

# FRASER VALLEY ANNUAL REPORT 2024



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*Keeping Wildlife Wild and  
Communities Safe*



CITY OF  
**CHILLIWACK**



Seabird Island Band



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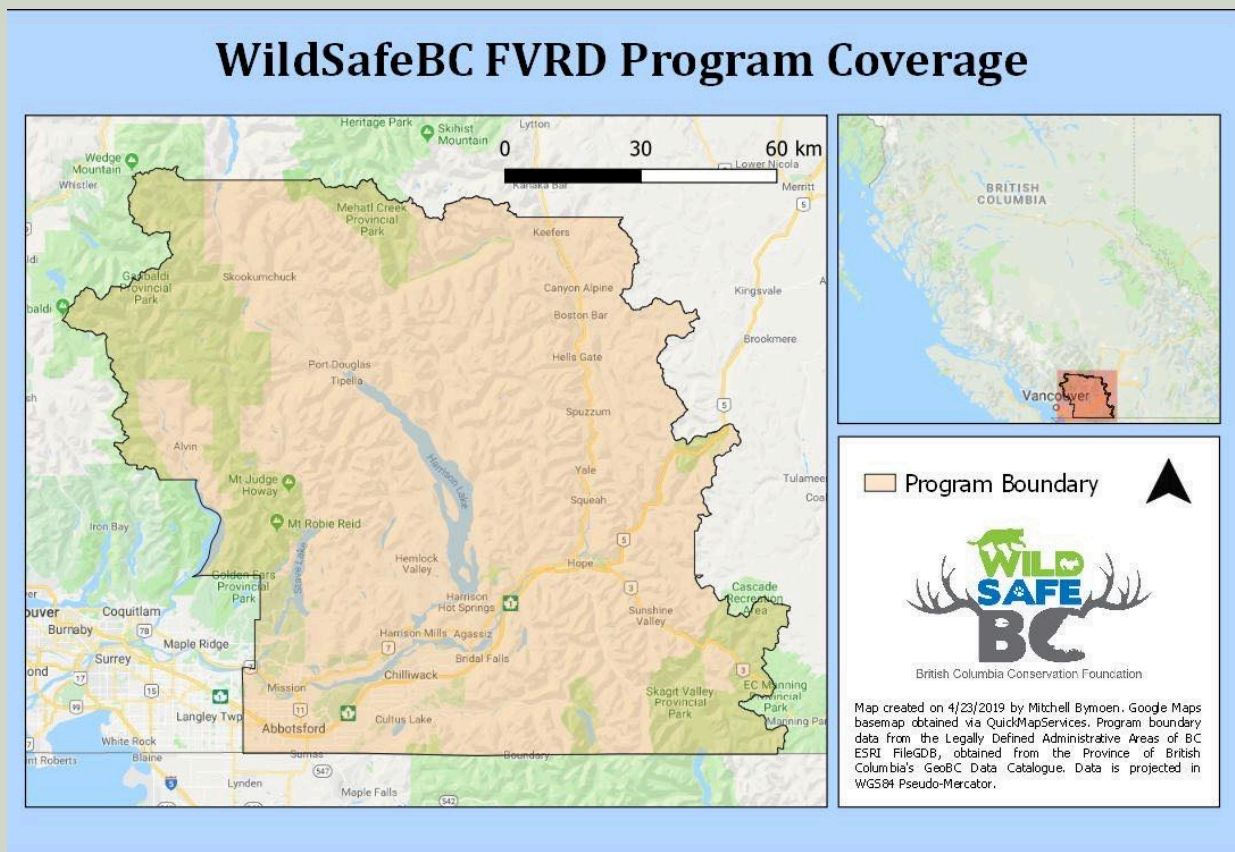
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# Executive Summary

This report describes the activities of the WildSafeBC Fraser Valley program for the 2024 season between June and November 30th. The main goal of the WildSafeBC Community Coordinator (WCC) 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 Fraser Valley program covers approximately 13,000 square kilometers. The Fraser Valley is located in southwestern BC and is part of the Fraser Valley Regional District. Sponsors covered include the Fraser Valley Regional District, the cities of Abbotsford and Chilliwack, and Seabird Island band.



