
NEWS RELEASE

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Ministry of Environment

Lions Bay and Whistler earn Bear Smart status

VANCOUVER – The Village of Lions Bay and the Resort Municipality of Whistler are the latest of only four B.C. communities to achieve the Bear Smart designation, Environment Minister Terry Lake announced today.

The Bear Smart Community program is a voluntary, preventative conservation program designed by the Ministry of Environment in partnership with the British Columbia Conservation Foundation and the Union of British Columbia Municipalities.

The goal of achieving Bear Smart Community status is to address the root causes of bear-human conflicts, reduce the risks to human safety and private property and reduce the number of bears that have to be destroyed each year.

The Ministry of Environment's Conservation Officer Service (COS) is responsible for managing and responding to wildlife-human conflicts when there is a risk to public safety or property damage. The COS provides expertise and funding to help communities implement Bear Smart planning and management. Since 2000, the provincial government has provided more than \$3 million to cost-share with municipalities.

Squamish and Kamloops were the first two B.C. communities to achieve the Bear Smart designation.

Quotes:

Environment Minister Terry Lake –

“Congratulations to residents and community leaders for making Lions Bay and Whistler safer for both people and bears.”

“These two communities earned their Bear Smart title by implementing Bear Aware education, bear-proofing residential waste management such as residential garbage totes and community bins and taking many other actions to reduce bear-human conflict.”

Lions Bay Mayor Brenda Broughton –

“The Lions Bay Bear Smart program was created and supported by the skilled and committed members of our Bear Smart committee, led by Norma Rodgers. Residents of Lions Bay have benefited greatly by using best practices for storage and curbside pick-up of garbage, along with care and attention to picking ripe fruit. This has greatly reduced interactions between people and bears in Lions Bay.”

Whistler Mayor Ken Melamed –

“The Resort Municipality of Whistler and its partners have been engaged in proactive initiatives to reduce and prevent human-bear conflicts since the mid-1990s. Our community strongly supports protecting our black bears and is committed to making continuous improvements in waste and attractant management.”

“Achieving Bear Smart Community status is a high point in our program, but is not the end point – we will continue to work co-operatively to further reduce human-bear conflicts.”

Quick Facts:

The Bear Smart program is directed to all types of communities. Some, like Whistler, have a high volume of “resident” bears, while others, like Lions Bay, have bears that “travel through” the region.

The most recent bear-human conflict statistics (2010-11) for Lions Bay and Whistler:

Lions Bay –

- 68 reported bear sightings
- COS responded to 21 calls
- One bear hazed (scared off) and no bears destroyed in 10 years

Whistler –

- 915 reported bear sightings
- COS responded to 400 calls
- 43 hazed and 11 bears destroyed

Community requirements for Bear Smart status –

- Prepare a bear hazard assessment of the community and surrounding area.
- Prepare a bear-human conflict management plan designed to address bear hazards and land-use conflicts identified in the previous step.
- Revise planning and decision-making documents to be consistent with the bear-human conflict management plan.
- Implement a continuing education program, directed at all sectors of the community.

- Develop and maintain a bear-proof municipal solid waste management system.
- Implement Bear Smart bylaws prohibiting providing food to bears, whether as a result of intent, neglect, or irresponsible management of attractants.

Find out more:

B.C.'s Bear Smart Program: www.env.gov.bc.ca/wld/bearsmart/

Contact: Suntanu Dalal
 Communications
 Ministry of Environment
 250 387-9745

Note to Media:

Minister Terry Lake and Mayors Brenda Broughton and Ken Melamed will be available to take questions today via teleconference at 1:30 p.m.

Toll-free dial-in: 1 877 353-9184
Vancouver only: 604 681-0260
Conference ID: 41028#

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