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People and Carnivores Launches Resource Fund to Reduce Bear Conflicts in Communities

From People and Carnivores
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Community leaders and local officials encouraged to apply

BOZEMAN — People and Carnivores, a Montana nonprofit working to prevent human-carnivore conflicts, today announced a resource fund to help communities in Western Montana, the Greater Yellowstone region, and Northern Idaho live safely alongside grizzly and black bears. The Bear Smart Community Resource Fund will support projects designed to reduce bear attractants like garbage and human foods and to help community members create plans to keep people and property safe and bears out of trouble. Community representatives and local officials can apply for resources on behalf of their municipality, neighborhood network, or other locale in which people live near bears.

The Bear Smart Community Resource Fund includes consulting and support services from People and Carnivores field staff, educational materials, and funding. The resource fund will support projects like purchasing bear-resistant equipment, hosting events to share bear safety information, or developing a community plan to carry out solutions that protect people and wildlife.

People and Carnivores has successfully used tools like electric fencing, bear-resistant garbage solutions, and scare devices to help landowners living near carnivores integrate protective practices for more than 15 years. Lisa Upson, Executive Director of People and Carnivores, notes “Both grizzlies and black bears are moving around a lot, and we’ve seen an influx of people and increasing development in the region. Local residents and businesses working together can make prevention tools effective on a community scale, which helps everyone as well as bears.”

Officials and residents in Virginia City worked with People and Carnivores to become a Bear Smart Community. “We took steps over time that have added up to make a huge impact for our community, like getting bear-resistant garbage cans in town and at campgrounds, a fruit gleaning program, and

educating people about bears being nearby” said Virginia City Mayor Justin Gatewood. “We used to have frequent black bear issues, but we’ve had none since doing all this. Now we’re working to maintain that trend, and I think we’re moving in the right direction.”

The Bear Smart Community Resource Fund is made possible with support from The Volgenau Foundation. Applications will be accepted through 2023, though early inquiries are encouraged. For more information on the program and how to apply, visit: peopleandcarnivores.org/bearresources.

About People and Carnivores

People and Carnivores works with landowners, tribes, community groups, agencies and local governments across the Northern Rockies to develop and implement on-the-ground solutions that keep people and property safe while allowing wolves, bears, and mountain lions to move, expanding their ranges and connecting with other populations.