



**Wild  
Wise**  
YUKON

## **Progress Report**

March 31, 2016

## A few words from our President and Program Coordinator

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The Centre for Human-Wildlife Conflict Solutions (WildWise Yukon) has been busy since our 2013/14 progress report. Our organization hit the ground running in 2012 and four years later we are now well settled into our role in the community. We continue to fulfill our mandate through education, research and outreach and, as you will see in the pages of this cycle's progress report, we are active in each of those areas.

We hear from you that wildlife is culturally, environmentally and economically important. Your engagement with our programs and events, your attention to our website and Facebook page and your response to our radio series, pilot project surveys and door-to-door outreach initiatives as well as your enthusiasm to share your stories about and photos of your encounters with wildlife is all proof that Yukoners are interested in reducing and preventing human-wildlife conflict. We are delighted to be here to help with that goal.

With the support of many funders, an active board and an engaged public, we made good progress in 2014/15. Our highlights include the development of the Whitehorse Bear Working Group, a partnership we share with the City of Whitehorse and Environment Yukon. The group is focused on reducing negative encounters with wildlife by addressing waste management issues at both a municipal and territorial level. We completed a bear hazard assessment for Whitehorse and are now seeking partnerships with other organizations to put the recommendations into action. As well, we completed a pilot project testing bear-resistant locks on properties with curb-side waste collection. And there is much more! We are pleased to report on what we are up to here.

You will notice some significant changes to our website this spring. This important outreach tool is growing with us and we are excited to use it to show you what we and other organizations are doing to reduce human-wildlife conflict. You will still find us at [wildwise.ca](http://wildwise.ca) and on Facebook at [wildwiseyukon](https://www.facebook.com/wildwiseyukon).

We hope you take some time to read through this progress report. We are always seeking new members and volunteers and are happy to receive your ideas and feedback on any of our projects.

Towards safety for people and wildlife together!

*Jennifer Smith, President and  
Heather Asthorn, Program Coordinator*



## Bear-proof Bin Participatory Community Research Project

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In 2014, the bear-proof garbage and compost bin project expanded to include over 50 homes in the Granger sub-division. Household participation in the project was voluntary. Residents received the locking devices for use at their home free of charge, in exchange for monitoring the effectiveness and ease of use of locking devices for 1 year following installation.

The pilot project is now finished. We successfully retrofitted over 200 bins with bear-proof locks. Participants reported on the final survey that they are generally happy with their bear proof bins and don't find them hard to use. However, site audits indicate that over half of the locks are not being used or are not being used properly. WildWise responded to several maintenance issues over the life of the project, ranging from lost lids to broken clips and cables but the majority of the locks were in good condition at the end of the pilot project.

Because there are so many variables that affect how many bear encounters happen in any given year we can't use number of calls to Conservation Officers or number of bears destroyed or relocated as an indication of the success of this pilot project. We would need to monitor the number of negative encounters over several years to be able to deliver reliable results. However, the locks we installed are certified bear resistant, tried and tested on some seriously determined grizzlies, and we can say with confidence that when they are used properly they are effective at keeping wildlife out of garbage and compost bins.

The Feed Store sells bins retrofitted with these locking devices. While the City is responsible for providing bins for curb-side pickup, we think this product is a great choice for anyone outside the curb-side pickup zone. They also make great feed storage bins. And please remember, even with locks on, all bins are best stored inside a secure shed or garage.

*Project partners included the City of Whitehorse, Environment Yukon and a Y2C2 volunteer crew. Macpherson Rentals donated the cost of air compressor rental in support of this project.*



*If you have ongoing maintenance issues with your retrofitted bins, please contact Miles Hume at the City of Whitehorse for assistance.*





## Whitehorse Bear Working Group

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The Whitehorse Bear Working Group is one of our most exciting initiatives to date. This partnership, between WWY, the City of Whitehorse and Yukon Government was established to find solutions to the needless destruction of wildlife due to negative human-wildlife encounters.

