

# KASLO ANNUAL REPORT 2025

Prepared By :

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***Keeping Wildlife Wild and  
Communities Safe***



*Village of  
Kaslo*



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# Table of Contents

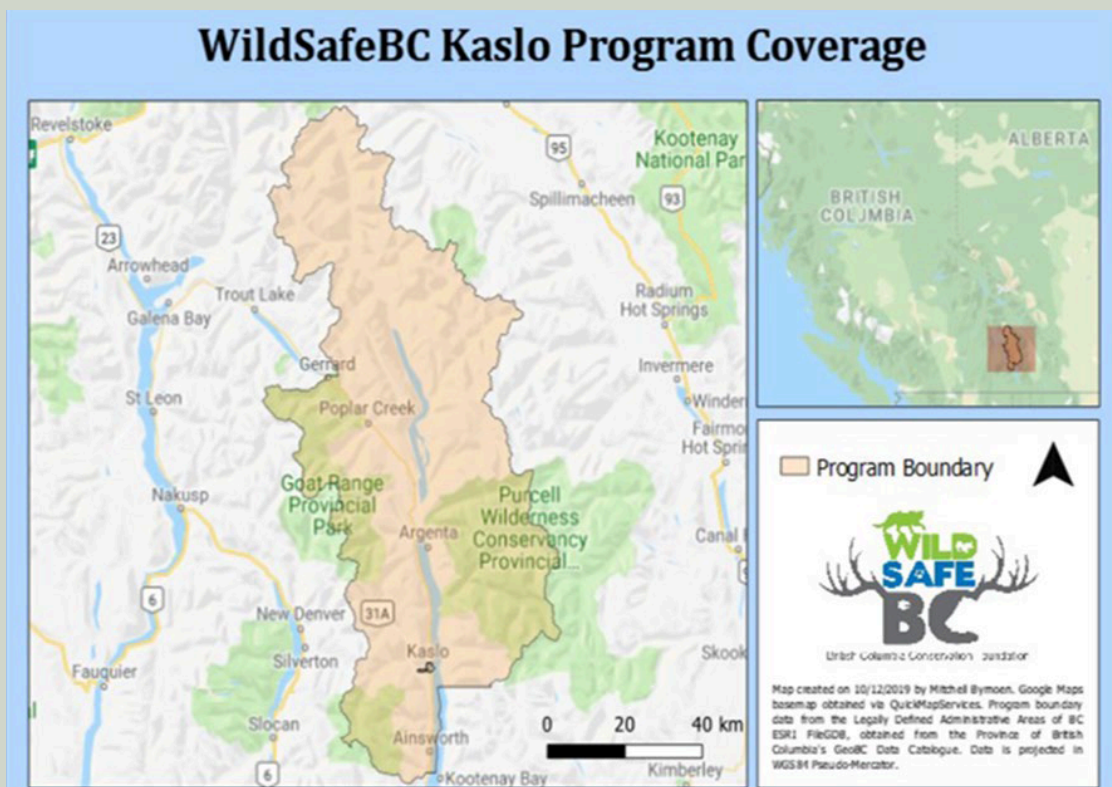
Executive Summary.....	1
Program Coverage Area.....	1
2025 Highlights.....	2
Conservation Officer Service Reports.....	3, 4
WildSafe Ranger Program.....	5
Workshops.....	6
Display Booths.....	7
Bin-Tagging.....	8
Door-To-Door Engagement.....	9
Social Media and Press.....	10
Bare Campsite Program.....	11
BC Goes Wild.....	12
Challenges and Future Goals.....	13
Acknowledgements.....	14

# Executive Summary

This report describes the activities of the WildSafeBC Kaslo and CKRD area D program for the 2025 season between May 5th 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 2025 season, and will help shape the delivery of the program for the 2026 based on coordinator, community, and sponsor needs.

## Program Coverage Area

The WildSafeBC Kaslo program covers the municipality of Kaslo and Central Kootenay Regional District Electoral Area D. Kaslo is located in the southern interior of BC in the Kootenay Mountain Ranges. Area D includes the communities of Lardeau, Argenta, Howser, Gerrard, Cooper Creek, Poplar creek, Ainsworth, Mirror Lake, Marblehead, Johnsons Landing, Shutty Bench and Meadow Creek.



