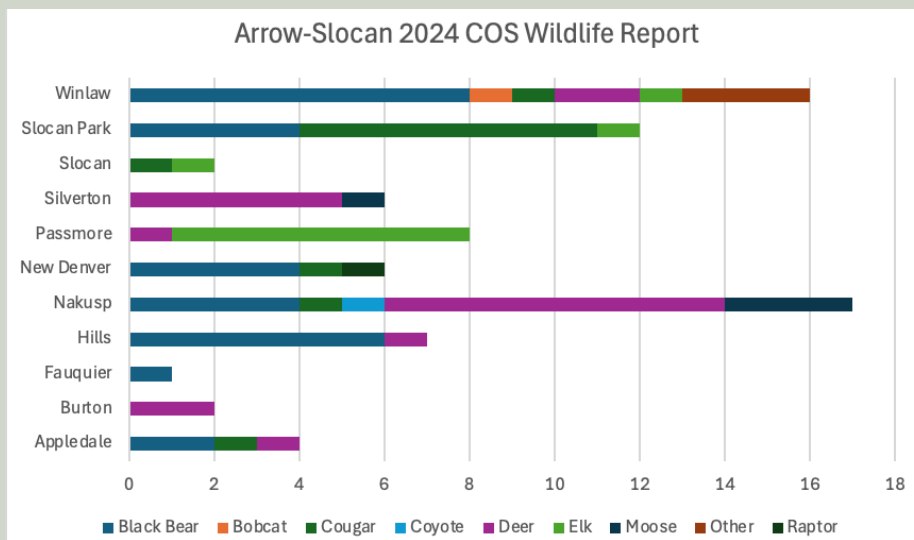
**Bins Tagged**

**16,148**

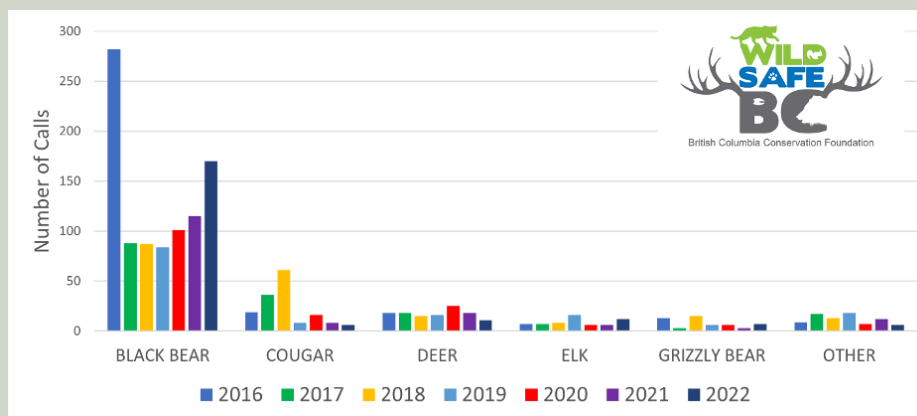
**Facebook Users Reached**

# Conservation Officer Service Reports

Between January 1, 2024, and October 31, 2024, a total of 81 wildlife-related reports were submitted to the Conservation Officer Service (COS) via the Report All Poachers and Polluters (RAPP) line (1-877-952-7277) or the online form. In comparison to previous years, the overall number of calls to the COS for this region in 2024 was lower (Fig.2). This decline is likely attributed to the wildfires that occurred in July and August, which may have disrupted reporting patterns. The Nakusp subregion was the only area that did not experience a significant decrease in reports, remaining relatively consistent with prior years (Fig.2). While the number of reports was higher in 2022, it was still less than half the volume seen in 2016 across all subregions, highlighting the variability in wildlife conflict reports from year to year (Fig.3). Such fluctuations are primarily influenced by the availability and abundance of natural food sources. Both 2016 and 2022 were years of low local food availability, which resulted in an increased number of wildlife sightings and conflicts reported to the COS (Fig.3).



