

YFWETF Final Report: WildWise Yukon – 2019

Project Activities

What activities did you complete during your project?

We hired two education/outreach coordinators who teamed up and accomplished a lot. They went above and beyond this year, collaborating with governments, schools, RRCs and Visitor Info Centre staff. Here is a list of what they did:

- Electric Fence workshop co-hosted with Yukon Ag branch
- Attractant management presentation for Mayo Road residents (upon request)
- Interactive booth at Dan Keyi RRC open house, Burwash Landing
- Public bear spray collaboration with Yukon Environment
- Interactive booth at Fireweed Markets throughout summer
- Bear awareness/bear spray training for Yukon Conservation Society staff
- Whitehorse Visitor Info Centre (VIC) information sessions: weekly, reaching an audience of 10-30 for the video/bear spray demos and dozens more interactions at our table each week
- Research forest event with 30+ elementary school students (WildWise scavenger hunt)
- Kwanlin Dun Lunch and learn with Yukon CO Jim Welsh
- VIC community visits: Watson Lake, Carcross, Dawson City, Haines Junction.
- Organized and delivered 3-day workshop: Building a critterproof compost at Cliffside Greenhouse; composter on permanent display there
- C/TFN summer student full day training re. bears, non lethal deterrents & safe travel
- Door-to-door attractant management survey & outreach work in Mount Sima and Grizzly Valley
- Advocacy for inclusion of composting facilities at rural landfills, collaboration with Mayo Rd. residents
- Educational videos (garbage, compost, building a bear safe bird feeder)
- School programs: Carmacks and Pelly

How did your activities contribute to your goals and objectives?

Goal 1: To connect people (local or not) with current information and best practices for reducing conflict with grizzly and black bears;

- Visitor info centre sessions offered touch time with bear hides and skulls, covered safe travel in bear country and respectful viewing practices to reduce habituation, food conditioning and conflict
- Fireweed market sessions offered touch time with bear hides and skulls and addressed agricultural attractant management by promoting electric fencing and or bear friendly egg program
- Electric fence workshop delivered practical information and hands on learning for people interested in reducing chicken coop conflicts

- School sessions taught kids how to identify bears, how to travel safely, garbage management tips and bear ecology
- Educational videos are a means of reducing waste related conflict, tailored to the at-home viewer
- Our guest speaker (Wind River Bear Institute) shared information about non-lethal conflict prevention using Karelian bear dogs and promoted discussion about how we perceive and live with bears.

Goal 2: To develop ongoing educational and outreach tools that are effective in getting people to change their behavior to better coexist with wildlife

- Outreach coordinators put together a tool kit for future school visits
- Educational videos are clear, short and easy to understand and are shared through our website and social media

Goal 3: To improve safety for people in bear country and protection of bears throughout their habitat;

- Visitor info centre sessions delivered specific information about safe travel in bear country and offered an opportunity to practice use of bear spray. Hundreds of visitors took us up on the opportunity and reported feeling more confident to use this non-lethal deterrent. Many visitors did not have prior information about bears, bear behavior and deterrents.
- Bear spray demos and talks given in collaboration with Yukon Conservation Society gave YCS staff an opportunity to learn how to talk about bear safety and bear spray and demonstrated both to visitors.
- Door to door work gave residents in Mt. Sima and Grizzly Valley a reminder to keep properties free of attractants. Our past door to door work has shown that people revert to past habits and behaviors if they are not prompted frequently. Good attractant management makes neighborhoods safer for people and allows bears to pass throughout without harm.

Goal 4: To make human-wildlife conflict data accessible to the public.

- All of our outreach activities are an opportunity to share statistics with the public. We worked with CO Services to create messaging about attractants using statistics generated from their conflict reports. Sharing information about past conflicts, for example, number of chicken coops destroyed by bears and number of bears killed by people dispels any myth that chicken coops are not a problem in bear country. Our outreach team embedded some of these statistics in their messaging while going door to door and in advertising and outreach materials.

Explain how the results of your work contributed to the protection, enhancement or restoration of fish, wildlife or their habitat.

Behavior change happens slowly and, often, as a result of ongoing effort and pressure applied by educators. Sharing solid facts helps us make informed decisions. For example, there have been 35 chicken coop raids by bears reported over the past 7 years (plus several more in 2019), resulting in fines, imposed conditions at a cost to coop owners, and many dead bears and inedible chickens. When people

can see the comparative costs (put up electric fencing at the outset vs. replace all your infrastructure and chickens and take time out of the busy farming season to do this) they are able to make good decisions that result in better protection of wildlife.

It is difficult to tether any seasonal outcome regarding human-bear conflict to any one thing, however, we are confident that providing continual education for people new to bear country and to people who have developed destructive habits, is an essential ingredient for reducing unnecessary deaths.

If you were to do the project again what would you do differently?

We would hire a project coordinator and an assistant as opposed to two coordinators. Because we have limited permanent staff hours, the outreach positions are very autonomous. We feel it would be more productive to have a coordinator who starts early in the season and lays out a program plan and who is then tasked with training a student or early career assistant.

There are minor details which we would do differently, such as making it clear from the start that the job involves weekend and evening hours.

We asked our outreach team to submit a final report with recommendations. We will follow up with all of their recommendations in 2020. We are hoping the YFWETF will support this program again.

Communications

What did you do to ensure your results were shared with the appropriate groups, people or governments?

- Results are posted to Facebook and our website when suitable for public viewing
- Door to door survey shared with Environment Yukon and City of Whitehorse and added to the agenda for a Bear Working Group discussion
- Letter re. rural landfill composting facilities shared with YG's community services, City of Whitehorse and Mayo Rd. residents

Describe how you recognized the Enhancement Trust and/or its mandate.

- Acknowledgment and thank you on FaceBook
- Link to YFWETF on our website
- Shout out to YFWETF in an early season CBC radio interview
- Acknowledgment of funding from YFWETF to all other WildWise funders.

Identify any communication materials, strategies or techniques that you used to promote your project and its objectives.

- Event posters (electric fence workshop, VIC centre session advertising, critter proof composter workshop, bear safe egg program promotion, community events)
- We use FaceBook and our website to advertise our activities before and during and event
- We share brochures and info sheets with Yukon residents when we go door to door
- We off hands on learning opportunities (bear spray training with inert bear spray) which promotes information exchange and encourages people to make the links between behavior and outcome.

Financial Reports

Category	Item	Projected cost	Actual cost	Receipts included
Education/Outreach program				
Project/Rental, expenses (equipment, machinery)				
Wages & contract services		13000	11,136.71	
Office & admin expenses				
Travel expenses		0	1086.50	
Materials & supplies		0	776.80	
Facility expenses				
Advertising				
Total			13,000	

Explain any over expenditures or under expenditures

Our contractor started a couple of weeks later than anticipated. With permission, we allocated the remaining funds to program materials and travel expenses.