## 2025 Highlights

**430+**

**Community Members Reached**

**4**

**Community Event Booths**

**3**

**Bins Tagged**

**15.9K**

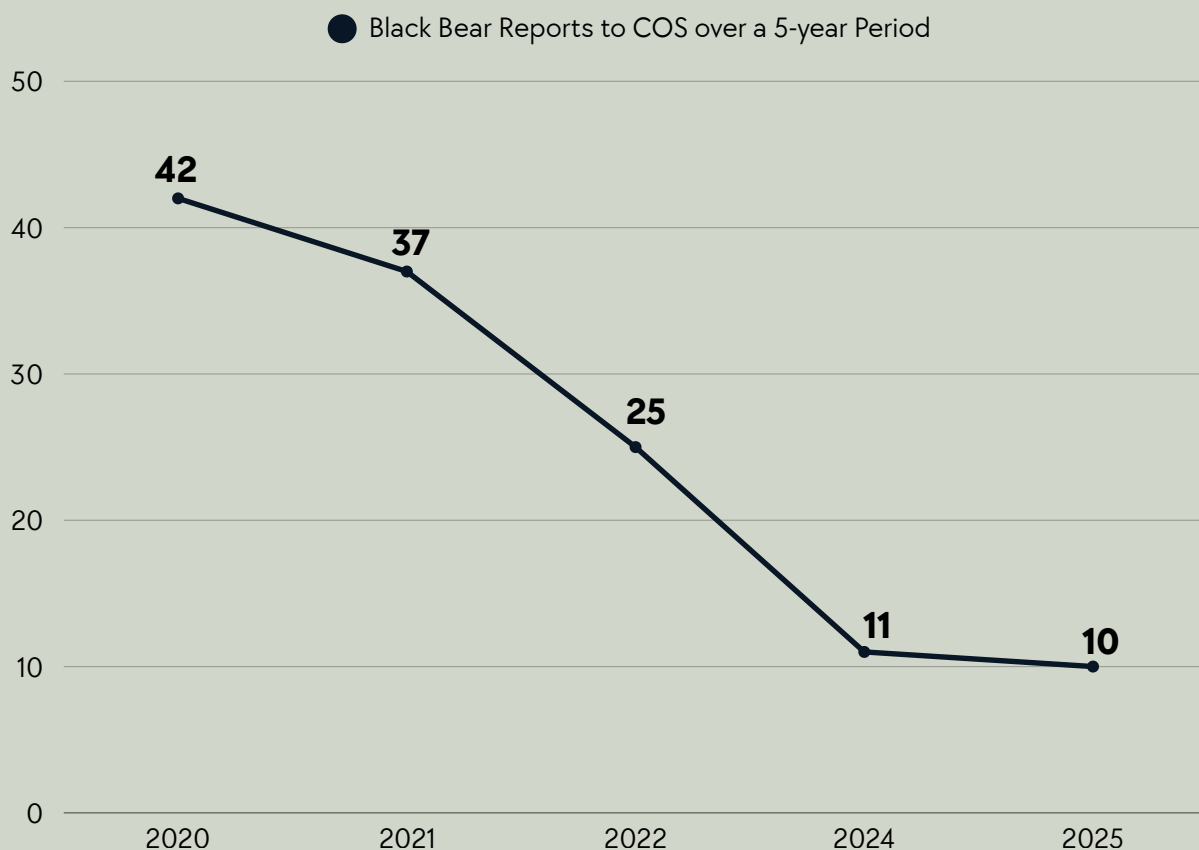
**Facebook Users Reached**



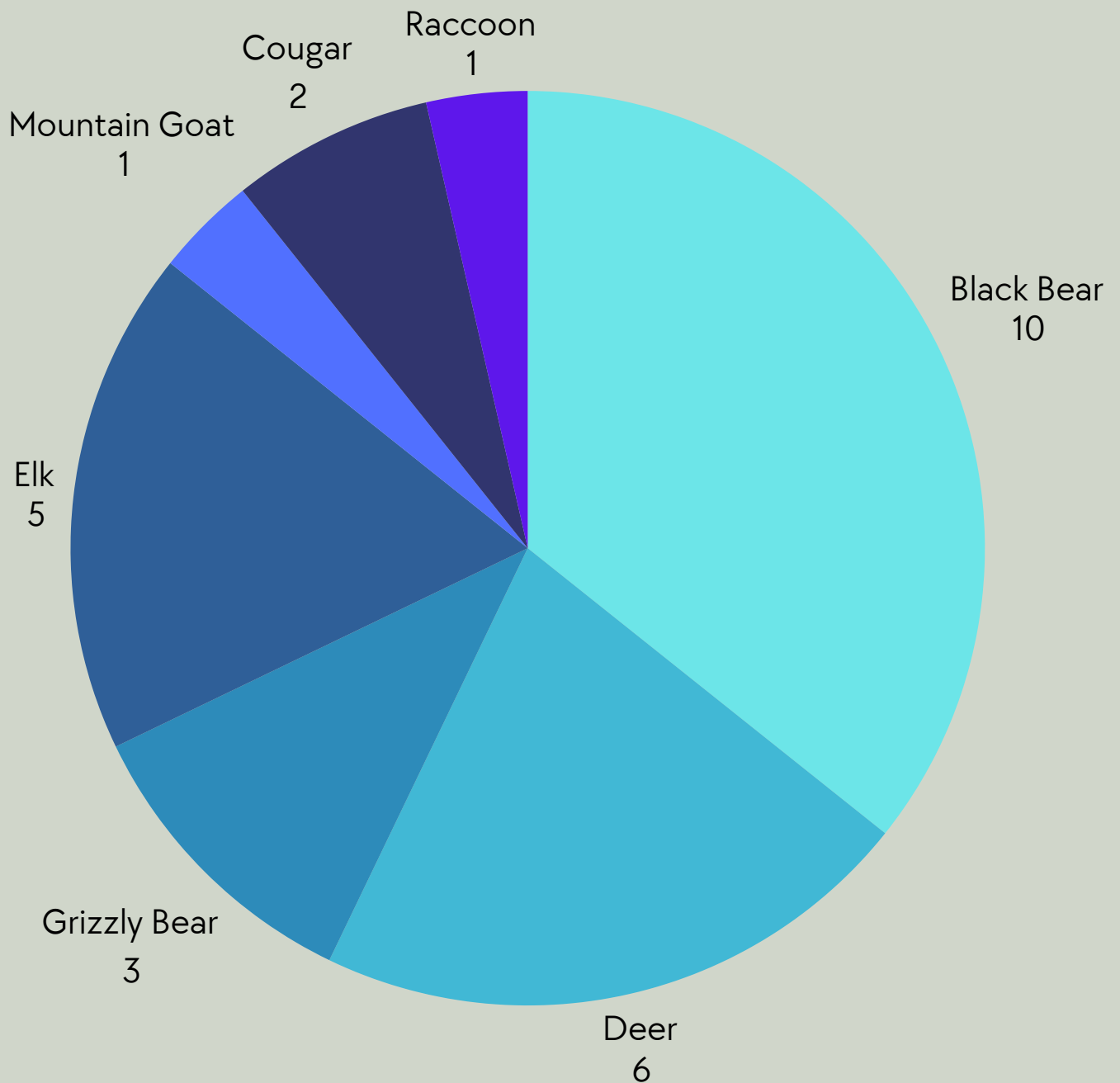
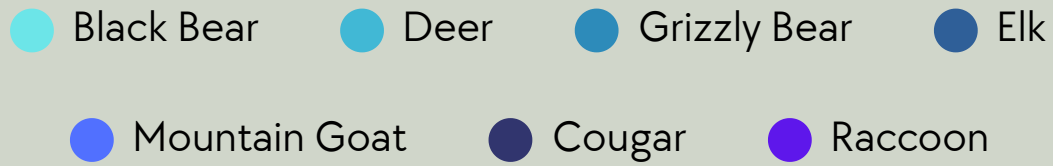
# Conservation Officer Service Reports

From January 1 to November 30, a total of 27 wildlife reports have been made to the Conservation Officer Service through the Report All Poachers and Polluters (RAPP) line (1-877-952-7277) or online form (<https://forms.gov.bc.ca/environment/rapp/>). Black bears were the most reported species to the Conservation Officer Service, followed by deer, elk, and grizzly bears. Reports included three cases of food conditioning, two of livestock being killed, and four involving aggression.

