



Living in Bear Country

Spring 2002

Info inside:

- ◆ Tips on how to keep your garbage away from bears.
- ◆ Explanation of the CBJ garbage laws in effect.
- ◆ You can be fined! How much? What for?
- ◆ What should you do if you see a bear?

A fed bear is a dead bear.

- ◆ Bears attracted to neighborhoods by garbage become problems for you, your neighbors (including kids!), and, eventually, for police.
- ◆ It is your responsibility to keep your garbage away from bears.

Protect all of your neighbors—including bears—by keeping trash and other attractants away from bears.

Over a year and a half ago, Mayor Sally Smith convened an Ad Hoc Bear Committee to address concerns about Juneau's bears and bear-human interactions. Since then, the Committee, interested citizens, the Assembly, and numerous city and state officials have worked together to find solutions to the ongoing bear-human conflicts around our town. Convinced that most residents believe we have a responsibility to the wildlife whose home we share, the Assembly adopted several modifications to the city's laws on garbage storage.

Most of us who live in Juneau treasure the natural surroundings in which we live. We live in bear country, and we feel lucky to do so. Black bears live in many locations throughout North America and residents throughout its range have long been asked to keep garbage away from bears. It is well known that **garbage kills bears**—that is, once bears associate people with a food reward, a chain of events is set into motion and the end result, very often, is a dead bear.



Juneau residents can be proud to say that we live in one of the few communities in the nation that has been willing to back up good intentions with responsible laws. We have shown a strong commitment to living with bears.

Please read and follow the information in this newsletter; share it with your friends and neighbors. Working together we can make our community a model for how to live in harmony with Alaska's wildlife.

The Black Bears of Juneau

- ◆ Juneau is prime black bear habitat and it isn't uncommon to see bears traveling through neighborhoods. A black bear passing through is generally not a threat.
- ◆ Black bears are rarely aggressive toward people. No serious attacks have ever been reported in Juneau. If given space, time, and the opportunity to retreat, most bears will wander back into the woods.
- ◆ Black bears, like humans, are omnivores. That means they'll eat about anything—including berries, salmon, grasses, sedges, and whatever else is available to them.
- ◆ Bears follow their noses and are attracted to anything that smells: garbage, birdseed, barbecue grills, pet food, fish smokers.
- ◆ In addition to being strong swimmers, sprinters, and climbers, black bears are very intelligent. One easy meal from a home garbage can or a dumpster is all it takes for a bear to learn that people and food go together. Once rewarded this way, a bear will continue this behavior, with sows teaching such habits to their cubs.

New CBJ Garbage Ordinances in Effect

It is against the law to feed or attract bears by leaving your garbage, pet food, or other attractants available to bears. To read the full text of the ordinances, go to www.juneau.org/bears.

Juneau residents have long been asked to try to keep garbage away from bears. Now, new laws (in effect year-round) offer that little extra incentive: you may be fined if you don't! With the hiring of a new community service officer, expect stepped up enforcement in 2002.

- Garbage cans must be labeled with your address.
- You may put out garbage cans for collection after 4 a.m. on pickup day.
- Other than after 4 a.m. on pickup day, garbage must be kept in a bear resistant container or enclosure.



Improperly stored food waste is a bear attraction nuisance!

Where may garbage be stored?

- Inside a strong, fully enclosed structure such as a garage, arctic entry, or sturdy shed.
- In a "bear resistant enclosure"—that is, in an enclosure that you can't get into unless you use your hands or tools. If it can be opened by stomping on it, kicking it, running into it with your body, or other similar actions, it doesn't qualify as bear resistant under CBJ law.

If your garbage has attracted bears and you fail to take steps to legally store your garbage, you could be cited for maintaining a bear attraction nuisance. Fines for a first offense, \$50 or \$250, depend on the circumstance.

Build a Bear Resistant Enclosure for your Garbage Cans

If you do not have the luxury of keeping your garbage cans inside a garage or shed or other fully-enclosed sturdy structure, here are some ideas for how to build an enclosure for your cans:

Metal Lids Now Required on Some Dumpsters

Effective April 18, 2002, some dumpsters in the city must be covered with a metal lid or be located behind a barrier sufficient to deny entry by a bear. This provision applies to the following dumpsters:

- Those used by any restaurant, cafeteria, or other facility regularly preparing or serving food.
- Those previously opened by a bear.
- Those smelling like they are likely to attract a bear.
- Those within a "bear problem area" as defined by the city manager. The manager will issue a public notice and will publish maps in the newspaper (and online at the city's website) of any area so declared.