## 2024 Highlights

**911**

**Students Educated**

**1775**

**Community Members Reached**

**10**

**Community Event Booths**

**92**

**Bins Tagged**

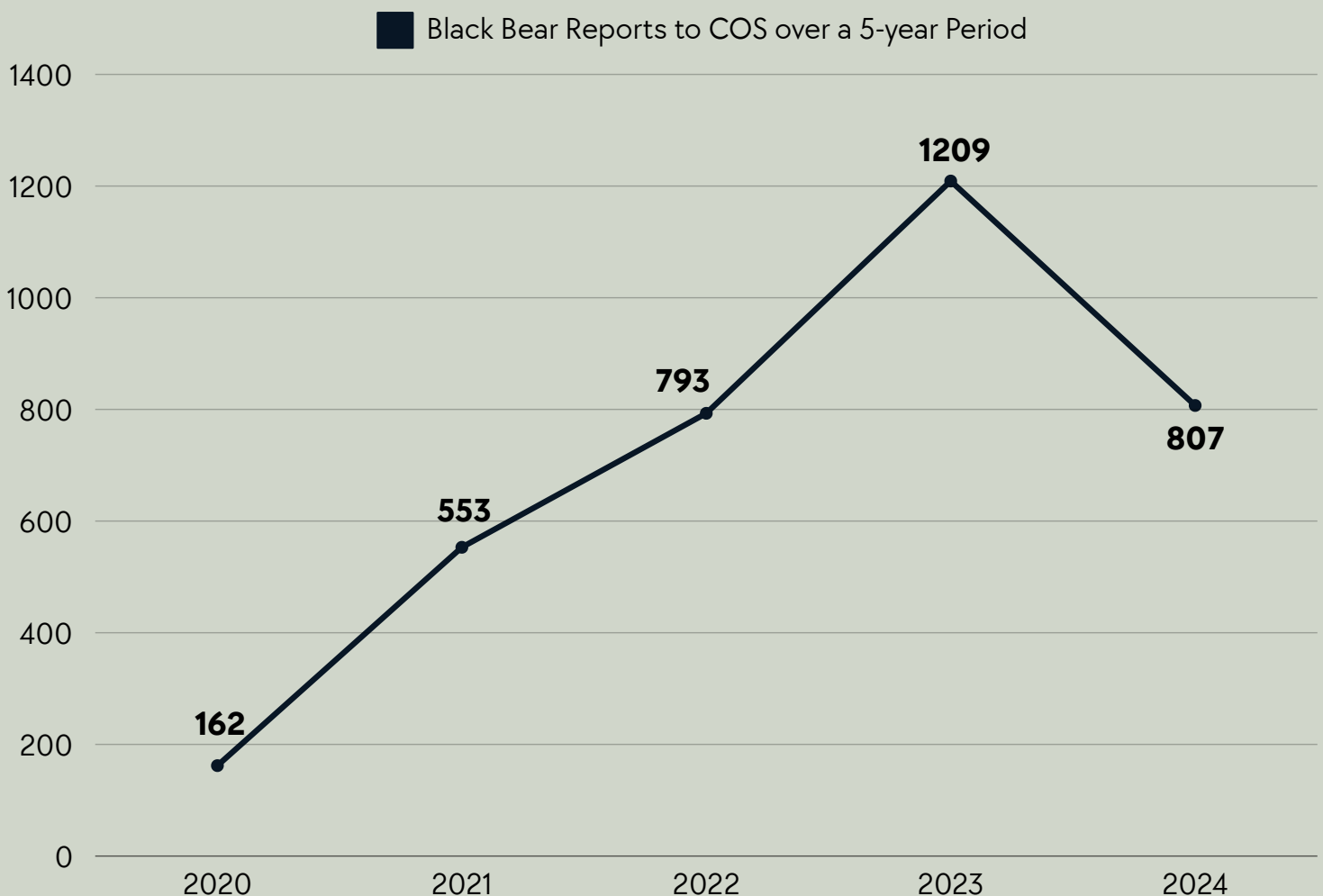
**20K**

**Facebook Users Reached**

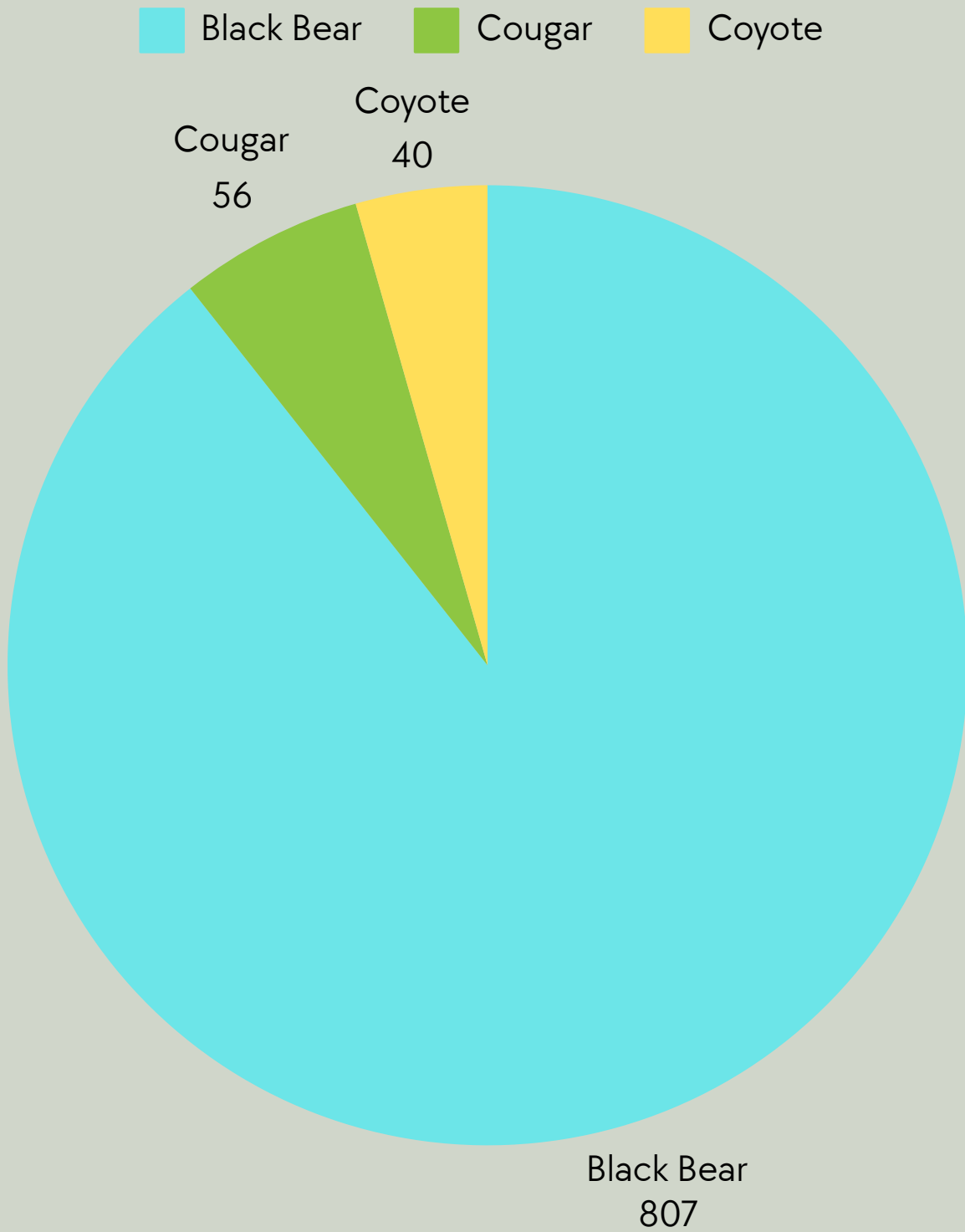
# Conservation Officer Service Reports

From January 1 to November 30, a total of 1022 wildlife reports have been made to the COS through the Report All Poachers and Polluters (RAPP) line (1-877-952-7277) or online form (<https://forms.gov.bc.ca/environment/rapp/>).

Similar to previous years, black bears were the species most often reported to the COS in 2024, followed by cougar and coyote. From January 1st 2024 to November 12th 2024, there were 807 black bear reports, which is lower than the number of reports made in 2023. This may be due to a decrease in the public's willingness to report to COS. It has helped having each of the coordinators living in the communities. They were able to give education via canvassing within hours when we received calls. For WCC Lori, living in the community of Chilliwack meant she could be in the location of a bear sighting within an hour in most cases.



