

# COLUMBIA VALLEY ANNUAL REPORT 2025



Prepared By :

Sierra Franklin



Columbia  
Basin **trust**



*Keeping Wildlife Wild and  
Communities Safe*



[www.wildsafebc.com](http://www.wildsafebc.com)



[programs@wildsafebc.com](mailto:programs@wildsafebc.com)



250-828-2551 ext. 109

# Table of Contents

Executive Summary.....	1
Program Coverage Area/Map.....	2
2025 Highlights.....	3
Education at Recreation Sites.....	4
Display Booths.....	5, 6
Bin-Tagging.....	7
Door-To-Door Campaigns.....	8
Wicked Woods Music Festival.....	8
Infographics Created.....	9
Challenges and Future Goals.....	11, 12
Acknowledgements.....	13

# Executive Summary

This report describes the activities of the WildSafeBC Columbia Valley program for the 2025 season between June 1st and November 1. 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 2025 season, and will help shape the delivery of the program for the 2026 based on coordinator, community, and sponsor needs.

- 322+ people engaged through display booths at 12 community events and recreation sites
- 86 people reached at three recreation sites, with focused education on biking, dogs, and bear safety, including bear spray demonstrations
- 27 garbage bins tagged in Invermere to reduce wildlife attractants
- 60 residents reached through door-to-door education and targeted signage in high-conflict areas
- Wildlife warning signs and garbage-safety stickers distributed throughout the valley
- 3,000+ festival attendees reached through partnership with Wicked Woods Music Festival, including two booths, 55 direct conversations
- 31 social media posts



## Program Coverage Area

The WildSafeBC Columbia Valley program covers 4 main communities: Radium Hot Springs, Invermere on the Lake, Windermere and Fairmont Hot Springs. The program also covers RDEK Areas F & G, and is available to the communities of Wilmer, Edgewater and Canal Flats as needed. Columbia Valley is located in the East Kootenays and sits between Golden and Cranbrook.



## 2025 Highlights

**322**

Community Members Reached

**12**

Community Event Booths

**27**

Bins Tagged

**3000+**

Festival Attendees Reached

## Education at Recreation Sites

Display booths at recreation sites provides visitors and locals with opportunities to engage directly with our educational materials, learn about safe biking practices in bear country, understand how to reduce wildlife attractants, and discuss best practices for recreating with dogs around bears. These booths also create space for meaningful conversations about coexisting safely with wildlife and for connecting recreationists with our program offerings. In 2025, WildSafeBC set up booths at three different recreation sites across the valley, engaging with 86 people. Many participants also took part in hands-on bear spray demonstrations, increasing their confidence and preparedness while recreating in bear country.

Location	# Reached	Date
Ray Brydon Dog Park (Invermere)	42	June 27-30
Lake Lillian (Between Invermere and Panorama)	31	August 7-9
Legacy Trail (Between Invermere and Fairmont Hot Springs)	13	August 19th

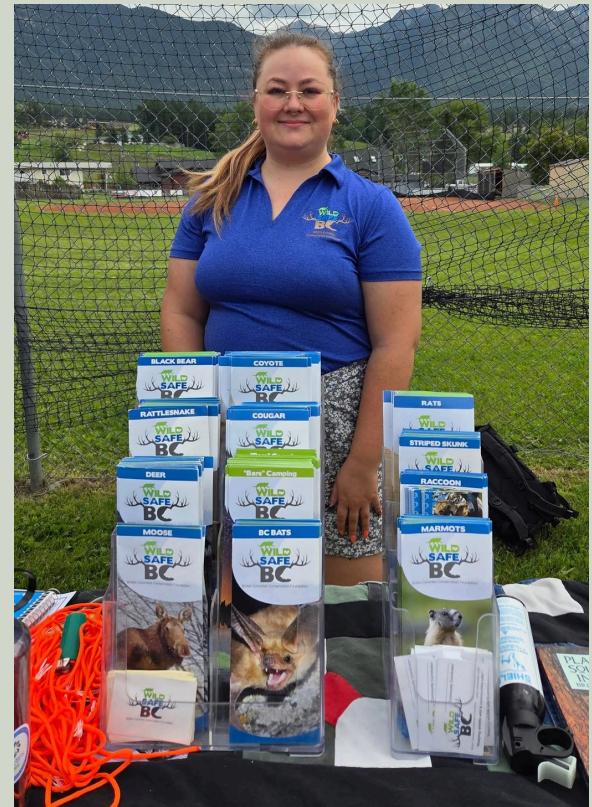


# Display Booths

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 2025, more than **322 people** visited the WildSafeBC display booth at 12 community events and recreation sites across the valley.

