

Bears in Black Mountain

Board of Aldermen

October 11, 2010



About the American Black Bear in NC

(Ursus Americanus)

- Omnivorous- diet of both plants and animals.
- Clocked at speeds of 35 mph over short distances.
- Begin hibernation in Nov –Jan; exit dens as early as Feb.
- Females give birth during hibernation period.
- Avg. life of 4-5 years; few longer than 10.
- Oldest known wild bear was 26.
- Shy, non-aggressive; avoid humans in most cases
- Dependence on human food causes bears to pursue these foods leading to increased interaction with people.
- Frequent bear-human contact can cause bears to become aggressive and dangerous.

- *NC Wildlife Commission*

Bears in Black Mountain

- Attracted to berries and berry patches.
- Attracted to trash and pet and bird food.
- Known incidences of humans using food to attract bears.
- Known to travel in certain patterns and frequent areas of specific food supplies (dumpsters).



BMT Police Department Calls for Service

2008 – 33 calls

2009 – 92 calls

2010 - 49 calls

(as of 9/27/10)



What We Can't Do in BMT:

- Destroy or hunt bears within Town limits
 - Unless imminent danger to humans
- Relocate bears
 - They take their bad habits with them anyway
- Ask Fish and Wildlife or Nature Center to adopt them
- Domesticate them (even if you're feeding a bear, it is not your pet!)

What We Can Do in BMT:

- Deny bears food sources
 - Remove incentives to visit and re-visit locations
- Influence bear behavior
 - No fear of humans? Averse conditioning
 - Work with Wildlife Resources on per case basis
- Influence human behavior
 - Education
 - Regulation and Fines

Education

- DON'T FEED THE BEARS!
- Remove food sources
 - Deny access to trash, bird and dog food
- Alert neighbors of bear activity
- Use noise to discourage bear activity
- Potential Methods:
 - Door knob hangers, fliers, website
 - BCTV info spot
 - Promote better garbage management/use of bear resistant containers

Individual Garbage Management (from August Meeting)

- Do not place garbage cans in street until morning of collection;
- Otherwise keep garbage indoors (garage, storage building);
- Minimize and manage outdoor compost and bird feeders;
- Consider a bear-proof container.
 - GDS offers 95 gallon residential bear proof containers for purchase at \$145.00 or for rent at \$5.00 per month; And \$40.00 fee to swap out 8 yard containers with bear-proof ones and charge \$15.00 to \$20.00 extra/month.
(253-3929)
 - Make your own bear-proof containers by adding hardware to container or building containment box.

Proposed Regulations

- No person shall intentionally feed or knowingly leave or store food that lures bears;
 - Problem bird feeders must be removed.
- No person shall set trash containers on street until after 5:00pm day before (*or morning of?*) trash collection; and
- Outdoor trash or grease receptacles for multiple-users shall be bear-resistant.

For Consideration...

- Is education adequate to change behavior?
- Are regulations necessary?
- How would you enforce these regulations?
- Can we try a concerted education effort prior to the creation of new regulations and then evaluate?

