



INTERAGENCY NEWS RELEASE

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Keep Tahoe Bears Wild!

Agencies launch collaborative website to remind public to practice proper food storage and trash disposal in bear country

LAKE TAHOE, Calif./Nev. – The Tahoe Basin is bear country and natural resource and law enforcement agencies are working diligently to remind residents and visitors to practice proper food storage and trash disposal when living in or visiting bear country. To help spread our message, we've launched a new website, TahoeBears.org, where residents and visitors can go to learn everything they need to know about living, visiting and playing responsibly in bear country. The website was made possible through a generous donation by the Sierra State Park Foundation and features an online reporting tool the public can use to report bear sightings. Collecting information about bear sightings will assist agencies in gathering better data to help Keep Tahoe Bears Wild. Submissions are anonymous and data gathered will not be used to track individual bears. This form is not to be used for emergencies. If you need immediate assistance, please contact 911.

Intentional or unintentional feeding of bears can result in unwanted bear behaviors, increased human-bear conflicts, and public safety issues, as well as fines and possible jail time for violators. Each year law enforcement and state wildlife officers respond to hundreds of calls in which bears may pose a public safety threat or are damaging property. In some cases, the bear is euthanized.

Once bears gain access to human food or trash, they will continue to seek it out. They become less cautious of people and may display unusually bold behavior when trying to get to human or pet food. Bears that have become indifferent or habituated to the presence of people may cause property damage and threaten public safety.

As a reminder, at National Forest campgrounds in the Lake Tahoe Basin, visitors are required to store food in bear-resistant containers (storage lockers/bear boxes), dispose of trash in dumpsters and close and lock these containers or risk fines, jail time, or both. Bear canisters are strongly recommended for those camping in Desolation Wilderness and other backcountry areas because bears have been successfully accessing food that is hung in trees.

In addition, California and Nevada law prohibits the feeding of any big game mammal. Proper food storage is required by law in California State Parks. Food, beverages, scented items or ice chests left unattended may be confiscated and a citation may be issued. Visitors that violate these rules may be evicted from the park. All counties in Nevada that border Lake Tahoe have ordinances in place prohibiting residents from allowing wildlife access to garbage. Citations and fines can be issued for code violations.

To report human-bear conflicts in California, contact the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) Northern California dispatch at 916-445-0380. Non-emergency wildlife interactions in California State Parks can be reported to their public dispatch at (916) 358-1300. Wildlife incidents in California may also be reported online using the CDFW Wildlife Incident Reporting (WIR) system at apps.wildlife.ca.gov/wir. To report human-bear conflicts in Nevada, contact Nevada Department of Wildlife at 775-688-BEAR (2327). If the issue is an immediate threat, call the local sheriff's department or 911.

This collaborative agency effort includes California State Parks, California Department of Fish and Wildlife, El Dorado County Sheriff's Office, Nevada Department of Wildlife, Nevada State Parks, the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency, and the USDA Forest Service Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit.

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