



# Annual Report for 2017

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Revelstoke Bear Aware Coordinator



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## 1. Summary

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2017 was a progressive year for Revelstoke Bear Aware. There were 154 reports concerning black bears made to Revelstoke Bear Aware and the conservation officer service. The Conservation Officer Service destroyed 4 black bears in 2017 as compared to 24 in 2016. There were four incidents where bears broke into houses and destroyed property. The first reported bear sighting in 2017 was on April 24 and the last reported bear sighting was on December 16.

Garbage continues to be the number one attractant for bears in Revelstoke with 66% of bear sightings being associated with garbage as an attractant. All of the destroyed bears were killed as a result of becoming conditioned to eating garbage. Bear resistant garbage collection systems significantly reduce human-bear conflict where they are installed, as seen in Fernie and Golden, BC where a new collection system was installed at the end of 2016. Revelstoke Bear Aware has continued to encourage the City of Revelstoke to implement a bear resistant garbage collection system in Revelstoke and has continued to provide information regarding possible avenues to implementing such a system. We recommend that the process of bear proofing the garbage system in Revelstoke begin by installing centralized bear resistant bins in mobile home parks where the limited availability of a secure garbage storage leads to higher rates of human-bear conflict, specifically related to garbage not being stored securely. This is due to the limited availability of a secure garbage solution.

Unmanaged fruit trees were another common attractant for bears in Revelstoke with 33% the remaining instances of bear sightings being related to fruit trees. The Gleaning Project was very active this year and also encouraged people to glean their own trees and donate their fruit to the project. Revelstoke Bear Aware partnered with the Revelstoke Local Food Initiative (LFI) again this year to harvest 1700lbs of fruit, of which 456lbs were donated to the Food Bank as either fresh or preserved fruit. The role of Revelstoke Bear Aware was primarily to provide a volunteer workforce and to locate properties that required the service through our door-to-door campaign and other advertising strategies, while the LFI coordinator managed the harvest and preservation of the fruit.

Revelstoke Bear Aware delivered 22 presentations, contributed to 3 City Council meetings, and attended 10 public events. We also held 3 workshops providing education on pruning, electric fencing, and bear management. Through these events we reached a total 1350 people.

Two door-to-door campaigns were conducted in conjunction with the Conservation Officer Service. Revelstoke Bear Aware worked with the City of Revelstoke to increase bylaw enforcement in areas of high bear activity and numerous residents and businesses were fined.

The Revelstoke Bear Aware Facebook page was utilized and post views reached over 122,581 views. Numerous posts regarding attractant management and the Gleaning Project were made to the Stoke List. Revelstoke Bear Aware issued 3 press releases and gave 6 interviews.

Bear in Area lawn signs were deployed in areas where bears had been reported. Feedback continues to suggest that the signs are very effective at raising awareness and reminding people to secure attractants. Signs were deployed 17 times during the season, for an average of around 5 days at a time giving a total of 85 sign/days in 2017. In addition, signs were loaned to several campgrounds and resorts so that staff could deploy signs when bears were seen in their area.

It would not have been possible to deliver the Revelstoke Bear Aware program to so many members of the community without the support from volunteers. This year 43 volunteers gave a total of 107 volunteer hours to Revelstoke Bear Aware.

Included in this report are recommendations for 2018 on page 17.

## *2. About Revelstoke Bear Aware Society*

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### **Purpose of the Society**

The purpose of Revelstoke Bear Aware Society is to reduce bear/human conflict in and around the city of Revelstoke by:

- Identifying and eliminating or reducing human related bear attractants;
- Educating Revelstoke residents, visitors and businesses about:
  - the importance of reducing bear attractants on their properties and in and around the community;
  - how to recognize bear attractants on their properties and within the community; and,
  - how to eliminate or reduce bear attractants for which they are responsible.

We achieve our purposes by operating a community education program, and by working in partnership with other agencies including City of Revelstoke, Parks Canada, Columbia Shuswap Regional District, the BC Conservation Officer Service, and other Revelstoke-based initiatives. Collectively, these agencies are called the “Revelstoke Bear Management Committee”. Revelstoke Bear Aware Society was founded in 2004, as a result of the Revelstoke Bear Management Committee recognizing that a registered non-profit society with charitable status would provide focus for the Committee, and allow fundraising in support of keeping our community safe and our bears wild. Although we are now independent of WildSafeBC, our Coordinator, Maggie Spizzirri, occasionally calls Frank Ritcey, Provincial WildSafeBC Coordinator, to discuss issues that he may have encountered before.

## **Board of Directors for 2017**

In addition to the Annual General Meeting, the Board of Directors met 6 times.