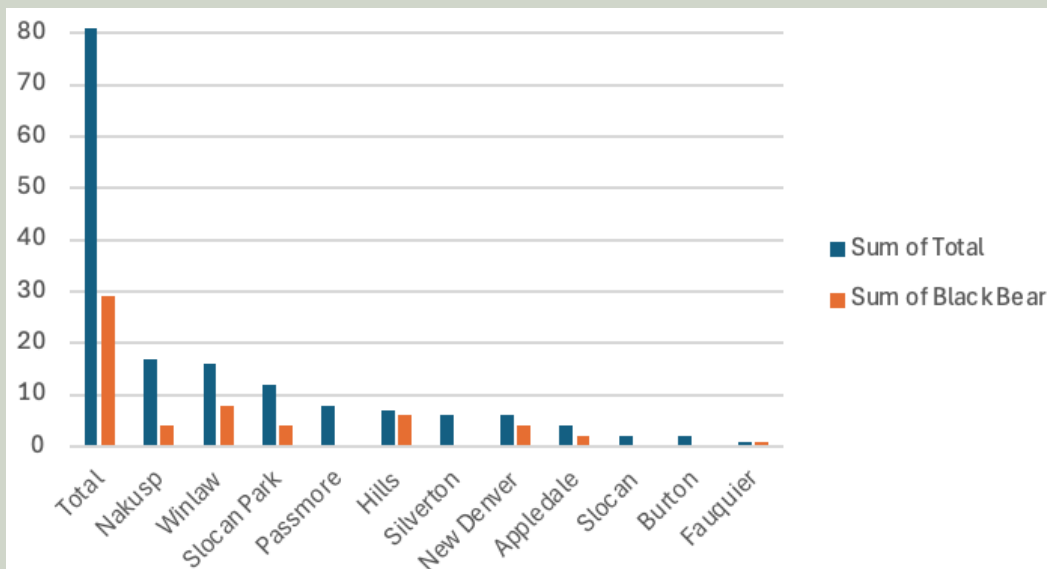
**Figure 2.** Reports to the COS from January 1, 2024 to October 31, 2024 by Species



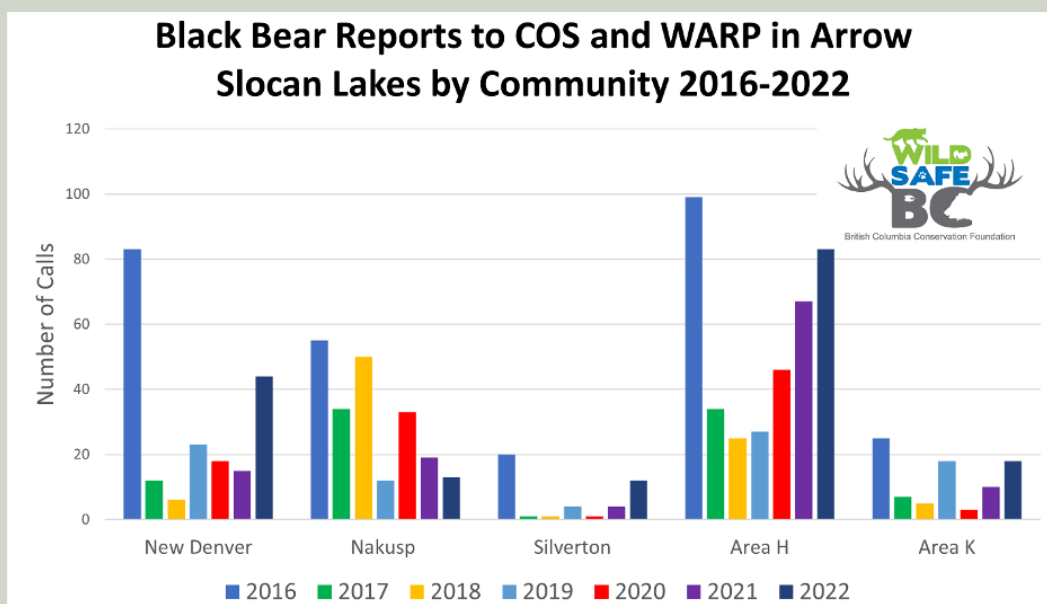
**Figure 3.** Previous Yearly Reports to the COS by Species

# Conservation Officer Service Reports

Black bears remained the most reported species in the region (Fig.4). There were 29 black bear reports made to the COS in 2024, which is much lower than the seven-year average of 132 (Fig.5). Reports of black bears have been consistently higher than other species in each community since 2016 (Fig.5). Unfortunately WARP has been unable to track the wildlife attractants as it has in previous years. Community reports and residents contacting WildSafeBC indicate that fruit and nut trees remained a major attractant in the late summer and early fall. Reports of conflict with other species were lower than average for moose and elk, above average for cougars and relatively average for deer, remaining at low numbers overall for these species (Figure 2).