# Conservation Officer Service Reports



# WildSafe Ranger Program

The WildSafeBC 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 WildSafeBC Community Coordinators delivered 5 WRP presentations with 4 elementary schools. A total of 667 children throughout the Fraser Valley became WildSafeBC Rangers and received a WildSafeBC Ranger kit to take away with them.



*Pictured: WildSafe Ranger Presentations being given at school assemblies, classrooms, and a Fraser Valley Regional Library location*

## Community Groups

This summer WildSafeBC was invited to attend a seniors event put on by Streams Foundation Canada. "Streams hosts social events and meetups every weekend. People connect & socialize with others through our Coffee with Seniors, Library Social, Walk & Talk and Multicultural Celebrations."

Meeting by the Vedder River in Chilliwack, the WCC spoke to the seniors about wildlife in the area, garbage storage and ways to keep them safe while exploring the great outdoors. It was a fun day connecting with our senior community members who live in wildlife country. The WCC was able to give them many tips and they left with some new tools to help them feel safer.

Bear spray workshops were given to the City of Abbotsford staff as well as Power Pros Electrical in Abbotsford.

**Streams**  
Foundation Canada

SATURDAY  
**July 27<sup>th</sup>**  
11:00am at Vedder Park

# WALK & TALK

Your chance to socialize, have baked goods and a coffee.

**Lori Roberts**  
Wildsafe Community Coordinator for Fraser Valley will be here to answer question about wildlife, safety and attractants.

*Tim Hortons*



# 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 1700 people visited the WildSafeBC display booth at 12 community events across the community. The WildSafeBC Community Coordinators visited parks, trailheads, campgrounds and community markets. The public was interested in learning about wildlife, they liked seeing the skulls, prints and the claws we have on display. A booth was held at Willband Creek Park and Shadbolt Park in Abbotsford. Pop-up booths were also held at trailheads in Chilliwack (Mt. Thom, Lindeman Lake and Elk Mountain). WildSafeBC also attended the Go Play Outside event put on by the City of Abbotsford.



## Bin Tagging and Door-to-Door

Garbage bin tagging consists of placing a highly visible and removable warning sticker on top of curbside containers the evening before collection day. During 4 outings, a total of 92 bins were tagged across The Fraser Valley garbage collection zones. In Chilliwack, the hillside communities were focused on the most since they back onto parks and trails where wildlife lives. The wildlife often comes into the community when attractant's or garbage, compost, recycling and greens, are not stored inside a garage or bear resistant shed or container.

The efficiency of bin tagging is productive as 92 of residences whose bins were tagged during an initial survey did not have bins out on the curb again during a second survey (source: City of Chilliwack Audits). Hillside community members are often leaving all their garbage on the side of their homes instead of a secured area like a garage or bear resistant shed.

Door-to-door education reached 690 people with door hangers. Door hangers are left on the door when no one is home. They have wildlife information and the program email. The WildSafeBC Community Coordinator also knocked on every door and engaged residents in conversations about wildlife. If the community member answers the door a wildlife brochure is given, education about wildlife in the area and any questions are addressed.



# Social Media and Press

The WildSafeBC Fraser Valley Facebook page came out of hibernation on January 3, 2024 with an introductory post. Over the season, the page has had 88 new Facebook followers. As well, the page has received 1026 Facebook Page likes during this same time period. Throughout the season, the WildSafeBC 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 posts reached over 300 Facebook users, with the most impactful re-post was about the bears found tied together on the Harrison River in Harrison Hot Springs deceased due to possible poaching. This post reached approximately 3,751 people.

There were also multiple articles written about the WildSafeBC program in the Chilliwack Progress.



## 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. During the 2024 season a total of 13 campsites were approached. These campgrounds are located in Chilliwack & Bridal Falls, within the Fraser Valley.

Camperland Resorts & Cabins was the only campsite that responded to WildSafeBC's email. We had one meeting and although they are some what following the Bare Campsite Program they have not officially signed up and no employees were trained. Black bears visit the campground on a regular basis. The WildSafeBC Community Coordinator visited the camp ground a month after the first meeting with an information booth set up during an event including a demonstration on what your campsite should not look like (see attached photo). The campers enjoyed all the information, education and booth. The WCC also dropped off the Bare Campsite Program brochures for the staff to hand out.