List of Directors:

Jackie Morris, President  
Sue Davies, Vice-President  
Kari Martin, Treasurer  
Cheryl Fry, Secretary  
Steve Kent, Director  
Lisa Longinotto, Director

## **Community Coordinator in 2017**

Our Community Coordinator is a part time contractor, who is responsible for planning and carrying out our programming, working with our partners as needed, and coordinating the functions of the society. Maggie Spizzirri is our Community Coordinator. We owe many thanks to Maggie for representing us so well in the community!

## **Operation of Our Society**

In 2017 the Revelstoke Bear Aware updated its Bylaws, which were approved at our Annual General Meeting on April 20, 2017. We have since prepared minor changes to our Constitution, which will be brought to our 2018 Annual General Meeting.

Revelstoke Bear Aware Society transitioned to the new BC Societies Act in May, 2017.

## **Supporters of Revelstoke Bear Aware in 2017**

Revelstoke Bear Aware benefits from the large number of volunteer hours contributed by Board of Directors and from representatives of agencies of the Revelstoke Bear Committee. It would not have been possible to deliver the Revelstoke Bear Aware message to so many members of the community without the support from volunteers. Community volunteers contributed time to the Gleaning Program, helped with garbage

tagging and door-to-door visits. We estimate that in 2017 our volunteers contributed 107 hours.

The Revelstoke Bear Aware Society would like to express gratitude to the following organizations for financial contributions made to Revelstoke Bear Aware in 2017:



Lisa Longinotto of Williamson Lake Campground Management.

Revelstoke Bear Aware would also like to express gratitude to the following individuals and organizations for valuable in-kind support provided to the program:

- Revelstoke Bear Aware board members: Jackie Morris, Sue Davies, Kari Martin, Cheryl Fry, Steve Kent and Lisa Longinotto;
- Revelstoke Bear Aware agency advisors: Councillor English (City of Revelstoke), Dan Bartol and Alex Desjardins (Conservation Officer Service), and Sarah Boyle, Lisa Larson, and Tawnya Hewitt (Parks Canada);
- Parks Canada for providing board room meeting space, printing, and also providing advice and expertise;
- Revelstoke Credit Union Insurance for providing board room meeting space.
- The Revelstoke Current, StokeFM, EZ Rock Radio, the Revelstoke Review, Reved Quarterly, Revelstoke Mountaineer and Revelstoke Cable TV for their continued support and promotion of the program;
- The Local Foods Initiative, and the North Columbia Environmental Society for their continued in-kind support;
- Patti Larson and Community Connections Food Bank for their continued support of the Gleaning Project;
- Local volunteers, for fruit picking, book keeping, expert advice, and IT help;
- School District 19 and the preschools of Revelstoke for inviting the program into their classrooms;
- Darren Komonoski, Tina Miertsch, Teresa LeRose, Cindy Floyd, and City staff for their support, help and input;
- Visitor Information Centre staff and the Welcome Wagon;
- Columbia Shuswap Regional District, in particular Loni Parker, Director of Area B, and Carmen Fennel, from the Columbia Shuswap Region Solid Waste Management Department;
- Current WildSafeBC and independent bear awareness group coordinators throughout BC for their ideas, support, and hard work throughout the season;
- Previous Revelstoke Bear Aware Coordinators in Revelstoke: Karen Bennett, Debby Robinson, Francis Maltby, Paula Couturier, Todd Arthurs, Steve Kent, Abby Pond, Penny-Page Brittin, Janette Vickers and Sue Davies;

- Jake Roos of Loki Tree Services for his help in putting on a pruning workshop;
- Gillian Sanders of Grizzly Bear Solutions for her help in putting on an electric fence workshop;
- Concerned citizens of Revelstoke for their input, ideas, calls and emails of support and reports of bear activity.

### 3. Revelstoke Bear Aware activities in 2017

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#### Personal contacts

In 2017 Maggie Spizzirri attended 10 public events including the community Farmers Market, BioBlitz, Revelstoke Garlic Fest and Timber Days. We also delivered 10 classroom presentations and 12 small-group activity sessions to grade 1-2 children at the Kokanee Fish Festival. We continued our association with the Local Foods Initiative (LFI) contributing bear aware messaging to their Garden Guru series of workshops throughout the summer. Revelstoke Bear Aware also presented our message to the international students at Revelstoke Secondary School. Revelstoke Bear Aware attended public meetings regarding the proposed wildlife attractant bylaw and presented our 2016 annual report to the City Council.

Through these presentations and events a total of 1,350 people were reached. The below table provides some details of the presentations, events and festivals and the number of people who attended each event.

