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From: Montana FWP - Region 5 <montanafwp@announcements.mt.gov>
Sent: Thursday, July 27, 2023 11:52 AM
To: Ravalli County Commissioners Office
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Nuisance bears causing conflicts in Red Lodge



FWP NEWS RELEASE

Region 5 Headquarters

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THE **OUTSIDE** IS IN US ALL.



Improperly stored attractants such as this garbage can initiate negative human-bear conflicts. Store all attractants properly. FWP photo.

Nuisance bears causing conflicts in Red Lodge

Bears getting into human or pet foods result in unnatural bear behavior and threats to human safety

BILLINGS - Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks reminds the public—especially those living in areas with high bear populations—to remain vigilant about attractant management to keep both humans and bears safe.

In Red Lodge, there are currently a number of habituated and food-conditioned bears. A yearling black bear has gotten into two vehicles, entered a home and two garages, stolen a backpack and approached people. This is unnatural bear behavior and is the direct result of this bear finding human or pet food items and quickly becoming dependent upon them. FWP wildlife staff are working to trap and euthanize this bear, given its likely irreversible food-conditioned behavior is a threat to human safety in the community.

A bear's life is dominated by the search for food. Both black and grizzly bears are omnivores, and consume over 200 different species of plants, animals and fungi. Their natural curiosity and quest for food, however, are also what leads to occasional negative bear-human interactions.

Preventing wildlife conflicts is easier than dealing with one. FWP prioritizes human safety. In urban areas with potentially unlimited opportunities for a bear to find human or pet foods, everyone has a role to play in keeping wildlife wild and out of conflict with humans.

Residents living near dense bear populations can follow these guidelines and pass them along to neighbors to help prevent community bear conflicts:

- Store garbage in a bear-resistant container and/or inside a similarly resistant building until the day of garbage disposal
- Avoid leaving attractants next to windows, doors outside walls, or inside vehicles
- Do not leave out pet food, bird feeders (including hummingbird feeders), bird seed or BBQs
- Secure vulnerable livestock (chickens, goats, sheep), compost piles and fruit-bearing plants with an electric fence
 - For details on building an effective electric fence, visit: mt.gov/binaries/content/assets/fwp/conservation/wildlife-reports/bears/mfwp_electric-fencing-guide_v4.0.pdf
- Pick fruit from trees and bushes immediately once ripe
- Keep doors to buildings and vehicles closed and locked
- Report unnatural or bold bear behavior or bears feeding on human or pet foods to:
 - Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks: 406-850-1131
 - Red Lodge Police Department: 406-446-1234

For more information on staying safe in bear country, visit:

fwp.mt.gov/conservation/wildlife-management/bear/be-bear-aware

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