



NEWS ADVISORY

Oct. 26, 2011

For immediate release

Living with Bears Public Workshop to be Held Friday

Do you want to know how to keep your garbage and birdseed away from bears and keep your neighborhood safe for wildlife and people? Do you want information on bear-resistant garbage containers? Would you like to better understand Missoula's wildlife and garbage ordinances? Would you like to help educate your neighbors by delivering informational flyers?

Erin Edge, Bear Aware Coordinator for Defenders of Wildlife, will answer all these questions and more at a lunchtime talk Friday, Oct. 28, noon to 1 p.m. in the large meeting room of the Missoula Public Library, sponsored by the City of Missoula and free to the public. Ed Franceschina, director of Missoula City-County Animal Control, will also be on hand to answer questions.

Allowing bears to find human-related foods, such as garbage, pet food and birdseed, habituates them to seeking food around neighborhoods and leads to dangerous encounters between bears and people, which can be a death sentence for many bears. Already in 2011, Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks staff members have relocated 11 black bears and euthanized two; one black bear cub died when it was hit by a car in a neighborhood.

What can you do?

- Keep your garbage indoors except on your day of pickup.
- Use a bear-resistant garbage container. Bear-resistant carts are available for rent from Allied Waste for \$10 a month above the cost of a regular blue garbage cart. Call Allied Waste at 543-3157 to order. They can also be purchased at Ace Hardware.. The Living with Wildlife Foundation at <http://www.lwwf.org> has a Bear-resistant Products Testing Program that describes the features of various containers and ranks their bear-resistant qualities with one, two and three stars.
- Take in birdfeeders or hang them high where birds can reach them but bears cannot. Pick your fruit and pick up windfall fruit. Securely fence gardens and compost piles. Put your barbecue grill inside a building.
- Visit www.missoulabears.org for complete information on living with bears. You can also report attractants and bear sightings on this website.

- Volunteer to hand out Bear Aware door hangers and educate your neighbors. Sign up at Friday's workshop or contact Edge at mtnrin@yahoo.com or 531-6007.

Two City of Missoula ordinances apply:

- The Wildlife Feeding Ordinance (Chapter 6.02) makes it illegal to feed wildlife. It is not limited to bears but also includes skunks, foxes, raccoons, deer, elk and other animals.. Birdfeeders that are accessible to bears are in violation. Read the ordinance here: http://www.ci.missoula.mt.us/DocumentView.aspx?DID=1028#Chapter_6_02
- A section of the Garbage and Rubbish Ordinance (Chapter 8.28) added in February 2010 dictates that it is illegal to store garbage in any way that makes it accessible to bears in the Bear Buffer Zone. The buffer zone includes the Rattlesnake Valley, Grant Creek, the southern perimeter of the City and several other areas. In this zone, garbage must be in an enclosure or in a bear-resistant container. *It is illegal to store garbage in non-bear-resistant cans or structures in alleys.* Garbage in non-bear-resistant containers may not be at the curb on pick-up day earlier than 5 a.m. and must be removed or secured by 9 p.m. that day. Commercial entities may work with the Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks and their waste haulers on an approved management plan. See the resolution and the Bear Buffer Zone map here: <http://www.ci.missoula.mt.us/DocumentView.aspx?DID=3149>
Read the ordinance here: http://www.ci.missoula.mt.us/DocumentView.aspx?DID=1029#Health_8_28_085

Interview contacts:

Erin Edge, Defenders of Wildlife Bear Aware Coordinator, 531-6007

Ed Franceschina, Missoula Animal Control Supervisor, 541-7387

Jamie Jonkel, Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks, 542-5500

Pam Walzer, Missoula City Council Representative, Ward 2, 327-8660

Dave Strohmaier, Missoula City Council representative, Ward 1, 529-5580

#

Ginny Merriam, Public Information/Communications Director, 552-6007; 546-7692