There were 10 black bear reports this year, a decrease compared to 2022 and 2024 (no data available for 2023). While this steady decrease may be attributed to natural food being abundant again this year, it may also be attributed to the fact that much of the wildlife-related reporting seems to occur on social media, particularly the local Facebook page. It appears many community members prefer sharing sightings online, possibly due to concerns about potential consequences for wildlife when reporting through official channels. This highlights the need for increased public education on the importance of early reporting.



# Conservation Officer Service Reports



# 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. This year two WildSafe Ranger presentations were given in the Kaslo / Area D region:

- Jewlett School in Meadow Creek: a classroom presentation for a combined Grade 4–6 class of 10 students plus their teachers.
- J.V. Humphries School in Kaslo: a larger, outdoor, interactive session with two grade 4 classes of 42 students and their teachers.

In the indoor session at Jewlett School, students learned about basic wildlife needs, habitat requirements, and the concept of human-wildlife conflict. In the outdoor session at J.V. Humphries School we focused on “thinking like an animal”: identifying attractants in our community, discussing what local wildlife need to survive, and how those needs intersect with human activities. We then examined a mock campsite set up ahead of time to explore practical ways to reduce attractants and make the site safer for wildlife and people. Feedback from students and teachers was positive — the combination of discussion, observation, and hands-on problem solving made the lessons memorable and engaging.

The program supported WildSafeBC’s broader goals of educating youth about coexistence with wildlife and empowering them to be active participants in reducing conflict at home and in the community. These school visits have helped build awareness among the youngest members of our community at a time when human-wildlife interactions continue to be a concern across the province. As we wrap up for the season, we look forward to continuing these educational efforts in the years to come.



## Workshops

WildSafeBC's workshops are designed to educate residents on how to prevent human-wildlife conflict through practical, science-based strategies and increased community awareness. The first workshop given was on rat mitigation. With increasing discussion on the Kaslo Community web pages about the number of rodents sighted in towns and homes, many residents continued reaching out for support well into November. The workshop provided practical, prevention-based strategies consistent with WildSafeBC principles including proper waste management, reducing access to food and shelter, habitat modification around homes, and the safe and effective use of traps. Participants also learned how to identify different rat species and understand their behaviours, allowing for more targeted and successful management. The session drew in a mix of homeowners and community members motivated to reduce the number of rats in Kaslo.

To close out the season, WildSafeBC Kaslo also hosted a family-friendly community event. The purpose of this gathering was to connect with residents, clarify the role and mandate of the WildSafeBC program, and listen to public input on the types of education and services they would like to see offered next year. It was also an opportunity to thank local sponsors and supporters whose contributions make the program possible, and to celebrate the end of another successful season together.





## 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 125 people visited the WildSafeBC display booth at 4 community events within Kaslo. These events included Kaslo's Birthday, the Kaslo Saturday Markets, and the Volunteer Fair, with the markets being the most popular.

Having bear skull and paw print replicas alongside bear spray totes and carriers drew in children and adults alike which led to many interesting conversations. Providing a physical space where community members could directly engage is a great way to learn about the concerns and joys of the community in relation to our wildlife. These encounters provided insights into community concerns, helped to identify key areas of educational focus for door to door canvassing, and identified locations with the highest concentrations of attractants and wildlife sightings. In 2024, reporting of sightings was very common and in 2025 there were less report and more wildlife encounters and experiences shared. This year there were racoon and beaver sightings which had not come up in the previous year. Most common topics of conversation included: Black bear and cougar safety, fruit trees and attractant concerns, rats and rat mitigation, wildlife encounters (including otters and coyotes!), bear proof bin enquiries and wildlife safety for children. Requests for bear spray safety workshops for spring 2026.



