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#StashYourTrash to protect wildlife and communities

Isolation could mean more wildlife wandering and a greater need for community responsibility

BRITISH COLUMBIA – Experts agree that spring wildlife will be exploring more as self-isolation continues and that puts extra emphasis on the #StashYourTrash message coming from an advocacy organization.

“Thousands of bears and other wildlife were killed in British Columbia in recent years in part because of human actions that impact their behaviours,” says Michael Howie, spokesperson for B.C.-based non-profit The Fur-Bearers. “We’re asking residents to pledge to #StashYourTrash in their communities to reduce human conflict with wildlife, and ultimately save lives and property.”

The new program launched last week on the first day of spring encourages residents to find and eliminate common attractants around their homes that can cause wildlife to get closer to people and potentially find themselves in conflict. The website, StashYourTrash.ca, features a growing list of attractants found around the home or business and how to stay safe while recreating outdoors. Sample by-laws for municipalities, research on the science of coexistence and links to suppliers will also be added to the site.

“We know that more than one in five of the times when the Conservation Officer Service attended calls related to bears in the last year, a bear was killed,” Howie says, citing statistics available on the Ministry of Environment and Climate Change website. “We will continue to push for transparency and oversight for this armed law enforcement agency, though we also need residents, businesses and municipalities to take ownership with the role they play, too.”

The pledge available on the site serves two roles: it helps give residents an engagement to indicate to their community, friends and family that they want to be stewards of the nature around their homes and public places, and a coming sense of competition.

“We’re implementing a feature that will allow us to display how many residents from different communities have taken the pledge and will be announcing the winning municipality weekly,” says Howie. “This kind of friendly competition can also help show that the more people who take the pledge to ‘#StashYourTrash’, the more of our wild neighbours we can protect.” Residents are encouraged to visit www.StashYourTrash.ca to learn more about attractant management and take the pledge to #StashYourTrash!

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The Fur-Bearers (The Association for the Protection of Fur-Bearing Animals) was formed in 1953 and advocates on behalf of fur-bearing animals in the wild and in confinement. The Fur-Bearers also works with communities and governments to provide evidence-based coexistence solutions.

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