**Figure 4.** Black Bear Reports to the COS from January 1, 2024 to October 31, 2024.



**Figure 5.** Previous Yearly Reports to the COS Regarding Black Bears

# WildSafe Ranger Program

The WildSafe Ranger Program introduces students to the concept of human-wildlife conflict and encourages them to take an active role in reducing human-wildlife conflict at home by helping their families identify backyard wildlife attractants. In addition, students learn how to have a safe and respectful relationship with wildlife. The program complements the BC Science K-9 Curriculum. The WildSafe Arrow-Slocan Lakes coordinator delivered 26 WRP presentations with 4 elementary schools (Table 1). A total of 259 children throughout the Arrow-Slocan Lakes region became WildSafe Rangers and received a WildSafe Ranger kit to take away with them.

School/Group	Grade	# Reached	Date
Lucerne Elementary	k-6	45	June 10
Winlaw School	k-5	86	September 24
Edgewood School	k-6	16	October 18
Nakusp Elementary	k-5	106	October 30

**Table 1.** WildSafe Rangers presentations provided in 2024 in the Arrow-Slocan Lake region



## Community Groups

In 2024, there were 7 community presentations in both indoor and outdoor settings, to 86 participants including: Wildlife Awareness and Safety presentations, bear spray workshops, electric fencing workshops, and a presentation with the Nakusp Community Forest (NACFOR) on rat prevention. Electric fencing workshops were held in collaboration with Grizzly Bear Coexistence Solutions and one in New Denver was additionally co-hosted with Valhalla Wilderness Society Slokan Valley Area H Bear Smart Program.



**Figure 6.** Bear safety and awareness presentation at the Nakusp Firehall in collaboration with Cora Skaien



**Figure 7.** Rat prevention presentation at the Nakusp Community Hall in collaboration with NACFOR



# Presentations

Event	Date	Number of Attendees
Wildlife Awareness + Safety / Bear Spray Nakusp Public Library	June 7	10
Wildlife Awareness + Safety / Bear Spray RDCK Nakusp Landfill	July 8	5
Wildlife Awareness + Safety / Bear Spray Nakusp Emergency Services Building	September 12	12
Electric Fencing Workshop New Denver - Knox Hall	June 11	9
Electric Fencing Workshop Passmore Hall	September 11	4
Electric Fencing Workshop Online - Google Teams	September 27	10
Rat Presentation at Nakusp Fire Hall	August 26	36

**Table 2.** Presentations and workshops provided in 2024 in the Arrow-Slocan Lakes region

## Display Booths

Display booths allow the public to view and interact with our educational materials, learn about wildlife safety, discuss wildlife attractant management, and network our program offerings to various groups of residents. In 2024, more than 558 people visited the WildSafeBC display booth at the New Denver Farmers Market, Hills Harvest Festival and Garlic Festival across the community. Many visitors appreciated the opportunity to learn more about wildlife safety and how to manage attractants. Informative handouts and visual displays on the best practices for keeping wildlife at bay resonated with the audience. Attendees enjoyed the chance to ask questions about local wildlife, their behavior, and how to avoid attracting them to their homes. Focus on managing wildlife attractants, especially with regard to bears, deer, and other animals common in the area, was particularly popular. Visitors were keen to learn specific ways they could protect both wildlife and their own properties. Some attendees were interested in arranging a WildSafeBC visit to their classrooms or local events. Overall, the booths provided a valuable space for education and engagement, with people leaving better informed on how to safely coexist with local wildlife.

