



**wild  
wise**  
YUKON

## **Progress Report**

May 31, 2017

## **Overview of Projects:**

WildWise Yukon focused on the following projects in 2016/17:

- Participation in the Whitehorse Bear Working Group, an inter-agency working group focused on city-wide wildlife attractant management of curb-side garbage and compost bins;
- Coordination of a workshop to determine the relevance of the Whitehorse Bear Hazard Assessment;
- Finalization of a door to door education initiative in the Southern Lakes region;
- Strategic planning;
- Co-hosting a speaking engagement with Aliah Knopff to educate the public about cougar behaviour;
- Bear aware trail sign research and design;
- Building partnerships;
- Outreach and education initiatives;
- Website, Social media, and radio;
- Program coordination & project management

## A note from our President and Executive Director

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Our year began with a changing of the guard at the board level. We lost several tried and true board members and gained a few excellent new ones. New board members always bring fresh energy and ideas and we accomplished a lot on this wave of enthusiasm. Our board members contributed over 320 hours of volunteer time to WildWise this year.

One of our highest priorities was to update our strategic and work plans and we feel that we have a comprehensive plan for the coming years. Our new objectives include outreach to all Yukon communities to reduce human-wildlife conflict where it is most likely to occur.

We are pleased with the partnerships we are building. Between the AYC, several RRCs, the Yukon Wildlife Preserve, Parks Canada and several First Nations we feel that we have made a solid start at being able to recognize how we can work with other organizations to achieve our goals. We are looking forward to 'getting out of town' in 2017 onward.

We have had a busy and fruitful year and great support from funders, partners and the general public. Our Southern Lakes door to door pilot project gave us confidence that outreach and education are our niche. In the coming years we are committed to doing more of what we know we are already good at and seeking opportunities to work on new projects and, in particular, to focus on wildlife species beyond bears. Our 2017 projects are piling up and we are excited to get out there! On our list is a project addressing food conditioning of bears along the Carcross/Skagway Roads, an extension of our door to door outreach in two communities, an assessment of waste hauling practices and solutions to reducing curb-side food conditioning of wildlife, development of a bear learning module for Yukon schools and continued effort to promote electric fencing for small and large scale farmers and other food producers.

We look forward to safer human-wildlife encounters and experiences in 2017!

*Denny Denison, President*

*Heather Ashthorn, Executive Director*

### **Current Board Members:**

Denny Denison – President  
Lindsay Caskenette – Vice President  
Scott Gilbert – Secretary  
Jennifer Smith – Treasurer  
Pam Brown – Director  
Cassandra Andrew – Director





## Whitehorse Bear Working Group (WBWG)

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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 unnecessary destruction of wildlife due to negative human-wildlife encounters. The group meets to discuss policy, education, and practical measures that can be taken to reduce negative impacts related to wildlife and attractants. This year the group focused on determining the relevance of the recommendations in the Whitehorse Bear Hazard assessment and encouraging action on priority recommendations. We lost three key members this year and WildWise has become the key 'instigator' for working group action. We anticipate a return to regular activity in 2017.

## Whitehorse Bear Hazard Assessment Workshop

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WildWise organized this workshop with funding from the Community Development Fund, Yukon Government and in-kind contributions from the City of Whitehorse. Over 30 people attended the full-day workshop, facilitated by Nansi Cunningham and we consider the event a success. Participants identified current activities that reduce human-bear conflict and prioritized actions that are just beginning or are outstanding. There is potential to become a 'bear-smart community' if all recommendations are accomplished and WildWise follows up regularly with workshop participants for progress updates and gentle reminders.





## Pets and Wildlife Poster Campaign

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We continue to educate Yukoners about canid attractants through this campaign, which encourages pet owners to secure their pets on leashes, in pens and indoors. We have established relationship in several vet offices and make sure the posters are visible in other key areas.

## Cougar Education

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*Our best  
ever  
attended  
event!*

We co-hosted a cougar presentation with Yukon Science Institute on March 5th and 6th. Aliah Knopff gave talks at the Beringia Centre and Yukon College in Haines Junction. We saw over 120 people at the Beringia Centre and 40 in Haines Junction. Aliah's presentation focused on cougar behaviour, habitat and interactions with humans as well as reducing human-cougar conflict, using Alberta and B.C. as examples of communities that are experiencing increasing negative interactions as cougar populations recover. The audience peppered the speaker with questions, comments and concerns about cougars.

## Southern Lakes Door To Door Education

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We completed our door to door pilot project in the summer of 2016. We hired Aaron Roberge to revisit the same properties that we surveyed in 2014 and were well received by most property owners.

## Bear Learning Module

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*We are seeking  
partners in all  
communities  
to establish a  
working group  
for this project.*

We have initiated development of a bear learning module for Yukon schools and are working with Environment Yukon, Yukon Wildlife Preserve, First Nations Partnerships and Programs and Parks Canada. The intent is to develop a module that encourages high school students to analyse the human-bear system from many perspectives and to develop a module that fits into the new curriculum requirements. We have applied for funding from the YFWETF to visit all communities and solicit participation and feedback about the project.