Date	Event	Details	People in Attendance
April	Pruning Workshop	Workshop	6
April	Farmers Market	Public display	212
May	TimberDays	Public display	87
May	Electric Fence Workshop	Workshop	4
June	Farmers Market	Public display	172
July	City council 2016 Annual Report	Presentation	22
August	Food Bank	Public display	47
August	BioBlitz	Public display	25

Date	Event	Details	People in Attendance
August	BC Day	Public display	37
August	Jr. Naturalist	Presentation	12
September	GarlicFest	Public display	472
September	Michael Proctor talk on bear habitat	Presentation	24
September	Kokanee Fish Festival	12 small-group presentations	96
September	International Students	Presentation	14
October	Red Wagon PreSchool x2	Presentation	37
October	Cool Kids PreSchool x2	Presentation	29
October	International Students	Presentation	18
November	Columbia Park Elementary	Presentation	17
November	Begbie View Elementary	Presentation	19
<b>Total</b>			<b>1350</b>

## Media contacts

### Facebook

During the season our Facebook page gained more than 150 new “likes” with 733 people following our page. Our posts during 2017 generated over 122,581 post views for the season. The fast growth of our Facebook page, the number of times information has been shared by other Facebook users, and the high speed of information dissemination through this system makes Facebook an excellent way to communicate almost real-time information about bear activity and conflicts in Revelstoke. Visit and follow our Facebook page at: [www.facebook.com/revelstokebearaware](http://www.facebook.com/revelstokebearaware)

### *Website*

The Revelstoke Bear Aware website ([www.revelstokebearaware.org](http://www.revelstokebearaware.org)) continues to provide a strongly informative resource for Revelstoke residents. There were 3,169 separate users who visited the Revelstoke Bear Aware website over the season, with 7,176 page views. The website provides information on how to manage specific bear attractants as well as a link to the WildSafeBC WARP map to provide the most up to date information generated from both the Conservation Officer Service and Revelstoke Bear Aware.

### *Mass media*

Revelstoke Bear Aware issued 3 press releases in 2017 (see Appendix 1). Local radio stations interviewed the coordinator 6 times during the season. This included two live talkback shows on Stoke FM, one on EZRock and one on Revelstoke Mountaineer.

In 2017, Revelstoke Bear Aware purchased print advertisements in the Revelstoke Leisure Guide - summer and fall editions. Online advertisements in the Revelstoke Current and the Review were also purchased for the AGM in April and the Bear Necessities Workshops. A “link button” was present on The Current website throughout the year. StokeFM advertising consisted of ads running several times per day during the summer and also several opportunities for the coordinator to appear on the morning show discussing bear aware issues. Revelstoke Bear Aware also posted advertisements on the Stoke List to promote particular events and general bear awareness.

A Revelstoke Bear Aware logo continues to appear on the City garbage schedule encouraging residents to secure their garbage during the months from April - November. Reminders about garbage and fruit as an attractant are also sent out on the new City of Revelstoke garbage app. The garbage truck also has Revelstoke Bear Aware signage on the side of the truck reminding residents to keep their garbage secure.

## **More ways we worked in the community**

### *Gleaning Project*

The Gleaning Project gathers surplus fruits from the community, helping to reduce bear attractants. Residents with excess fruit can contact Revelstoke Bear Aware to arrange volunteers to harvest the fruit. The volunteers receive some of the fruit and much of the remaining fruit is donated to Community Connections Food Bank and Food Recovery Program. Any edible excess fruit that Community Connections is unable to take gets donated to the Monashee Craft Distillery. The project also invites all residents to donate their extra harvested fruit, berries and vegetables directly to the Food Bank. Any rotten fruit collected from the ground is donated to local farmers for pig food.

The Gleaning Project collaborated with the LFI this year to harvest and preserve Revelstoke's fresh fruit. The role of Revelstoke Bear Aware was primarily to coordinate a volunteer workforce, use our door-to-door campaign and other advertising to seek out the properties that required gleaning and provide equipment such as a new ladder and picking poles. The LFI coordinator managed the volunteers during harvest and preservation of the fruit. Revelstoke Bear Aware also purchased 2 picking poles, a step ladder and a new 6' orchard-specific ladder for better stability on rough ground.

The Gleaning Project has been a very successful part of the Revelstoke Bear Aware program in Revelstoke:

- 23 properties were gleaned by the project in 2017,
- 1700 lbs. of fruit was harvested,
- 456 lbs. went to the Food Bank,
- the remainder of fruit went to the volunteers who harvested it, to the Monashee Distillery and to local farmers.
- 37 volunteers collectively donated 77 hours to the Gleaning project during the season.

