

Reducing Human/Bear Interactions in Black Mountain, NC

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Tanya Poole is the Mountain Regional Education Specialist for the North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission. She is also the Project WILD Coordinator for the state. Her main job duty is to train educators on incorporating wildlife education into their curricula. Tanya has been with the Wildlife Resources Commission since 2004. During that time, she has also held positions as the Piedmont Regional Education Specialist and the Program Coordinator for the Pisgah Center for Wildlife Education. Prior to working for the Commission, Tanya was an elementary school teacher. In addition, she is working towards a Masters of Science Degree in Environmental Education at Montreat College.

The goal of the project is to decrease opportunities for black bears to receive human-provided foods in the Town of Black Mountain through implementation and evaluation of educational strategies designed to inform the public.

The purpose of my study is to test the hypothesis that educating people on how to safely coexist with bears using methods such as programs, brochures and signs will increase the likelihood of behavior change in people. To change behavior there must be an increase in a person's knowledge on the topic, the person must care about the environment, which is called environmental sensitivity, and the person must feel they have the ability to make a difference. If these three areas are addressed with the proposed educational strategies, the potential for behavior change has increased and there should be a decrease in the amount of opportunities bears have to receive human-provided foods.

~~For the purpose of the town council, I would just say we~~ We are trying to determine My goal is to find answers to the following questions My research questions are: (1) Are educational strategies effective in changing human behavior to decrease opportunities for black bears to receive human-provided foods? (2) What types of educational strategies are most effective in changing human behavior to decrease opportunities for black bears to receive human-provided foods?

Method:

1. Planning Winter (December – February): Planning

A. Design and reproduce print materials, such as brochures, flyers, decals and signs that will be posted around town and possibly included with a utility bills.

B. Design and schedule programs for the general public to be given in late-winter and early spring.

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C. Make contact with schools and provide copies of the Interactive Bear Facts DVD for teacher's to use in the classroom.

D. Contact realtors and other businesses to gauge interest and support levels.

2. Implementation Late winter/early spring (March – May): ~~Implementation~~

A. Use volunteers (~~Scouts, Pisgah Center for Wildlife Education staff and others~~) to distribute print materials.

B. Facilitate programs to be held at various times for all ages throughout town.

3. Survey Late summer (July/August): ~~Survey~~

~~A. Survey residents to assess behavior change. Method of survey implementation to be determined. through mailings and face to face opportunities.~~

34. Compile and report results -Fall (August –November): ~~Compile results~~

A. A. Compile results from surveys and complete research.

B. Report to town.

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