## Trail Sign Project

We partnered with Yukon College to develop bear aware trail signs for trails in and around Whitehorse. This project had several phases, including a test phase using the Canada Trail behind Yukon College. We surveyed trail users at two points in the project to solicit feedback about messaging and retention of information and have finalized the product, including signage 'geared' specifically towards trail cyclists. With support from Y2C2 staff, we will erect signs at over 50 locations around Whitehorse this summer.



Bear safety signs

## Electric Fencing Education

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We organized and co-hosted an electric fence technique workshop with EMR through the Ag. Branch in May, 2016. The workshop took place at Kevin Bower's farm on the Sawmill Rd. Kevin has both permanent and portable electric fencing on his farm and gave participants a detailed description of materials and methods. Everyone had a chance to set up the portable fencing units. We will repeat the project this coming spring.

We also gave a presentation to the Agriculture Association about electric fencing and feel that we had good reception and feedback. Board members were interested in portable fencing as an option for some of their farm applications but noted that cost is often prohibitive and there is little funding available for installation. We asked the group if they were interested in forming a supply co-op to help reduce costs and share information with other farmers. We feel that we have a foot in the door with this group now and look forward to working more with them in future.

We have developed an information page for chicken farmers about electric fencing and are partnering with the Feed Store to distribute to people when they order their chickens. We are working on three one-page information sheets which will be finalized in early April. They discuss the why, how and cost break downs of using electric fencing to secure livestock and will be available on our website soon.

## Tourists and Bears

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We are working with a Yukon College student, CTFN and C/T RRC on an outreach initiative to address food conditioning of bears along the Carcross/Skagway Roads. The first phase of this project has involved developing outreach materials, including a road signs and brochures which will inform tourists, other travellers, tour operators and residents of the area about bear behaviour and the dangers of feeding and approaching bears. The second phase will involve hiring a contractor to educate tourists face to face along the road over the summer and to distribute the materials. We will be working with CTFN environmental monitors in the field.







## AYC

We met with the AYC in December to discuss attractant management in Yukon communities and to inquire about what communities need in order to reduce human-wildlife conflict. As a result, the AYC is investigating current practices in all communities and we have heard from the City of Whitehorse's Sustainability Department that the meeting helped gain traction for our mandate. We are excited to see where this relationship leads as we have had a difficult time finding a win with the City of Whitehorse in reducing the availability of curb-side attractants.

## Yukon Wildlife Preserve

We are regular contributors to the YWP newsletter and are currently working with them on developing a bear learning module for Yukon schools.

## Parks Canada

We reached out to Parks Canada to partner on the bear learning module and to inquire about food conditioning of bears along the Skagway Road. Parks Canada is interested in working with us in future to develop educational materials. We will meet with them soon to introduce our programs and discuss opportunities with PC staff.

## RRC AGW

WWY participated in the 2017 RRC AGW at Kluane Lake. We set up a table with WildWise pamphlets, membership brochures and other materials and attended most of the workshops to network and increase our understanding of all RRCs. We made valuable connections and have followed up those meetings with collaboration on reducing human-wildlife conflict in the Kluane, Kwanlin Dun, Ta'an Kwachan, LSC and Carcross/Tagish Traditional Territories.

## Dan Keyi

We co-produced a resource for locals and tourists about sheep grazing near the highway alongside Kluane Lake. The Dan Keyi RRC approached us in the fall and we used some of our surplus funding for design and production of the product.



*photo:  
Mary Blahitka*



## CTFN

We consulted the CTFN Lands Management Board about two projects that will affect CTFN members and/or are happening within their traditional territory. The board endorsed both projects (development of a bear learning module for Yukon schools and a project addressing food conditioning of bears at the hands of tourists and tour operators along the Skagway Road) through a letter of support to the Fish & Wildlife Enhancement Trust Fund. We used some of our surplus funding to design materials (brochures and road signs) to support this project and will be working with CTFN Environmental Monitors and summer students this summer. CTFN has also identified other projects within their Traditional Territory that they would like to partner with us on in 2017.

## C.O. Services

We were approached by Dean McLean (C.O. for Carmacks) to assist with a project mapping human-bear occurrences over the past six years for Carmacks. Dean supplied incident reports, including GPS points for each incident and we hired Andrew G. Smith of AllSmith Overland to create a database according to Dean's instruction and a map product which may be used to help us and C.O.s explain bear behaviour and history of conflict to Carmacks residents. Turn the page to see a small version of the map that was created.



WildWise Yukon has a strong commitment to providing information and education to the public. We have established a 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 wildlife bulletins and event postings.

## Website Upgrades

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We continue to update and upgrade our website to reflect current, evidence-based approaches to reducing human-wildlife conflict. Our goal is to increase traffic to the website by making it a hub of information relevant to researchers, other organizations, decision-makers and the general public.