### *Bear in area signs*

Bear in Area lawn signs were again deployed to areas where bear activity was reported. Signs were deployed at 17 locations during the season for an average of 5 days each, giving a total of 85 sign/days in 2017.

Sign placement is decided by reports from the Conservation Officer Service or residents of Revelstoke to: 1) let people know where bears are active, and 2) remind people to secure bear attractants in the immediate area of bear foraging. Feedback from school students during presentations suggests that the signs continue to be an effective way to do this.

### *Door-to-door and garbage tagging*

Two major door-to-door campaigns were mounted in 2017 in conjunction with the BC Conservation Officer Service. All campgrounds and select businesses were visited. All houses in the Big Eddy, select houses in the downtown and southside area were canvased. These areas were chosen based on past data showcasing them as "problem" areas in Revelstoke. Residents received information about being bear aware and some residents received cautions and tickets about complying with the new Wildlife Attractant and Garbage Bylaw. Houses where fruit trees were evident also received information about the Gleaning Project and the necessity of harvesting fruit as soon as it is ripe.

### *Printed materials*

Revelstoke Bear Aware was able to deliver its message through a variety of initiatives in 2017 including letters and pamphlets in the Welcome Wagon and at the information centre, on notice boards, at B&Bs, new citizen's groups, and local businesses.

New camping cards, stickers, information advisory post cards, and rulers were printed. New bear in area signs and fruit gleaning signs were also printed.

## *4. Summary of bear activity in 2017*

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### **Overview of the season**

In 2017 there were 154 reports regarding bears made to the RAPP line and to Revelstoke Bear Aware (Table 1). 4 black bears were killed throughout the season. The first reported bear sighting in 2017 was on April 24 and the last reported bear sighting was on December 16.

Anecdotally, local people reported an increase huckleberry crop at upper elevations especially later into the fall months, which indicates wild food resources may have been plentiful this year. However some bears did come into town and found garbage and fruit. Bears in town became habituated to this food and lost their sense of caution around humans. There were 4 reports of bears breaking into houses.

*Table 1. The number of reports concerning bears and bear mortality, between 2005 and 2017 in Revelstoke and surrounding area.*

<b>Year</b>	<b>Total Bear Sightings Reported</b>	<b>Bear Mortality</b>
2005	50	3
2006	147	11
2007	143	11
2008	162	13
2009	34	2
2010	212	6
2011	221	10

2012	125	2
2013	41	2
2014	305	10
2015	104	3
2016	642	24
2017	154	4

Revelstoke Bear Aware encourages the reporting of bears to the Report All Poachers and Polluters (RAPP) Line and / or to Revelstoke Bear Aware so that each situation can be monitored and the best solution provided for that bear or cub.

### **Bear attractants and waste management in 2017**

Each report to the RAPP line or Revelstoke Bear Aware details if it was a 'sighting only' or if a bear attractant was involved; garbage, fruit tree, livestock, pet food, outdoor freezers and fridges, compost, bird feeders, BBQ's, beehives, vegetable gardens, or spilled grain on the train tracks (Table 2).

*Table 2. Bear attractants reported between 2009 and 2017 in Revelstoke and surrounding area.*

<b>Attractant Reported</b>	<b>2009</b>	<b>2010</b>	<b>2011</b>	<b>2012</b>	<b>2013</b>	<b>2014</b>	<b>2015</b>	<b>2016</b>	<b>2017</b>
Garbage	12	76	70	28	10	69	29	225	53
Fruit & Nut Trees	3	20	19	1	5	57	6	104	22
Livestock/Chickens	1	5	4	1	0	4	4	4	2
Pet Food	1	2	0	0	2	3	1	0	0
Outdoor Freezers	1	2	2	1	0	3	1	2	2
Compost	1	3	5	3	0	2	1	1	2
Birdfeeders	3	1	3	0	1	2	0	0	3
BBQ	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0
Beehives	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Vegetable Garden	0	2	1	0	0	1	0	0	0
Grain on Train Tracks	0	3	0	0	0	4	1	0	3

Other	0	1	0	0	1	5	1	0	1
Sighting Only	14	99	112	72	22	143	57	306	66

In 2017 the City of Revelstoke implemented a new Wildlife Attractant and Garbage Bylaw. This is a positive improvement to the garbage collection system. It was well received. However, as this was the bylaw’s first year, community education was required.