## 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 five outings, a total of three bins were tagged across the garbage collection zone. Two recycling bins and one garbage bin. The bin tagging outings covered all areas of Kaslo within the municipality. Again, no pattern was found as offending bins were evenly distributed throughout Kaslo.

The results show us that garbage bin tagging is most effective in the community of Kaslo in Spring and Fall. Bins were most often found in the Spring and fall over the 2024 and 2025 surveys. It would appear that during spring, the occasional resident becomes accustomed to leaving their garbage out early due to less smell in freezing temperatures and may need a reminder that wildlife are emerging in the spring. Bins being out in the fall most likely are due to busyness and time constraints.

Continuing the program in following years will offer a non-confrontational method for a gentle reminder to the public to keep up their good work. This can lead to positive changes in behavior over time. Secure waste management is key to preventing human-wildlife conflict and bin tagging serves as that nudge for those who may not have it on the forefront of their minds.



## Door-to-Door Engagement

Last year, I introduced myself to the community through door-to-door outreach. I was able to provide general wildlife information, pass on contact details and learn about concerns and sightings in the area. Using this information for the WildSafeBC season of 2025 I was able to focus in on Kaslo's identified hotspots. Alerting residents in Spring along popular bear trails near the river trail and upper Kaslo. Initial visits to areas near the river trail and downtown were due to regular sightings of two curious bear cubs (yearlings) testing boundaries. In these visits I alerted residents, reinstated the importance of managing attractants around homes, keeping an eye on pets and asking for sightings to be reported.

I conducted two visits related to bear activity, addressing issues such as securing garbage, compost, and fruit trees. Four visits were in response to concerns from public around fruit trees not being cleared and one case of fruit dumping. One outing regarding rat sightings in which I provided advice on exclusion techniques and attractant management to the neighborhood. Two others regarding concerns of denning skunks and raccoons under peoples houses.

Fruit trees were a key focus throughout all visits and within both Kaslo and Electoral Area D. Door to door engagement reached over 115 local residents. In cases where homeowners were out, door hangers were left offering contact information, reason for visit and practical tips for managing attractants.

Gleaning and Public Education: This year I once again spent a larger portion of time educating households on gleaning practices to reduce wildlife attractants. This included hands-on demonstrations and tailored advice on how to harvest and manage excess fruit to minimize bear encounters. Whilst some homeowners followed advice given the previous years, the households that were the main concern to other members of the public were the same households I had spoken to the previous year. Despite the education, there are member within Kaslo and Area D who have little interest in maintaining their fruit trees and fruit waste. Further talks within the Village of Kaslo and the RDCK may need to happen in order to find some resolution to these problem areas.



## Social Media and Press

The WildSafeBC Kaslo Facebook page came out of hibernation on May 5th 2025 with a spring post, reminding Kaslo residents of pruning, wildlife on roads and managing attractants. Throughout the season, the WildSafeBC Kaslo Coordinator engaged with posts relating to wildlife activity and provided education and information to residents in community Facebook Page groups. The page has 575 followers, and in total, 20 Facebook posts were created that reached 15.9K people from May 5th to November 30th.

In 2026, I would like to change the approach by providing a wider variety of content. Last year the aim was to increase Facebook users through useful information on the community page. Whilst users did increase by 2.5%, a wider variety of information is more likely to reach a higher number of Facebook users and provide local community members with valuable and engaging content. I found it interesting to learn that 92.5% of viewers are from within Canada with 47.6% being from Kaslo, 15.1% from Nelson and 13.4% from Balfour and Castlegar.

Many local residents recognized the WildSafeBC's coordinator through the Valley Voice, showing that many residents still prefer traditional routes of receiving information.

on empowering individuals to take small, actionable steps in their daily lives to improve the welfare of wildlife both close to home and worldwide.”