Community Event	# Reached	Date	Purpose
Politics & Pizza (Invermere)	30	June 17	Wildlife education
Bear Spray Demonstration (Fairmont Hot Springs)	8	July 3rd	Wildlife education + Bear Spray demo
Valley Appreciation Day	77	July 19th	Wildlife education + Bear spray demos
Wicked Woods Music Festival (Fairmont Hot Springs)	55	August 28/29th	Bear safety + Bare campsite education
Aviation Day (Fairmont Hot Springs)	71	September 6th	Wildlife education + Bear spray demos

# Display Booths

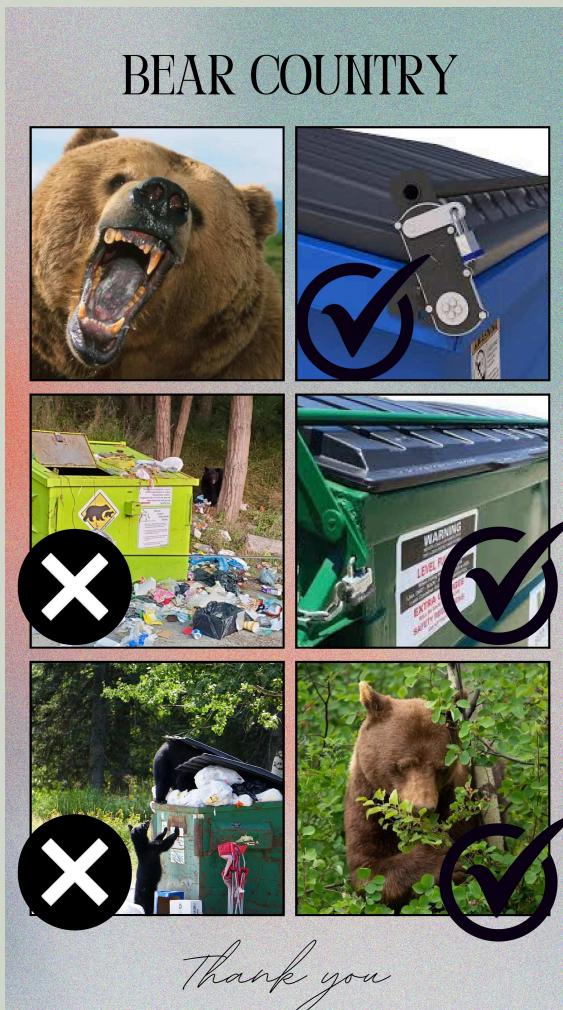


# Bin Tagging

Garbage bin tagging consists of placing a highly visible and removable warning sticker on top of curbside containers the evening before collection day. During 2 outings in Invermere, a total of **27 bins** were tagged. No bin was tagged twice.

Several wildlife signs such as "Warning - Aggressive Deer in Area" and "Bear in Area" signs were distributed around the valley including Panorama, Invermere and Fairmont Hot Springs. Reflective stickers reminding community members to keep garbage inside bear safe bins were also distributed to Fairmont Hot Springs.

The Invermere bin tagging practice, the door-to-door campaigns and the movable electronic sign (in front of Sobeys) that reads "Bears in Area - Keep Garbage Inside" were effective tools in educating people on how to prevent bears from accessing garbage.