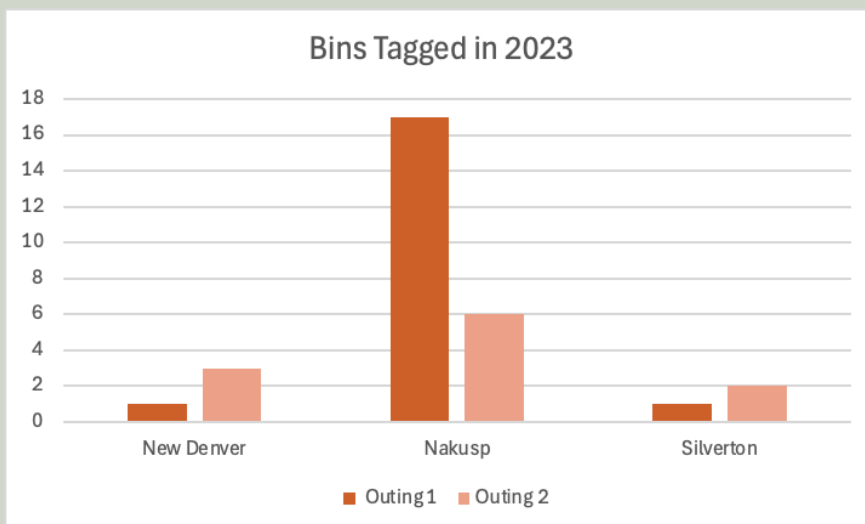
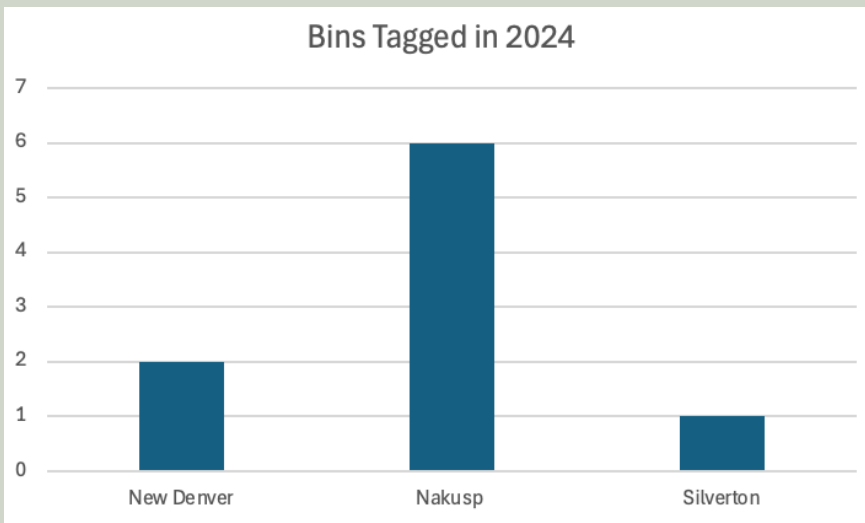


