



# Wild Wise YUKON

## **Bear-proof Bin Participatory Research Pilot Project (2013-2014)**

Unsecured garbage and compost is the number one wildlife attractant in the City of Whitehorse and Southern Lakes area. To reduce the number of bears and other wildlife from becoming food conditioned, this issue needed to be addressed directly. With support from Environment Yukon and the City of Whitehorse, we initiated a pilot study to investigate retrofitted locking devices on city waste and compost containers as a method to deter access by wildlife, including bears.

We made use of a product that was tested & certified as bear resistant by the Interagency Grizzly Bear Committee (IGBC), Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks (MFWP) and Living with Wildlife Foundation (LWWF).

**Thank you to all pilot project participants. With your support, we are one step closer to better waste management.**



*The problem*

## **Pilot Study Area: Finch Crescent-Copper Ridge**

*51 Households, 104 bins retrofitted with certified bear-resistant locks*

### **Initial survey results (48 participants responded):**

- 37 % had a bear on their property before the project
- 29% have had garbage or compost accessed by a bear
- Bears have accessed berries, compost, garbage, chokecherry

### **What participants reported:**

- 70% of participants think the locks are effective at deterring wildlife and should be used throughout the city, 23% were unsure, 1 participant did not agree
- Some participants were concerned about wildlife other than bears and neighbours feeding wildlife

### **One year after survey:**

We revisited the participants in Finch Crescent one year after installing the locks to perform an annual maintenance check and monitor lock use. What we saw (50 households were surveyed):

- Only 20% of participants were using the bear locks properly (both locks on both bins)
- Some residents were using clips on compost only
- 80% of unlocked bins contained garbage
- One lid had been lost during compost collection
- Maintenance issues including frayed cables and lost clips



*The solution*



### Reminders for participants:

- The locks are only effective if both locks are used on both (or all) bins on your property
- Keep bins locked until the morning of collection
- Put bins out in the morning and keep them as secure as you are able at all other times
- Continue to use your locks in the winter. WD40 or lock de-icer can be used to keep them free of ice
- Please contact Environmental Sustainability at the City of Whitehorse if you have lost a lid or need to problem solve other maintenance issues. They can be reached at: 335-8296

### Centre for Human-Wildlife Conflict Solutions

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## 2014 Project Expansion – Granger

*54 Households, 115 bins retrofitted with certified bear-resistant locks*

In 2014 we expanded the pilot study to an additional neighbourhood in Granger. We had volunteers help sign up 54 new participants in our selected pilot area in Granger, and installed 115 bins in June using trained Y2C2 volunteer crew members. Participants were asked to fill out the same surveys as participants on Finch Crescent. Monitoring of both pilot areas is on-going.

**Initial survey results** (*43 participants responded*):

- 58% have had a bear on their property
- 26% have had a bear access garbage or compost
- Bears have accessed garbage, gardens, fruit trees, compost
- 64% did not store garbage in a secure location
- 79% put bins out on the morning of collection
- 14% put bins out the night before collection

**Exit (end of summer) survey results** (*38 participants responded*):

- 91% said the locks were easy to use, 9% said they were not
- 5% required maintenance for frayed cables and lost clips
- 97% stated they used their clips until the morning of collection
- 76% put bins out the morning of collection
- 8% put bins out the night before
- 16% varied the time the put bins out
- 50% stated that 7 am was a reasonable time for the City to expect bins to be at curbside if bylaw mandated bins to be off the curb until the morning of collection
- 90% of participants stated that they thought the locks were an effective method of preventing wildlife from accessing waste bins.
- 91% stated that the locks were a good solution to not having secure storage for their bins

**What we saw:**

- Similar to Copper Ridge, most households were not locking both bins
- 13% of bins had ongoing maintenance issues, including frayed cables, missing clips and warped lids

### Conclusion:

Providing everyone bear-proof locking devices is only the first step. We must make the decision every day to use the clips properly and do our part to keep wildlife out of our garbage and compost bins.