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From: Montana FWP - Region 5 <montanafwp@announcements.mt.gov>
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To: Ravalli County Commissioners Office
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Bear aware education event in Billings September 14



FWP NEWS RELEASE

Region 5 Headquarters

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THE **OUTSIDE** IS IN US ALL.



The bear awareness event in Billings on Sept. 14 will include bear spray training with inert bear spray and a fake charging bear. FWP photo.

Bear aware education event in Billings September 14

Bear spray demonstrations, safety tips at home and afield

BILLINGS - Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks is hosting a bear awareness education event in Billings on Thursday, Sept. 14 from 11:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. at the Region 5 office front lawn located at 2300 Lake Elmo Dr. This event is part of Bear Aware Month, as [proclaimed by Gov. Greg Gianforte](#). Events are scheduled throughout September, both in-person and virtually. All events are free and open to the public.

The event in Billings will include bear spray demonstrations with inert training spray and a fake charging bear, bear safety and biology information, tips on bear

identification with full mounts of both species, tracks, skulls, and giveaways such as stickers, coloring books, and can koozies. Free bear spray will be provided to the first 25 adult participants who complete bear spray training. Bear spray trainings will be every hour beginning at 11:30 a.m., with the final training beginning at 3:30 p.m. Similar events will be held in Missoula on Sept. 19, Florence on Sept. 20, Helena on Sept. 26, and in Butte on Sept. 27. For more information on bear awareness events in Montana, visit: fwp.mt.gov/bear-aware.

As grizzly bear populations and distribution increase across Montana, it's more important than ever to be bear aware. Currently, grizzly bears can be found in all of Montana west of Billings. Both black bears and grizzly bears are more active in the late summer and early fall as they spend more time eating in preparation for winter hibernation. Avoiding conflicts with bears is easier than dealing with such conflicts. Here are some precautions to help residents, recreationists and people who work outdoors avoid negative bear encounters:

- Keep garbage, bird feeders, pet food and other attractants put away in a secure building or certified bear-resistant container. Keep garbage in a secure building until the day it is collected. Certified bear-resistant garbage containers are available in many areas.
- Never feed wildlife. Bears that become food conditioned lose their natural foraging behavior and pose threats to human safety. It is illegal to feed bears in Montana.
- Carry bear spray and be prepared to use it immediately.
- Travel in groups whenever possible and make casual noise, which can help alert bears to your presence.
- Stay away from animal carcasses, which often attract bears.
- Follow food storage orders from the applicable land management agency.
- If you encounter a bear, never approach it. Leave the area when it is safe to do so.

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