**Figure 8.** Typical display booth setup. This booth was hosted at the New Denver Friday Market

# Bin Tagging and Door-to-Door

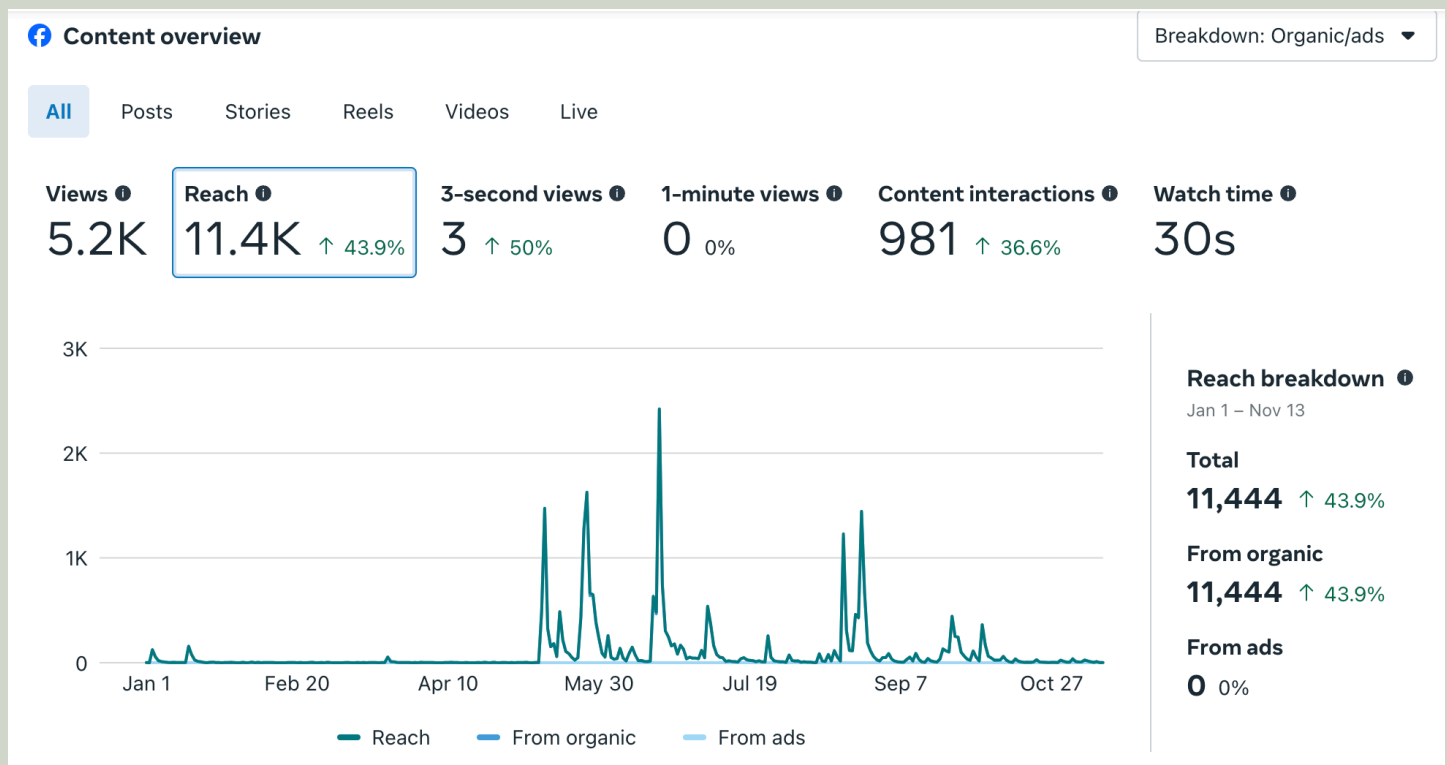
Garbage bin tagging involves placing a highly visible and removable warning sticker on curbside containers the evening before collection day. Over the course of three outings, a total of nine bins were tagged across three garbage collection zones: New Denver, Silverton, and Nakusp. Due to the limited number of tagging sessions—one per community in 2024—the effectiveness of this initiative cannot be fully assessed at this time. However, data from 2023 indicates a notable improvement in the number of bins tagged compared to previous years.

In addition, door-to-door educational efforts reached 522 residents through the distribution of door hangers. The WildSafeBC Community Coordinator personally visited each household to introduce the new community coordinator and provide valuable information on strategies for reducing human-wildlife conflict in these areas.



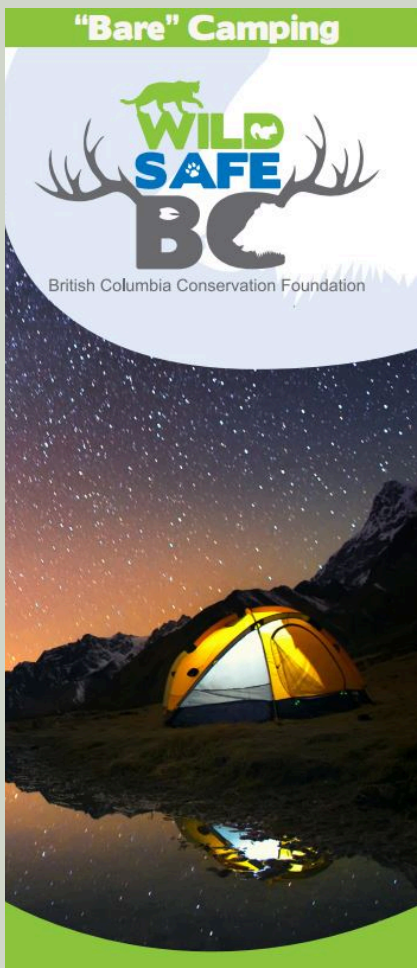
# Social Media and Press

The WildSafeBC Arrow-Slocan Facebook page came out of hibernation on May 25, 2024 with an introductory post. Over the season, the page has had 43 new Facebook followers, from 672 followers in November 2023 to 715 followers in November 2024. As well, the page has received 82 new Facebook Page likes during this same time period. Throughout the season, the WildSafeBC Community Coordinator engaged with posts relating to wildlife activity and provided education and information to residents in community Facebook Page groups. This approach was an effective method to bring people in to explore our page and our content while continuing to provide engaging education. Many Facebook posts created were also shared by Facebook users into other groups or on their own personal timeline, which helped promote the WildSafeBC Arrow-Slocan Lakes Facebook page. In total, 29 Facebook posts were created that reached 16,128 people from May 25th to November 30th. Many posts reached over 17,298 Facebook users, with the most impactful post being about a cow moose and her calves in the area. People were informed to slow down on the road to keep these wild animals safe. This post reached approximately 4,259 people and was shared 26 times.