Garbage continues to be the greatest bear attractant in Revelstoke mostly due to garbage being stored in wildlife accessible areas such as on porches and by back doors. All garbage related calls occurred where bears accessed garbage put out for collection. Many people do not have secure storage for their garbage and should keep all waste foodstuffs frozen until collection day. However, there are still a significant proportion of people leaving their garbage accessible to bears even though they have garages or sheds that could be used to secure it. Proactive action by the bylaw or conservation officer will be required to enforce the new Wildlife Attractant and Garbage Bylaw, which states that garbage must be secured from wildlife. The online reporting system (See Click Fix: <https://revelstoke.ca/332/See-Click-Fix>) is helpful to monitor what is and is not being done and where.

Fruit trees and even nut trees caused concern again this year. The Gleaning Program provided relief to pro-active residents who were not able to glean their own tree this year. The combined efforts of Revelstoke Bear Aware and the Local Foods Initiative worked hard to ensure that all ripe fruit was harvested in a timely manner.

There were instances of property damage, including bears breaking into 4 reported houses through basement windows and unlocked doors. There were numerous reports of bears that appeared habituated to humans and were very unconcerned in the presence of honking horns etc.

Most instances of bears becoming aggressive or damaging property appeared to be associated with bears having accessed garbage and fruit on a regular basis. There is considerable concern that these sorts of conflicts may result in human injury if garbage continues to be accessible to bears in the future.

## *5. Future directions for reducing bear/human conflicts in Revelstoke*

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### **Future of waste management**

Revelstoke Bear Aware will continue to request improvements to Revelstoke’s waste

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handling system. We feel that a substantial gain in bear attractant management will occur simply by requiring all mobile home parks, campgrounds, undeveloped and new subdivisions and developments to install a centralized bear resistant dumpsters.

Rental housing, vacation rentals, and illegal suites are also in need of consideration due to the fact that often these short term tenants are not familiar with local bylaws nor are they be able to adhere to garbage schedules or the securing of garbage. Owners should be held responsible for such management by purchasing a bear resistant storage bin and advising their guests how to secure their garbage. There is currently an issue in Upper Arrow Heights where residents are concerned about vacation rentals leaving garbage out. In that part of town, for several years in a row, bears have continued to be active late into December. These bears will not go into hibernation if food is readily available to them, and unfortunately, as the winter continues into February and March, these bears will not be able to find enough food to survive on garbage alone.

The City of Golden has implemented a bear proof system handing out bear resistant bins to all residents. The City of Golden has had positive reviews of the garbage system and has had 0 bears killed in 2017. Fernie has implemented centralized bins in problem areas within City limits and has also found that their human-bear conflicts have dropped dramatically.

The CSRD has mentioned a move toward centralized bins for organic food waste only. It is still unclear how this will unfold.

### **Conservation Officers for Revelstoke**

The City of Revelstoke has requested that the Province of British Columbia station bring Conservation Officers permanently in this community. Revelstoke Bear Aware supports this request, but recognizes that this would be only a partial solution to reducing bear-human conflicts. Our residents and the City must do all they can to ensure bears are not attracted to our community.

## *6. Recommendations for 2018*

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In 2018 Revelstoke Bear Aware Society will continue to operate our program to educate area residents, visitors, and businesses about appropriate behaviours to reduce human-bear conflict. This will be accomplished by offering workshops, presentations, and other educational opportunities in person or through various media. We will work with other

agencies and associations to expand the effectiveness of our program.

Specific focus points for our 2018 program will be garbage management and fruit tree management. This will include advancing community awareness of, and encouraging skills to comply with, the City's new wildlife attractant and garbage bylaw.

#### Garbage management

- Follow the progress of the Columbia Shuswap Regional District's move to create an organic waste disposal system in Revelstoke. Investigate what this organic waste disposal program will mean for bear-proof garbage disposal in town.
- Continue to promote communal garbage bins in trailer parks and new developments.
- Investigate how to make bear proof household garbage bins available to individual homeowners upon request.

#### Fruit Tree Management

- Continue to operate the Gleaning Program, to ensure unused fruit is available to our community and does not become a bear attractant.
- Set up an online application so that gleaners and people with excess fruit can connect independently of the Gleaning Program.
- Continue to list unmanaged residential fruit trees, with the aim of assisting enforcement of the new City bylaw.
- Continue to identify unmanaged fruit trees on City property and lands managed by other agencies, and request removal of these fruit trees.
- Develop point-of-sale information directed to people buying fruit trees, so they recognize the long-term effort required to care for a fruit tree.