## Door-to-Door Campaigns

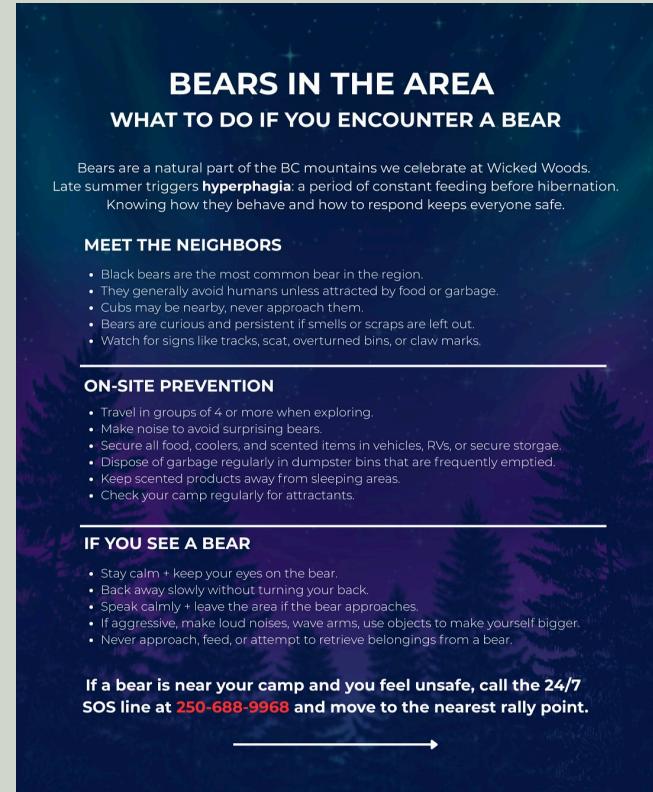
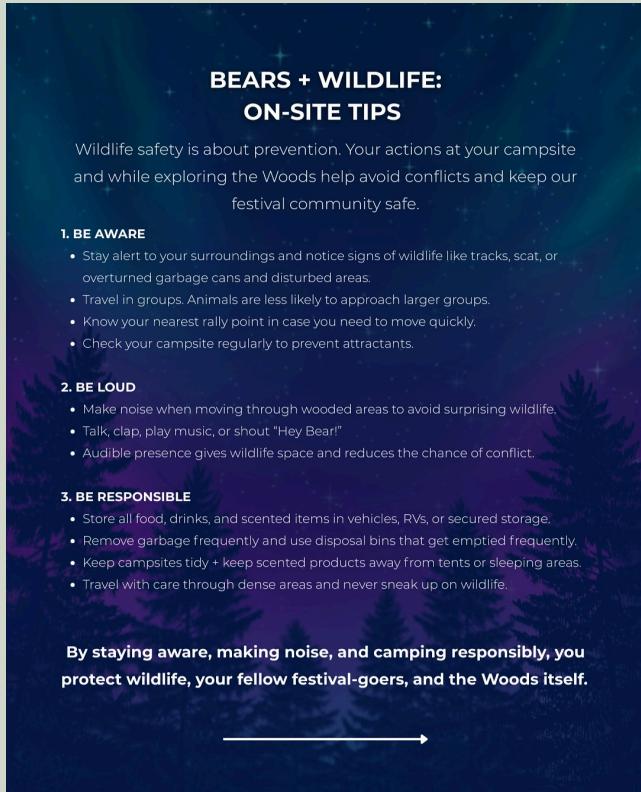
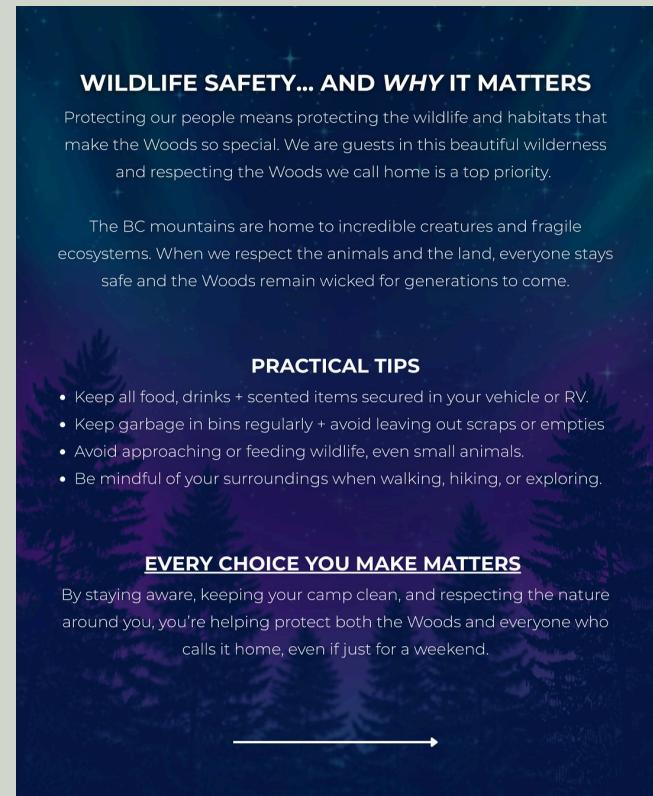
Door-to-door education reached **60 people** with door hangers. The WildSafeBC Coordinator also knocked on doors and engaged several residents in conversations about wildlife. The Conservation Officer Service requested that the Coordinator carry out door-to-door education in communities facing a higher percentage of bear issues.