# Bare Campsite Program

Through the WildSafeBC Bare Campsite Program, WildSafeBC is able to provide clear guidelines and resources to assist campground operators in maintaining a safe campsite for both people and wildlife. In 2024, seven campgrounds were approached, including Silverton Campground, Camp Valhalla, Nakusp Hot Springs Campground, Box Lake Campground, Summit Lake Campground, and others. As part of the initiative, three campground employees were trained in "bare" camping practices to ensure proper food storage, waste management, and other key measures to reduce attractants. Notably, Silverton Campground became "bare" campsite certified, setting an example for other local campgrounds. The region's campgrounds are often frequented by a variety of wildlife species, including black bears, deer, raccoons, squirrels, and occasionally, coyotes. These animals are attracted to food waste, improperly stored food, and other potential food sources within the campgrounds. By promoting the "bare" campsite approach, WildSafeBC is working to mitigate human-wildlife conflicts and protect both visitors and animals.



## Challenges and Future Goals

The impacts of wildfires in the Arrow-Slocan Lakes Region during the summer months of July and August were significant, leading to forced evacuations that disrupted a number of planned events, including community booths, markets, presentations, and bin tagging initiatives. Additionally, the wildfire activity appears to have influenced local wildlife behavior, with a noticeable reduction in bear sightings and reports, potentially linked to changes in migration patterns and disruptions to food sources. Many species have faced increased mortality rates due to their inability to escape or adapt to the altered environment. Despite these challenges, improperly managed attractants such as garbage, fruit trees, bird feeders, and urban livestock remain persistent sources of human-wildlife conflict in the region. While some residents are well-versed in preventing these conflicts, there is still a gap in awareness among others regarding the risks and proper management practices. Continued outreach and education are essential to equip the community with the knowledge and skills necessary to manage wildlife attractants effectively and ensure safety in wildlife-prone areas. The WildSafeBC Arrow-Slocan Lakes Community Coordinator recommends the following activities for 2025:

- Strengthen Local Bylaws on Attractant Management
- Continued support to Harvest Share and Valhalla Wilderness Society for Electric Fencing Programs
- Rat Control Presentations in New Denver and Winlaw
- Wildlife Safety Outreach for High-Risk Areas and Campgrounds



## Acknowledgements

I would like to extend my heartfelt thanks to the many individuals and organizations who have contributed to the success of the WildSafeBC program this year. A special thank you to Cora Skaien, our previous WildSafeBC coordinator, for taking the time to show me the ropes and provide invaluable guidance. I'm also grateful to our new WildSafeBC volunteers, Cole Bright and Josh Adams, for their enthusiastic assistance with garbage tagging and booth set-ups and takedowns. Our work would not be possible without the strong partnerships we've built in the community. Grizzly Bear Coexistence Solutions has been instrumental in offering electric fencing workshops, while Rosebery Bonanza Summit Trail Society (RBS), Nakusp Community Forest (NACFOR), Nakusp Public Library, and Arrow Lakes Search and Rescue (ALSAR) have supported our public presentations. I also want to acknowledge the New Denver Bulletin, Farmers Markets, and Valley Voice for their continued media support, helping us reach a wider audience. A special thank you to Harvest Share and the Valhalla Wilderness Society (VWS) for their collaboration on the cost-share electric fencing program. Your contributions have been essential in making our efforts a success, and I look forward to continuing these collaborations in the future. The WildSafeBC Arrow-Slocan Lakes Coordinator would like to thank the Village of New Denver, Silverton and Nakusp, the Province of British Columbia, and the BC Conservation Foundation for funding the WildSafeBC Arrow-Slocan Lakes project. Thank you to the Conservation Officer Service for their direction and support of the program, including Ben Beetlestone. Lastly, the WildSafeBC Coordinator would like to send an enormous thank you to all the British Columbia Conservation Foundation staff and fellow provincial WildSafeBC Community Coordinators for their encouragement and support. This program would not be able to succeed without the collaboration of all those mentioned.



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*Thank You!*