



Wildlife Management Policy (Abridged)

Vision

Camp Chief Hector YMCA envisions communities safely co-existing with wildlife and ecosystems with increased sustainability and diversity.

Mission

Camp Chief Hector YMCA co-exists with wildlife and healthy ecosystems as an integral part of its experience, according to the following priorities:

1. Compliance with applicable laws and regulations
2. Safety of campers, staff and families
3. Collaboration with professional wildlife managers
4. Sustainable co-existence of people, wildlife and ecosystems

Organization of Wildlife Management Policy (WMP)

The mission of Camp Chief Hector YMCA's WMP is accomplished by focusing on its four components:

- Education
- Pro-active management
- Reactive management
- Oversight

Education

- Camp Chief Hector YMCA works closely with wildlife management professionals:
 - Alberta Environment managers and officers
 - Provincial Conservation Officers
 - Bow Valley WildSmart
 - National Parks Wardens
 - Bear Conflict Solutions
 - Consultations with bear and wildlife conflict management professionals
- With input from the above organizations, CCH YMCA forms its wildlife education and prevention programs, its training programs, and designs or upgrades its paths, accommodations and food management facilities
- From the above organizations, CCH YMCA receives timely and relevant reports, submits reports and observations, and follows government policies
- Staff members must watch "Living in Bear Country" DVD before commencing work with participants, and, for non-program staff within a week of their arrival at camp
- Program-related staff members will have a question-and-answer presentation with a regional provincial wildlife manager



Education: Bear and Cougar Education for Campers and Participants

- Introductory education regarding bear and cougar encounter responses is given while in possession of an authoritative paper – the CCH-edited BearSmart two-sided sheet, or the BearSmart pamphlet or the Parks Canada Bears & People pamphlet
- Link to information used by staff at Camp Chief Hector YMCA: [WildSmart](#)
- During Outtipping Plans, the facilitating staff member will use the CCH-edited BearSmart two-sided sheet to recall to campers the most basic preventative and reactive BearSmart actions
- Pioneer and Leadership groups will watch the 30-minute “Living in Bear Country” DVD

Pro-active Management: Food and garbage storage at Main-sites

- All food must be stored securely inside of either Bowfort Lodge, Outtripping Center, Hector Lodge, Health Centers, Old Lodge or Staff Housing (or, at Gray Jay, the Antler Cabin, the Main Lodge or the Casa Grande) – or, if grain for horses, in secure facilities at the horse program areas
- All food garbage must be stored securely inside any of the buildings stated above, or in an approved bear-safe garbage dumpster (or, at Gray Jay, the garbage room, secured at night with a lock and an electric fence)
- Food may be served temporarily, with permission of a full-time director, in any of Deer Lodge, Eagle Lodge, the Old Lodge or the Family Cabin
 - The food must be dispensed from a container which will then carry away food garbage directly after the event (not sometime later that day, not the next day)
 - The food must be eaten in the immediate area
 - Any food garbage litter (apple cores, wrappers, peels, etc.) must be gathered up and taken to the garbage with the rest of the garbage from the event
- All smellies (items that may attract bears with their odour, such as lotions, toothpaste, shampoos, etc), for campers and for staff members, must be kept in designated smellies areas

Pro-active Management: Food, Food-garbage and Smellies storage on Outtrip (OT)

- When unpacking backpacks on an outtrip, food, food-garbage and smellies must be under direct supervision of a camp staff member or it must be in an approved bear-safe container stored at the correct location
- Approved bear-safe containers MUST be clean
- Approved bear-safe containers from CCH are either 10-litre black or 10-litre clear-plastic food vaults (NOT food-tubs or Nalgene tubs, etc.)
- On canoe-trips, CLEAN and lidded-with-hasps-or-straps wannigans and barrels are permitted as food-storage containers – be aware that as these containers are NOT at all bear proof, they must be kept clean
- Food-garbage must be carried by staff members
- Cook-site clean-up (including dish-washing, dish-rinsing and the re-organization of food, food-garbage and smellies, site-sweep) must be actively accomplished by a staff member (campers may provide help)
- Dishes and cook-site clean-up (see above) MUST be accomplished directly after the meal (not left until later)
- Cook-sites and secured food storage must be minimally 60 meters away from tent sites