The WildSafeBC Coordinator position is a “great opportunity to use my experience to contribute to the safety and well-being of this community I now call home,” she said.

Erin says this year is particularly significant for wildlife in the Kootenays. Many young animals are striking out on their own, and there has been a notable increase in bear sightings in the area. “It’s crucial during this time to secure all attractants, clean up properties, prune back fruit trees, and take down



Erin Lawrence is Kaslo and area's WildSafeBC Coordinator.

# 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. The municipal campground continues to operate to a high standard. The campsite is kept very clean and tidy with bearproof bins and responsible guests. I spoke with the campground attendants in Davis Creek and Lost Ledge and left them with educational materials and resources. Visitors to these campgrounds along with those visiting Mirror Lake and Fletcher falls were reached as part of WildSafeBC's program.

The interactions I shared were full of curiosity and a great opportunity to talk to those from outside our area about human-wildlife conflict in the Kootenays. These interactions were not included in the community members reached numbers. Topics of conversations included active wildlife in the area, bear spray use, hazing wildlife in urban areas for both human and wildlife protection safe practices whilst hiking and safe campsites. Mirror lake campground had a change in management this year, moving forward I plan to offer support where they may need help with wildlife, offer training, and educate on the Bare Camping program.





## 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 10th Annual BC Goes Wild Event. Throughout September, I had the pleasure of hosting two stalls at the Kaslo Saturday markets, where I handed out coloring competition sheets for kids and encouraged everyone to join in the wildlife photography contest. This year there was a lot more interest in the photo competition and I was able to encourage locals to engage more with the beautiful environment that surround us. I also organized a fun event at the Kaslo Library, with a coloring and crafting station and an interactive talk for families about local wildlife, and their habitats. An online Electric Fence workshop was shared to help keep the community informed and involved.

The BC Goes Wild campaign is a wonderful chance to raise awareness, spread the word about wildlife safety, and inspire positive changes in how we all coexist with wildlife here in Kaslo. In future I hope to engage the community in wildlife safety talks, a habitat craft session, offering the opportunity to participate in a bear spray workshop, work with local stores to promote wildlife themed purchases and look into running an event with the Langham. I see many opportunities for fun and informative events.



## Challenges and Future Goals

Kaslo residents were found to be well intended when it comes to wildlife safety and managing attractants, yet continued to face challenges with personal life conflicts such as time pressure, finances or forgetfulness. Through a second year of community education, it is coming to light that not all residents are willing to make changes in order to protect wildlife or the neighborhood around them. Improperly managed garbage, fruit trees, bird feeders, and urban livestock continue to be a source of human-wildlife conflict in Kaslo, with fruit trees at the forefront of the issue. 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 Kaslo Community Coordinator recommends the following activities for 2026:

- More freely available public spaces for presentations and workshops; inaccessibility to appropriate spaces for talks often prevented workshops from happening
- Coordinator to connect with Lardeau, Argenta and Johnsons community halls
- Continue with residential bin tagging in the spring and fall leaving summer to focus on other forms of education
- Continue to promote gleaning activities and connect fruit tree owners with local farms. Council or RDCK could provide incentive such as round ups, funding for tree removal or pruning, incentivizing through fines or providing signage for households offering free fruit to the community.
- WildSafeBC's Ranger program for schools and tailor workshops for homeschool groups
- Invite conservation officers for talks to better communicate the role/goals of the Conservation Officers
- Bylaw enforcement – enforcement resources – promote sense of reasonability and follow through
- Wildlife safety and awareness workshops including Bear spray workshops
- Find and establish relationship with internal contact for the RDCK to take on requests for the wider area of Kaslo

## Acknowledgements

The WildSafeBC Kaslo Community Coordinator would like to thank the Village of Kaslo, the Central Kootenay Regional District, the Province of British Columbia, and the BC Conservation Foundation for funding the WildSafeBC Kaslo project. Thank you the many residents of Kaslo and the surrounding area for their continued efforts and support. Thank you to the Conservation Officer Service for their direction and support of the program.

Lastly, the WildSafeBC Kaslo Community 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.

*Thank You!*



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