## 7. Year End Statement 2017

<b>Revelstoke Bear Aware Society - 2017</b>		
<b>As of December 31, 2017</b>		
<b>1 Shares account</b>		
	Shares account, January 1, 2017	\$32.93
	Shareholder dividend February 1, 2017	\$0.33
	<b>Total in Shares account</b>	<b>\$33.26</b>
<b>2 Term deposit</b>		
	2 year redeemable 1.10%, matures Feb 7, 2019	\$20,503.81
	interest as of Feb 7, 2017	\$256.30
	Transfer to chequing (Aug 9)	\$5,760.11
	<b>Total in Term Deposit</b>	<b>\$15,000.00</b>
<b>3 Chequing Accounts</b>		
	amount in Gaming account at start of year	\$0.00
	amount in Organization chequing at start of year	\$21,420.97
	<i>Total in both chequing accounts at start of 2017</i>	<b>\$21,420.97</b>
<b>Income</b>		
	Membership fees	\$295.00
	Funding - federal	\$0.00
	Funding - provincial (BC Gaming)	\$0.00
	Funding - regional district	\$0.00
	Funding - municipal	\$0.00
	Other income - Grants, donations	\$33,863.77
	GST/PST rebate	\$480.54
	Transfer from Term Deposit (Aug 9)	\$5,760.11
	<i>Total income</i>	<b>\$40,399.42</b>
<b>Expenses</b>		
	Ads and Marketing	\$2,372.08
	Banking and PayPal	\$7.40
	BA Coordinator	\$24,499.67
	Dues - Societies Act of BC	\$40.00
	Insurance - liability & Directors and Officers	\$1,300.00
	Phone	\$918.40
	Postage & PO Box fee	\$170.10
	Supplies	\$79.19
	Vehicle expenses for coordinator	\$236.96
	Workers compensation	\$28.27
	Other expenses	\$3,404.83
	<i>Total expenses</i>	<b>\$33,056.90</b>
	<b>Total amount left in chequing accounts</b>	<b>\$28,763.49</b>
<b>4 Funds in PayPal account</b>		
	<i>Expressed as the amount we will receive after their processing fee</i>	<b>\$19.38</b>
	<b>Summary of our cash holdings as of February 10, 2017</b>	
	1. Rev CU Shares account	\$33.26
	2. Term deposit	\$15,000.00
	3. Chequing accounts, combined total	\$28,763.49
	5 PayPal account	\$19.38
		<b>\$43,816.13</b>

## 8. Appendix 1

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### **Press Release: January 16, 2017**

2016 was a very active year for Revelstoke Bear Aware Society. There were 638 reports concerning black bears reported to Revelstoke Bear Aware and the conservation officer service and 4 reports of grizzly bears in 2016. The Conservation Officer Service destroyed 24 black bears in 2016, and there were unconfirmed instances of residents destroying further bears. There was 1 cub sent to the Northern Lights Rehabilitation Centre. Fortunately the cub was not food conditioned or habituated so he was the only candidate for rehabilitation.

There were several incidents where bears destroyed property, including fences, breaking doors and tearing siding off houses. Bears were also breaking into locked and unlocked vehicles this year and there were 7 confirmed cases of bears showing aggression towards humans specifically in the downtown and Kovach park areas. The first sighting of a bear in 2016 was on the 11th of April and the last bear reported so far was on December 31, 2016.

Garbage continues to be the number one attractant for bears in Revelstoke with 67% of bear sightings were associated with garbage. Half of the destroyed bears were killed as a direct result of becoming conditioned to eating garbage. Most reports that concerned aggressive bears also concerned garbage.

The City has not yet chosen to implement a bear resistant garbage collection system in Revelstoke. Revelstoke Bear Aware Society and the Conservation Officer Service agree that the implementation of a bear resistant garbage system must be a priority before there is an incident concerning human safety. Revelstoke Bear Aware Society recommends that the process of bear proofing the garbage system should begin in mobile home parks where installation of centralized bear resistant bins is relatively easy and may even be more cost effective per house than curbside pickup from every house.

Unmanaged fruit and nut trees were another major attractant for bears in Revelstoke in 2016. There were two instances where bears attacked chicken coops. Outdoor freezers were also reported as attracting bears this season.

The City of Revelstoke is currently drawing up a Wildlife Attractant Bylaw to cover the issues related to unmanaged fruit trees and other attractants. Revelstoke Bear Aware Society has recommended such a bylaw, to the City, for years. We are hopeful that this bylaw will be passed this spring. This bylaw will bring Revelstoke one step closer to becoming a Bear Smart community. Implementing a city-wide bear resistant garbage system will be the final task.

Revelstoke Bear Aware Society is excited for the upcoming year and will be launching a new Bear Necessities program to provide further education on specific issues that are

pertinent to residents. We will continue with the popular Gleaning Program in partnership with the Revelstoke Local Food Initiative. We will also be implementing our other long running education initiatives. You will see us at the Farmers' Markets, in the schools, and on social media.