## Indigenous Awareness and Engagement

The WildSafeBC Community Coordinators extend their gratitude to the Seabird Island Band for continuing their sponsorship support in 2024. The Seabird Island Band (Sq'ewqel) is located on the traditional and ancestral territories of the Stó:lō and Nlaka'pamux First Nation peoples, united by Halq'eméylem, the upriver dialect of the Downriver dialect. This partnership marks an exciting opportunity to strengthen relationships. In this second year of sponsorship, the WCCs participated in Sq'ewqel Day, where they connected with community members, listened to wildlife stories, and shared educational resources. The program also delivered wildlife safety presentations for students in Grades 8–12, including a specialized bear spray workshop for senior students.

A collaborative highlight of the year was the donation of bat boxes crafted by students at Promontory Elementary to the Seabird Island Band, supported by guidance from BC Bats and with help from the WCCs. With some modifications, these boxes aim to create new habitats for local bat populations. (Thanks goes out to Chloe MacBeth and Jennifer Bohnert from SD#33 for their involvement).

WildSafeBC remains committed to learning from and working alongside Indigenous partners, fostering trust and understanding while supporting shared goals. Looking ahead, we hope the partnership with Seabird Island Band continues to grow.



# BC Goes Wild

Throughout September when human-bear conflicts are at their highest in BC, WildSafeBC celebrates its annual BC Goes Wild campaign to acknowledge the spectacular diversity of wildlife in the Province. This year WildSafeBC celebrated it's 9th Annual BC Goes Wild Event. Colouring sheets were handed out at all presentations, two schools, door to door education and all booths. The WCCs promoted the event on the program Facebook page and handed out colouring sheets during all booth set ups, school & library presentations



## Challenges and Future Goals

Improperly managed garbage, fruit trees, bird feeders, and urban livestock continue to be a source of human-wildlife conflict in the Fraser Valley. While some residents are familiar with conflict and how to prevent it, others are less aware of the risks of human-wildlife conflict. Continued outreach is needed to provide people with knowledge and skills on how to manage wildlife attractants and how to stay safe when in wildlife country. The WildSafeBC Community Coordinators recommend the following activities for 2025:

- Further educate communities to ensure garbage, recycling, compost, and greens are not stored outside of their homes, as well as proper management of other attractants such as bird/hummingbird feeders, fruit trees, coolers, and dirty BBQs
- Get two community coordinator kits, as it was challenging sharing one among the two coordinators
- A full time-year round coordinator to bring more awareness as well as a full-time seasonal coordinator, since the coverage area is so large
- Door to door canvassing implemented before bears leave their dens
- Education brochures to give to new community members either via mail or real estate agents. The new residents may not be aware of the wildlife in their areas
- Bear Aware Community Program to be started for Chilliwack and other parts of the Fraser Valley if not already in place
- Brochures in different languages to help with non English speaking community members to learn what wildlife live in the area, what to do in a human-wildlife interaction and how to safely store garbage
- Higher fines for community members who do not follow the garbage bylaws
- Bear resistant garbage cans installed in parks and at all trailheads
- Encourage more campsites to adopt the Bare Campsite Program
- Encourage landlords to provide proper garbage storage for all tenants in rental units

## Acknowledgements

The WildSafeBC Community Coordinators Lori Roberts & Matthew Mill would like to thank the City of Abbotsford (Julie Kanya), The City of Chilliwack (Cathy Shu, Sydney Hartley, Brynn Doeleman-amazing team work with WSBC), Seabird Island Band, Fraser Valley Regional District (extra thanks to Lance Lilley & Vanessa Hart), the Province of British Columbia, and the BC Conservation Foundation for funding the WildSafeBC Fraser Valley Project. Thank you to the Conservation Officer Service for their direction and support of the program, including Alexander Mimeault. Thank you to Jo-Anna Welch, Corinne McConnell and Pacific Pathways for volunteering with WildSafeBC. We appreciated it! Thank you to all the communities for following the city by-laws and keeping ALL your garbage materials inside! Lastly, the WildSafeBC Fraser Valley Coordinators 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.

*Thank You!*



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Communities Safe***