Pro-active Management: Travel and Supervision

- While at a main-site, camp-staff directly responsible for campers (whether counselors or resource staff or both), must always know their campers' whereabouts and must periodically do counts to ensure the entire group is accounted for
- Before groups leave on OT, trail reports are reviewed, including notes regarding bear activity and trail closures due to bear or cougar activity
- While on OT, all campers must ALWAYS be DIRECTLY supervised by a staff member, except:
 - When a camper is "going to the washroom" – and in this case the staff member must know their direction-distance and approximate time gone (campers are encouraged to go in pairs)
 - When a camper is travelling to and from a cook-site and a tent-site (NOTE: in the case where a group is split between the cook-site and the tent-site, staff members will supervise each location)
- Campers are encouraged to travel as a group or, minimally, in pairs
 - Provincial regulations, camp up-dates or, more often, camp staff judgment may dictate a more specific group formation such as traveling as a tighter group, travelling with a staff member at the front (lead) position and (if two staff members) a staff member in the sweep (back) position
 - Conditions that would lead to a specific group formation as described above, or as indicated in the Backpacking Rules (*Outtripping Handbook*), may include:
 - Reduced visibility (dimming light, thick bush, weather, etc.) or reduced sound-travel (increasing the chance of a surprise encounter)
 - Evidence of excellent bear food or habitat
 - Signs indicating "Bear (or Cougar) in Area"
 - Fresh signs of bear activity

Pro-active Management: Bear Spray

- Camp staff leading designated hikes with Camp Chief Hector YMCA programs carry bear spray in the spring, summer, and fall seasons (staff member may be a group leader, a program staff, a support staff, etc., and will in all cases carry bear spray):
 - While on a hike in spring, summer or fall, the bear spray must be holstered and ready to be drawn with ease
- At other times, the bear spray is encouraged to be carried by each staff member, but need not be holstered, but may be carried (for instance) within a day-pack
- Bear spray may only be discharged IN PRACTICE with an authoritative professional wildlife manager, such as a Conservation Officer – otherwise, bear spray is NEVER to be discharged in practice
- Campers are NOT permitted to carry CCH bear spray
- Bear spray must be kept relatively securely from campers, such as in the lid of a day-pack
- All bear spray discharges must be reported as soon as is safe to do so, to a supervisor – if on outtrip, to the OT Assistance Telephone or called in on a radio



Reactive Management: Reactions to Observations and Encounters

- If a bear or a cougar is sighted, get together as a group and respond according to BearSmart and Parks Canada information (see below: BearSmart)
- If a bear or a cougar is sighted, and the BearSmart or Parks Canada information cannot be recalled with confidence, follow these simple actions:
 - get together as a group
 - back away speaking calmly
- No staff member or participant may approach a bear, or stay within sight of a bear in order to observe it after it has been sighted and a retreat has been initiated
- Radio or call in all cougar sighting, Grizzly bear sightings or Black bear sightings as soon as it is safe to do so, whether traveling on-site, day-hiking, or on outtrip (call OT Assistance Phone, if on OT)
- Fill out and submit a Wildlife Encounter Report Form as soon as possible (same day) following a bear or cougar sighting or encounter – and any other wildlife observation that has risk management implications
- Communicate your animal sighting to a supervisor as soon as possible
- Report the wildlife sighting to Kananaskis EMS Non-Emergency line at 403-591-7755 (if on OT, the OT Staff will do this for you, after you have called in your observation)
- Camp staff are NEVER to engage in “rescue missions” or engage in “aversive conditioning” (trying to scare or disturb a bear) – except during an unanticipated encounter; only professional wildlife managers may approach dangerous wildlife

Reactive Management: Elk/Moose

In rare situations, Elk and moose can be dangerous to people. These animals are trying to feed in order to reproduce and to have sufficient food to survive the winter. Give them the right of way and stay back at least three bus lengths (30m / 100ft). If you spot an elk or moose put their heads down and paw at the ground, pull back at once and leave the immediate area.

Reactive Management: Radio Communication

- 1 – EMS or immediate life threatening assistance
- 2 – First aid support or non-life threatening assistance
- 3 – Lost camper/group; a situation requiring support with no first aid
- R – Fire
- W – Wildlife

- Bear/Cougar Sighting:
 - your name
 - Please switch to channel 2
 - code “W” [for wildlife]
 - location
 - Animal description [one young bear, ear tags, unknown type; etc.]
 - Comfort level of group