Revelstoke Bear Aware Society invites the community to attend its **2017 Annual General Meeting** this spring. Come along on **April 20<sup>th</sup> at 6:30pm** to the **Revelstoke Community Centre** in the Macpherson Room. The meeting will last about 1 hour and will be a great opportunity to have some input into the society and to support the society by purchasing your 2017 membership (single \$10, family \$20).

Revelstoke Bear Aware Society would like to thank BC Gaming, CBT, Lush Cosmetics, Revelstoke Credit Union, Revelstoke Community Foundation, Parks Canada, Lisa Longinotto of Williamson Lake Campground and Bresco for their support of the Revelstoke Bear Aware Program.

To report bear sightings or conflicts with bears please call the 24-hour hotline at 1-877-952 RAPP (7277). To get the latest information about bears in Revelstoke, follow us on Facebook @revelstokebearaware.

*For any questions please contact:*

Maggie Spizzirri

Revelstoke Bear Aware Community Coordinator

+1-250-837-8624

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[www.revelstokebearaware.org](http://www.revelstokebearaware.org)

## Press Release: April 24, 2017

With the change in weather from winter to spring, wildlife is awake and happening. Keeping this in mind, Revelstoke Bear Aware and the residents of Revelstoke saw an extremely active bear year last year. In 2016 there were 642 reports of bears to both the conservation officer service (COS) and Revelstoke Bear Aware and 24 bears killed. There were multiple reports of bears damaging property, breaking into homes and cars and showing aggressive behaviour. This was not a localized issue, cities across BC saw an increase in bear activity and multiple resolutions are being looked into.

The COS and Revelstoke Bear Aware agree that a waste management solution is essential moving forward. The City of Revelstoke has purchased and will be installing bear resistant bins to replace current garbage bins downtown and in local parks. A new wildlife attractant and garbage bylaw is being reviewed by council and will hopefully be passed before summer hits. These are great first steps as garbage is the number one attractant causing human-wildlife conflict with fruit trees coming up second.

The Revelstoke Bear Aware education initiative reached 1842 people with face to face presentations. Over and above this, door to door campaigns, bear in area lawn signs, online and social media and local and global media outlets were also successful reaching additional residents and visitors. The Gleaning Project was busy with multiple trees needing to be picked and numerous amazing volunteers donated their time. The project will be expanded this year with the partnership of the Revelstoke Local Food Initiative and a dedicated gleaning coordinator so that more trees will be able to be gleaned resulting in more fresh local fruit being donated to the Food Bank.

Revelstoke Bear Aware has some exciting new workshops this season to help aid in our education initiatives to get the word out about attractant management. A pruning workshop will be held April 25th with Loki Tree Services. Pruning fruit trees are an important step in fruit tree management. A pruned tree yields better fruit and makes gleaning far easier which in turn increases the chances that the tree will be picked, resulting in the reduction of a bear attractant. An electric fence workshop will be held on May 25th. Electric fences are a great way to keep chicken coops, bee hives, and more safe. Temporary electric fences can also be used for fruit trees as fruit is ripening. Bears do not take into consideration how ripe fruit is, bears will eat fruit ripe or not. Keep an eye on the Revelstoke Bear Aware Facebook page @revelstokebearaware for upcoming events throughout the season and remember to keep your garbage secured indoors or inside a shed and keep your fruit picked up off the ground and harvested at the earliest convenience.

Bears are active already this year, with the closest being spotted on Westside Road this past weekend. Open and available garbage have also been spotted throughout the city. When taking garbage to the dump be sure to take extra caution that no garbage falls out of your vehicle. It is the hope of Revelstoke Bear Aware that everyone comes together in managing attractants to keep bears wild and our community safe. If any wildlife attractants are spotted, insecure garbage or fallen fruit, the City of Revelstoke has a great reporting app called See Click Fix, <http://revelstoke.ca/332/See-Click-Fix>, where these incidents can be reported and a bylaw officer will speak to the home owners.

**10 Tips for bear proofing your yard:**

- Secure garbage from bears, either in a bear-resistant container or indoors. Don't put your garbage out before 6 a.m. on the day of collection.
- Harvest ripe fruit and pick up windfall fruit every day.
- Remove bird feeders during bear season (April - November) or use only small amounts of feed and bring in each night.
- Feed pets indoors. Store pet food and livestock feed indoors.
- Consider a properly installed and maintained electric fence to protect small livestock (such as chickens and beehives), fruit trees, and compost piles.
- Consider removing outdoor freezers and fridges.
- Do not put cooked food, meat, fish or cheese in compost. Keep compost piles working properly, smelly compost attracts bears.
- Clean barbecues after each use.
- Do not feed wildlife.
- Report conflicts with bears to the Conservation Officer on 1-877-952-7277.

