



INFORMATION ONLY COUNCIL REPORT

To: Mayor and Council

Date: July 11, 2023

From: Paul Gipps, CAO

Subject: **WildSafe BC Bear Smart Community Initiative - Update**

Report Prepared by: Mike Cain, Bylaw Services Manager

STRATEGIC AREA(S) OF FOCUS

Foster Safety and Well-Being – We will pursue through direct action, advocacy, and collaboration with local and regional service providers, investments in community health, needs-based housing, emergency preparedness, policing, and other services that foster safety and well-being in West Kelowna.

BACKGROUND

On January 25, 2022, Council directed staff to proceed with the first step of becoming a Bear Smart Community by undertaking a Bear Hazard Assessment (BHA) at a cost of \$15,000.

WildSafe BC was not able to have the BHA conducted in 2022, however WildSafe BC did initiate the BHA process on June 5, 2023.

The BHA is a multi-phased project which, outlined in brief from materials supplied from Wildsafe BC, contains the following:

- Data Collection
- Community Engagement
- Report Draft

The scope of the BHA includes an evaluation of the land within the City of West Kelowna with a detailed focus on areas and neighborhoods with high bear activity and/or other risk factors, such as location around bear travel corridors, schools, and parks.

The data collection phase has been completed and is now on to Community Engagement which includes, a public survey developed by a social scientist expert on the topic of bear-human interactions and is open to all West Kelowna residents. The survey allows for WildSafe BC to engage with interested community members regarding their concerns and

attitudes towards bears in the community; as well as provide an opportunity for residents to identify areas of bear activity.

A BHA assessment typically begins in the spring/summer of one year and is completed by the spring of the following year.

The BHA will identify and map key factors that influence existing or potential human-bear conflicts in West Kelowna including:

- History of bear reports and patterns;
- Non-natural attractants such as garbage or fruit trees; and
- Bear travel corridors and risk areas.

Subsequent Steps

Upon completion of the BHA, the next step would be to complete a Bear Conflict Management Plan (BCMP) which is informed by the BHA and is developed in collaboration with City staff.

The BCMP outlines what specific actions can take place to address some of the hazards identified in the risk areas with proposed timelines. An example of addressing identified hazards would be for the City to move from an education only enforcement strategy, to adopting bylaw language around attractant management.

During this process the City will continue to work collaboratively with the WildSafe BC local program coordinator to deliver the WildSafe core activities, such as door-to-door education, bin tagging, use of media, area signage, and communications.

COUNCIL REPORT / RESOLUTION HISTORY

Date	Report Topic / Resolution	Resolution No.
January 25, 2022	<u>It was moved and seconded</u> THAT Council consider and direct staff to proceed with the first step of becoming a Bear Smart Community and undertake a Bear Hazard Assessment at a cost of \$15,000.00; and THAT WildSafe BC be invited to the first Committee of the Whole meeting in 2022 to provide an update on the progress of their work within the City of West Kelowna. <u>CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY</u>	C040/22

REVIEWED BY

Brad Savoury, Director of Legal Services

APPROVED FOR THE AGENDA BY

Paul Gipps, CAO

Powerpoint: Yes No

Attachments:

1. Bear Smart Communities
2. WildSafe BC Proposal for a Bear Hazzard Assessment
3. WildSafe BC Central Okanagan 2022 Program Summary