The working group hired Wind River Consulting to complete a Bear Hazard Assessment (BHA) for Whitehorse in 2015. The BHA identified attractants and human-wildlife conflict hotspots within the City and made recommendations to help reduce human-bear conflict, including:

*The BHA was funded by the City of Whitehorse, Yukon Government, Ta'an Kwach'an Council, Kwanlin Dun First Nation, WildWise Yukon, the Yellowstone to Yukon Conservation Initiative and Margo Supplies.*

- Work towards developing a bear-resistant waste management system
- For Kwanlin Dün areas, replace wooden garbage boxes with bear-resistant types
- Draft and pass a wildlife attractants bylaw. Consider all non-natural attractants
- Bear-resistant food lockers and garbage bins at campground tenting sites
- Conduct a pedestrian garbage bin audit in parks, campgrounds etc. and replace or repair bear-resistant bins in high hazard areas
- Open sightlines and remove soapberry plants in high hazard areas
- Require new developments to install bear-resistant garbage bins
- Implementing an education program for government employees about the merits of electric fencing for livestock (bylaw, permit granting staff)
- Maintain landfill electric fence and keep vegetation controlled around fence
- Consider program to manage community fruit trees. Assist residents who want to harvest their fruit so bears don't access it first
- Remove fruiting berry bushes from City landscaping (plant natural food less attractive to bears), especially in high hazard areas
- Consider trail audits to assess sightlines and bear food on pedestrian trails
- Erect educational bear signage at the recreation sites, prioritizing day use areas

We are now organizing a planning session with key stakeholders to begin turning the recommendations from the BHA into action this spring. Check our website for updates in the coming months. Completing the BHA gets us one step closer to being a 'bear smart' community! Financial support for the next steps has been provided by the Community Development Fund, Environment Yukon, the City of Whitehorse and WildWise Yukon.

We have also worked together to design and distribute stickers for all residential garbage and compost bins which we hope will serve as a reminder to Whitehorse residents to secure the bins.

*These stickers are a simple, affordable step towards helping us all manage the wildlife attractants on our own properties.*



## Industrial Attractant Management Program

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Preventable issues often arise when bears and other wildlife enter bush camps and industrial yards to access improperly stored attractants, or because of a lack of 'bear-safe' work practices. By working to prevent these conflict situations, we hope to reduce the number of wildlife eradications and/or relocations while providing greater safety for people working in remote locations.

Through this initiative we hired a local business consultant to conduct a comprehensive marketing feasibility study. The resulting recommendations highlighted the need for industry to develop Attractant Management Plans and Wildlife Safety training for employees. These recommendations helped guide our work plan, identify effective partnerships, and increase our understanding of bear-smarting potentials within the agriculture and mining industries.



## Options Paper

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In 2014 WildWise Yukon drafted a paper detailing three waste management options for the prevention of negative human-wildlife encounters. The options were further developed in collaboration with City of Whitehorse's Environmental Sustainability department and Environment Yukon and presented to Council and Senior Management (CASM) for consideration. At that time, Council agreed that the City has a role to play in reducing negative wildlife/human interactions, and approved staff time to develop more detailed mitigation options. The Whitehorse Bear Working Group was formed as a result.

## Speakers

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In 2014 WildWise organized a talk by Lori Homstol (and her bear dog Cisco) about urban bear management and bear encounter prevention. Lori is a bear conflict specialist with a wealth of experience in communities across Canada, teaching and sharing knowledge about co-existing with bears.

## Website, social media and radio

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WildWise Yukon has a strong commitment to providing information and education to the public. We have established a strong media presence to help us with this task. We are followed through social media, on FaceBook and our website, and in partnership with Environment Yukon, we release regular wildlife bulletins and event postings.

Over the summer of 2015 WildWise Yukon had a weekly CBC radio program. We covered all kinds of issues related to reducing human-wildlife conflict, including bear-proofing your backyard, wildlife tips by YG's large carnivore biologist, updates on city bylaw and waste management strategies with the City of Whitehorse's Organics Coordinator, bear-safe cycling and a visit from bear biologist, Lori Homstol. Judging from the ongoing feedback, the radio series was a great success and we hope to continue with the same trend this coming summer.

## Poster Campaign

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Unsecured pets can easily be injured by wildlife and wildlife by unsecured pets. Dogs are taken by wolves every year in residential neighbourhoods and wolves and other wildlife are needlessly destroyed when this happens.

With help from the Community Development Fund, WildWise designed a series of posters that aim to remind people to keep pets and wildlife safe by keeping pets on a leash, in a pen or inside when unsupervised. This initiative began with the intent to provide education about foxes, wolves and coyotes (canids). However, we realize that the message we wanted to promote is relevant to our relationships with all wildlife. Posters have been placed in neighbourhoods, parks and other places that pet owners might see them. We hope that this campaign will help pet owners take simple steps to reduce human-wildlife conflict.

Funds from the Community Development Fund helped WildWise collaborate with Environment Yukon on educational materials for grade 4-8 classrooms. The tool which was developed teaches young people about wolves, foxes and coyotes and aims to foster stewardship of these important animals and their habitat. The program has been piloted in two classrooms with great success and we look forward to hearing from more teachers as they integrate the materials into their curricula.