Please visit [www.revelstokebearaware.org](http://www.revelstokebearaware.org) for more information on managing bear attractants or contact Bear Aware on 250-837-8624. To get the latest information about bears in Revelstoke, like us on Facebook ([www.facebook.com/revelstokebearaware](http://www.facebook.com/revelstokebearaware)).

Thank you to our sponsors who make the Revelstoke Bear Aware project possible: The Columbia Basin Trust, LUSH Cosmetics, Bresco Industries, FortisBC, Revelstoke Community Foundation, Revelstoke Credit Union, Williamsons Lake Campground and our wonderful members.

To report bear sightings or conflicts with bears please call the 24-hour hotline at 1-877-952 RAPP (7277).

## **Press Release: May 24, 2017**

There are currently several bears foraging for food in different areas of Revelstoke. With all of the positive changes the City of Revelstoke has implemented Maggie Spizzirri of Revelstoke Bear Aware is hopeful that this year will be far more positive for bears and residents and the City alike will continue to make more of an initiative to secure their attractants such as garbage and clean up windfall from fruit trees.

The new Garbage and Wildlife Attractant Bylaw is one step closer to Revelstoke becoming a Bear Smart community and a positive step towards making positive change in Revelstoke. It was noted that there were some concerns about the bylaw initially, however, the bylaw is in place to encourage positive change. Warnings from the City will be sent out far before any fines are issued. This is also a great baseline for new residents and tourists to understand how serious Revelstoke is about keeping wildlife wild and our community safe.

Revelstoke Bear Aware stresses the importance of reporting human-bear conflicts to the Conservation Officer Service RAPP line (1 877 952 7277). "I'd like people to understand that the COs won't necessarily turn up to shoot a bear if it is reported. In most cases they simply track the movements and habits of bears through the reported sightings, and only if they think there is a significant threat to human safety will they act to remove the bear," said Maggie.

"Many people believe they can't call the COS now because they think that the bear will be killed, so they call no one" said Maggie "but this is not the case, calling the RAPP line allows us to canvas and provide education and resources about reducing conflict with bears and provide resources to manage attractants to high traffic areas. Revelstoke Bear Aware is not equipped to manage the bears if conflict does arise. It is really important to call the COS so that the information about the whereabouts of bears gets to the right people, including being sent to Bear Aware to be entered into our web based bear-sightings map, posted on social media and signs placed in the area" said Maggie.

The 24-hour RAPP line gets you through to a call center that will direct your call to the nearest Conservation Officer. The Conservation Officers from Golden are also working with Revelstoke based Natural Resource Officers who can help out with some of the duties of Conservation Officers. Be ready to tell the operator your address, the nature of the sighting, and if there is any food source that may have attracted the bear to the area. The number to call is 1 877 952 RAPP (7277).

This solution has proven to work in the past. Before Revelstoke Bear Aware started its education program upwards of 50 bears were killed per year and without social media these numbers were not highly publicized. Now with the Bear Aware education program in place on average 7 bears are killed per year. In 2015 only 3 black bears were killed. With the high bear activity last year and 27 bears being killed it is even more important

for the program to get it's message out. This is a great step in the right direction for Revelstoke's wildlife.

Maggie will be at Farmers Market's, community events and doing presentations to community and school groups. If anyone has any questions please do not hesitate to stop by and see her or give her a call at Revelstoke Bear Aware: 250-837-8624.

Resources to help reduce your attractants:

- The Gleaning Program: Revelstoke Bear Aware and the Revelstoke Local Food Initiative have partnered to run the program again this year to provide a free service to pick fruit when home owners are unable to do so themselves. All excess food goes to the local Food Bank.
- Compost management and fruit tree pruning: Revelstoke Bear Aware has some great resources on their website to manage these attractants yourself: <http://revelstokebearaware.org/resources/>
- Do you see an insecure attractant? Report it to the City through their See Click Fix App: <http://revelstoke.ca/332/See-Click-Fix>
- Bear Necessities Workshops: New this year, Revelstoke Bear Aware will be hosting or partnering with community groups to provide informational workshops such as a pruning workshop, electric fence workshop, bear talks, hikes and campfire talks to provide hands up attractant management and information. Keep an eye on their Facebook page for up to date information: [www.facebook.com/revelstokebearaware](http://www.facebook.com/revelstokebearaware)

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