Expect vigorous enforcement by JPD. Call Waste Management (780-7800) to order your metal lid. If you can prove to the officer or the judge that you ordered a lid but Waste Management has been unable to fill the order, you won't be fined.

- Minimum of 5/8 inch plywood; 2 x 4 construction; use screws instead of nails.
- Heavy duty hinges and latches strong enough that they cannot be pried open by claws.
- No seams that claws can get into (use metal flashing to cover seams).
- Secured so it can't be tipped.
- If you can get into it without using your hands—by jumping on it, kicking it, using your shoulders—then it isn't bear resistant.

See building drawings and examples at www.juneau.org/bears. Send us photos of your bear resistant container and we will post them online for others to see. Working together we can solve Juneau's human-bear conflicts.

Visit our website for more information — www.juneau.org/bears

What do I do if I see a bear?

The Juneau Police Department and Alaska Department of Fish & Game cannot respond to every bear sighting. Before calling authorities, try to determine what the bear is doing.

Is the bear eating natural foods and/or just passing through?

If a bear is eating natural foods—such as berries or grass—leave it alone and give it time and space to leave. Unless the bear receives food rewards (e.g., garbage, dog food, birdseed), it will generally move on.

Is the bear climbing onto property?

If the bear is climbing onto your porch or deck, encourage it to leave by banging pots or making other loud noises. After the bear leaves, remove any attractants.

Is the bear getting into garbage?

If the bear is getting into your garbage, wait in a safe place—a car or house—until you are sure the bear has gone. Clean up whatever attracted it to your property, and keep trash cans inaccessible until the morning of pickup day. Don't give this or any other bear a chance to get another food reward.

Why doesn't Fish & Game just move all the bears?

Bears are seldom the root of the problem: unsecured garbage is the problem. As long as garbage is easily available around Juneau, bears will find it. The Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G) can't relocate every bear that has learned that garbage is an easy source of food (they also don't want to move *our* problems somewhere else). Even if a particular bear is relocated and doesn't return, Juneau is such

productive bear habitat that another bear will move in to take its place and start the garbage/bear cycle anew. As more people store their garbage properly, and "new" bears don't become trained to associate people or human dwellings with a food reward, we will likely see fewer bears in and around town. This will result in a better life for Juneau's bears, and a safer place for Juneau's humans.

What else can I do to avoid conflict with bears?

The best way to avoid conflict with bears is to prevent it. Proper storage of your garbage is the best way to discourage bears from coming to your property. Bears are attracted to anything smelly or edible. It's a good idea to responsibly store or remove any attractants, including

- Pet food
- Bird feeders and birdseed
- Barbecue grills
- Fishing gear

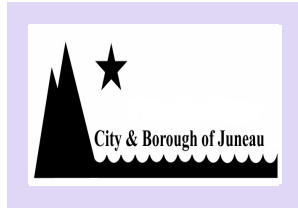
Remember: the smellier your garbage, the harder you'll have to work to keep it unavailable to bears. The more odor-free your garbage, the less attractive bears will find it.

- Deodorize cans with bleach or ammonia.
- Double bag garbage.
- Separate "wet garbage" and keep it in an airtight container.
- Freeze meat and fish scraps and other smelly items until pickup day.



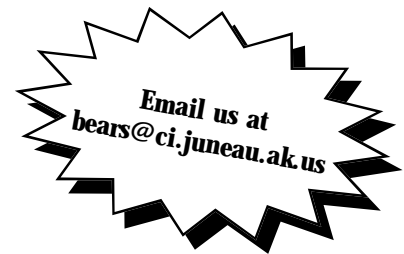
Prevent this from happening to YOUR garbage!

Send questions or comments to bears@ci.juneau.ak.us



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Questions? Comments?

- Call Junkbusters (586-0493) or the Juneau Police Department (586-0600) to report violations of the city's garbage or litter laws.
- If you see a bear and you believe you are in immediate danger, dial 911 to call the police.
- For questions about bears, call ADF&G at 465-4265.
- For help with figuring out how to construct a bear-resistant garbage container or for more information, call Dan Garcia at the CBJ Community Development Department, 586-0715. Find illustrations and examples online at www.juneau.org/bears
- For questions about garbage collection schedules or metal dumpster lids, call Waste Management at 780-7800.

Hey Kids ! If you see a bear in your neighborhood:

- ◇ Tell an adult.
- ◇ Do not chase the bear or throw anything at the bear.
- ◇ Do not run. Stay with your friends. Walk slowly away from the bear.
- ◇ Do not leave garbage or food around for the bear.



Garbage Kills Bears!