## To market to market to fence a fat pig!

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WildWise Yukon took our electric fencing and netting to the Fireweed Market this summer! This is a fun place to demonstrate fence set up and answer questions about the work we do. We were happy with how many people dropped by our table to tell their own bear stories and share ideas for preventing conflict. Look for us again this coming market season! We are also organizing an electric fence workshop for small and large scale agriculture operations in collaboration with the Yukon Government's Agriculture branch. Watch the local papers and newsletters for more information!

## Door to Door

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In the summer of 2014, WildWise, alongside YG Conservation Officers, visited 105 homes in the Southern Lakes area, including North and South M'Clintock, Robinson Subdivision, Army Beach and Annie Lake Road. We offered educational materials and site audits with willing participants, checking properties for non-natural and unsecured wildlife attractants. The most common attractants found were garbage, birdfeeders, pet food, chicken coops, and petroleum products. We asked property owners about their history with wildlife encounters on their properties and offered tips for securing attractants. We gave all property owners a backyard checklist to help keep their clean up efforts on track. Our visits were well received and we look forward to following up with these households this coming spring.



*photo:  
Peter Mather*





## What's next?

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The year ahead looks like a busy one for WildWise Yukon! We will be launching a new and improved website in early spring of 2016. We are excited to make this a resource that is accessible to anyone interested in human-wildlife relationships, in learning more about bears, canids, birds and other wildlife, in linking to other like-minded organizations and in tracking our progress and success stories. Our URL will not change. Please visit us at [www.wildwise.ca](http://www.wildwise.ca)

We will also be pushing the recommendations from the Bear Hazard Assessment forward and into action. Watch for announcements about upcoming events and workshops on our website.

WildWise Yukon will be working on our strategic and fundraising plans for 2016-2018 over the coming months. We aim to identify effective ways of securing funding for our ongoing and future initiatives and increasing the sustainability of the organization.

Outreach is an important communications tool for our organization. We will be continuing our Door to Door initiative in the Southern Lakes region. We will gather feedback from the residents we visited in 2014 and offering information and site audits as we go. Watch our website and Facebook page. We will announce when we will be in your neighbourhood.

## A few last words...

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For WWY, the result of two busy years of activity is a growing ability to be part of an evidence-based approach to human-wildlife relationships. We believe that humans and wildlife can peacefully co-exist, and we urge our membership and Yukon residents to pursue activities that reduce human-wildlife conflict. WWY is dedicated to encouraging Yukoners to enjoy, protect and take responsibility for the integrity of our wilderness and the intrinsic value that wildlife contributes.

We welcome feedback, questions, ideas, comments and volunteer participation in all of our initiatives.

Towards a wild-wise future!

## Financial Report: April 1, 2015 to March 31, 2016

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### Revenue

Donations & Sales .....	\$2,718
Contribution Agreements:	
Environment Yukon .....	\$35,000
Community Development Fund .....	\$8,867
Bear Hazard Assessment Funds:	
City of Whitehorse .....	\$6,000
Environment Yukon .....	\$7,000
Yellowstone to Yukon .....	\$3,000
Kwanlin Dun First Nation .....	\$1,000
Ta'an Kwach'an .....	\$1,000
Margo Supplies .....	\$1,000

**Total Revenue: \$65,585**

### Expenses

Payroll expenses .....	\$20,418
Consulting & Projects .....	\$31,554
Accounting .....	\$280
Advertising and Promotions .....	\$3,629
Business Licenses and Fees .....	\$25
Courier and Postage .....	\$12
Interest and Bank Charges .....	\$309
CRA penalties and Interest .....	\$51
Materials and Supplies.....	\$218
Rent.....	\$1,925
Telephone.....	\$666
Utilities.....	\$53

**Total Expenses: \$59,139**

**Revenue - Expenses = \$6,446**

## Thank you!

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The work of WildWise Yukon is made possible through the generous support of our funders. We would like to thank Environment Yukon, the Community Development Fund, the City of Whitehorse, the Yukon Fish and Wildlife Enhancement Trust, Margo Supplies, Ta'an Kwach'an Council, Kwanlin Dun First Nation and the Yellowstone to Yukon initiative.



### Current Board Members:

Jennifer Smith – President  
Pam Brown – Secretary  
Wendy Nixon – Director  
Robin Hamilton - Director  
Angela Milani – Director

Thank you to past board members:  
Carol Spillette, Rosa Brown, Lori Larose

And to our volunteer social media coordinator:  
Nicole Tattam

And to all of our other volunteers –  
for your dedication and generosity. Your support is  
greatly appreciated.



# **wild wise**

**YUKON**

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Conflict Solutions**

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 *WildWise Yukon*