2017 is shaping up to be a very big year for WildWise Yukon. We have several projects on the go in collaboration with RRCs, First Nations, territorial, federal and municipal governments. Look for us along the Skagway Road this summer where we will be talking with travellers about the dangers of food conditioning of bears, and in Carmacks, Pelly and Whitehorse where we will be going door to door to find out about people's experiences of wildlife encounters on their properties and what they are doing to manage attractants. We will also be visiting all Yukon communities over the summer to learn about approaches to bear management and opportunities to address human-bear conflict at the community level. We look forward to meeting you!

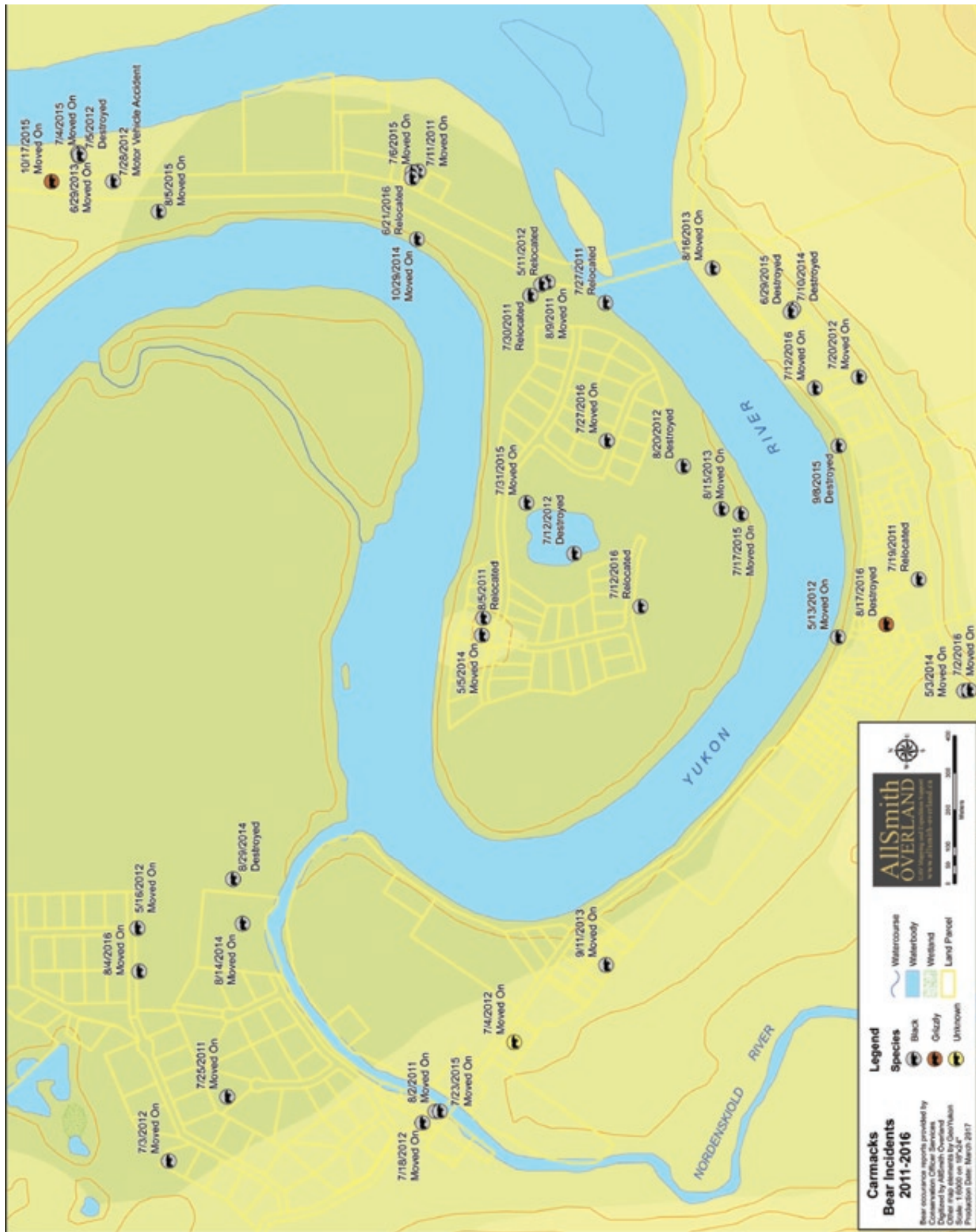
*We are always interested in your stories, your ideas and your photos. Please get in touch with us if you would like to contribute to WildWise.*

### Thank you to our funders!

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Environment Yukon continues to support WildWise Yukon on an annual basis. The bulk of our funding comes through Conservation Officer Services Branch and we work closely with this highly skilled team to develop our programs. We also received funding from the Community Development Fund, City of Whitehorse, Yukon College and Energy, Mines and Resources and Dan Keyi Renewable Resources Council this year. Many thanks to all of these agencies for supporting the work we do.







# Wild Wise YUKON

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Conflict Solutions**

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