## Wicked Woods Music Festival

The WildSafeBC Coordinator worked closely with the Executive Director and staff of Wicked Woods Music Festival in the weeks leading up to the festival to bring education, safety guidelines and signage to the yearly, 4 day festival located just outside Fairmont Hot Springs. This festival attracts more than **3,000 people** from all over the country, and some traveling from all over the world to attend. Many attendees arrive with little to no camping gear, or knowledge of local wildlife and ecosystems. With little resources or knowing this puts a lot of people in a small amount of space at risk for wildlife conflict. The WildSafeBC Coordinator co-created infographics to educated festival goers as well as hosted two booth during the event and spoke directly with 55 people.

# Infographics Created



## Challenges and Future Goals

Improperly managed garbage, fruit trees, bird feeders, and off-leashed dogs continue to be a source of human-wildlife conflict in the Columbia 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 managing wildlife attractants and staying safe when in a wildlife country. The WildSafeBC Columbia Valley Coordinator recommends the following activities for 2026:

- **Columbia Valley**

- Acquire wildlife statistics from COS for 2025 Annual Report
- Develop a working relationship with Groundswell Greenhouse & Community Garden's Apple Rescue program, the DOI and the COS to gain permission to harvest fruit trees of absentee homeowners
- Develop a working relationship with WildSight Invermere to cross-promote messaging and programs
- Work with Panorama, FHS Resort and Cooper Point to train their staff on how to host bear spray workshops for their guests + have their employees certified in WildSafeBC's Wildlife Awareness & Safety Course – Level 1 Certification

.....Cont. next page



# Challenges and Future Goals

- **Radium Hot Springs**

- Participate in the Radium Hot Springs Friday Night Market to develop local connections and be aware of what is happening locally
- Work with the motels and restaurants around wildlife awareness and safety (as many of their employees are from out of province/ country)
- Work with businesses so that they all sign on to the Business Pledge

- **Invermere**

- Work with District to increase communications about the hindrance of planting fruit trees in the community (i.e. \$ available to remove fruit trees, bylaw re. electric fence / netting)
- Work with Groundswell Greenhouse & Community Garden to install an electric fence around their property
- Work with Westside Park to mitigate future concerns
- Work with volunteers to start a BearSmart Community Committee

- **Windermere**

- Work with local stratas to put bylaws in place preventing the future planting of fruit trees or to encourage the use of electric fencing
- Work with the Windermere Community Association and Lions Club

- **Fairmont Hot Springs**

- Continue to work with BearSmart Community Committee
- Continue to work with Fairmont Community Association

## Acknowledgements

The WildSafeBC Columbia Valley Coordinator would like to thank the the District of Invermere, the Regional District of East Kootenay, the Columbia Basin Trust, the Province of British Columbia, and the BC Conservation Foundation for funding the WildSafeBC Columbia Valley project. Thank you to the Conservation Officer Service for their direction and support of the program, including Greg Kruger, Matthew Hall and Michael Boudreau. Additional thanks to the Fairmont Community Association and the Fairmont Hot Springs community, in-particular Linda Pfeiffer for all her support. Lastly, the WildSafeBC Columbia Valley Coordinator would like to send an enormous thank you to all the British Columbia Conservation Foundation staff, WildSafeBC Provincial Support Staff, Kathy Murray, 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!*



*Keeping Wildlife Wild and  
Communities Safe*