

## **Bear Smart Community Resources – Seeking Project Proposals**

People and Carnivores is providing resources for community-level human-bear conflict prevention programs. We are offering consulting and support services, educational materials, and funds to local “Bear Smart” efforts. There is a total of \$50,000 available in 2023, with additional resources likely for 2024 and 2025. There are no pre-determined resource levels for projects: funding, support, and materials provided will be prioritized based on the extent to which residents and officials plan to integrate bear conflict prevention across a community.

### **Purpose**

A “Bear Smart” initiative is a community-led and community-wide human-bear conflict prevention program. The resource fund will help community organizations/groups and leaders as well as local governments begin or support new human-bear conflict programs or Bear Smart initiatives in their local areas. Our vision is sustainable, inclusive, community-level programs to reduce conflict risks and conflicts.

### **Background**

People and Carnivores works with landowners, tribes, community groups, agencies and local governments in the Northern Rockies to assess needs and develop and implement tools and programs to prevent conflicts between people and wolves, bears, and mountain lions, reducing human risks and keeping carnivores wild.

In 2022, the Interagency Grizzly Bear Committee (IGBC) endorsed a Bear Smart Community program to support and provide a framework for communities to create local bear conflict prevention programs. The IGBC program provides a framework for communities to achieve Bear Smart status (see the [IGBC website](#) – additional information being posted soon). The State of Montana is participating in the IGBC program and MT Fish, Wildlife, & Parks is otherwise also working to help prevent conflicts and provide education to residents and visitors. The US Fish & Wildlife Service is also a partner in this effort and is providing staff capacity to administer its Bear Smart Program.

People and Carnivores is seeking local community leaders, groups, or officials interested in the IGBC process or simply in developing a human-bear conflict prevention initiative in their area or town. The resource fund is meant to support beginning efforts or to help sustain new efforts – whether or not the community is planning on using the IGBC process.

### **To Apply or Inquire**

1. Check requirements below to see if your community/project is a good fit.
2. Email [bearresources@peopleandcarnivores.org](mailto:bearresources@peopleandcarnivores.org) and we’ll set up a meeting to talk about your community’s needs and how we might be able to help. With your email, please attach an informal document addressing the following – maximum one page:
  - (a) Briefly describe your role/membership in the community and the location/area
  - (b) What are the current or anticipated problems or needs in your area?
  - (c) Vision and goals for the project
  - (d) How would you approach making this a community-wide effort?

(e) What resources do you think you need and, if funding, what might it be applied to?

**No phone calls, please.** We will set up a meeting to discuss the project in more detail.

\* If you don't think you meet the criteria for this program, it's possible we can assist you with our regular program work, so reach out to us if you are located in western Montana and interested in bear conflict prevention generally.

\*\* We will accept inquiries on a rolling basis through 2023 but encourage interested community representatives to reach out sooner rather than later, as resources are limited.

### **Requirements**

The resources program is meant to support initiatives that are or will gain the support of various stakeholders, become community-wide, and that will be sustained over time, and physically-concentrated. We welcome inquiries/requests from organizers/leaders of communities, municipalities, or neighborhood networks who have started or are interested in starting a collaborative initiative to prevent human-bear conflicts in their local area.

The geographic area is approximate and will depend on projects, but is focused in western Montana, Greater Yellowstone (MT, ID, WY), and central/northern Idaho.

Some example activities that may be supported by funding or P&C support services include:

- Organizing or forming a group/committee to begin a program
- Developing and distributing bear educational resources (print, digital/media)
- Events (bear fairs, town halls, gleaning, etc.)
- Conducting an assessment of conflicts or potential problems
- Making a prevention plan
- Acquiring and using equipment: bear-resistant garbage security, prevention and educational toolkits, fencing, scare devices, etc., as long as part of a larger effort
- Learning about funding resources
- Initially focusing prevention for one group (e.g., businesses or residents), or focusing on one type of attractant or conflict (e.g., garbage or bear education)

What will not be supported: the purchase of garbage cans or other equipment unless part of a larger plan; projects that have a scattered impact; hazing, research, or monitoring work/equipment; loss compensation. We've done our best to identify (non)qualification criteria, but unique circumstances may come up.

This program is made possible with funding from The Volgenau Foundation.

Help sustain this Bear Smart Resource Fund by [making a contribution here](#) or by emailing [bearresources@peopleandcarnivores.org](mailto:bearresources@peopleandcarnivores.org) to learn more, or about the different ways to donate.