



LIVING IN A FOREST COMMUNITY
- A Privilege and a Responsibility

KANANASKIS
from Multi-use to Provincial Park

BRAGG CREEK WILD'S
Community Garbage Bylaw Survey Report

LINKS TO
Wild Smart tips

LIVING IN A FOREST COMMUNITY: A Privilege and a Responsibility



It's hard to imagine the greater Bragg Creek area without its towering trees, lush vegetation, winding creeks, fresh air and precious wildlife. These natural features are the very reason people choose to live in this forest community - and why so many others are drawn to visit.

But what exactly is a forest community? How is it different from other places? And most importantly, what responsibilities come with living in one?

WHAT IS A FOREST COMMUNITY?

A forest community is a dynamic, interconnected system composed of local people living within or near a forested area alongside the native plants, trees and wildlife that inhabit it. Unlike urban or agricultural communities, the health and sustainability of a forest community depends on a balanced coexistence of human activity with natural processes, with local knowledge and stewardship playing a role in the preservation and maintenance of a healthy, functioning ecosystem.

Imagine that the vegetation and wildlife in Bragg Creek suddenly disappeared. Would it still be the community we know and love? Would the quality of life be the same? Of course not. This is a challenge we face.

Currently, the forest community resident enjoys a unique quality of life that embraces the wilderness as part of its identity. It is a privilege that comes with clear responsibilities. The natural environment will only sustain us if we care for it in return. Overuse or misuse of our forests, waterways and wildlife will cause them to lose their vitality and deteriorate.

So how do we protect what we cherish? Let's consider the concept of Regenerative Living.

WHAT IS REGENERATIVE LIVING?

Beyond simply minimizing harm to the environment, regenerative living is about actively restoring, enhancing and supporting the health of natural systems. It's a mindset that prioritizes living within nature's limits and creating conditions that allow ecosystems, wildlife and people to thrive in harmony.

In practical terms, it means protecting and improving what we already have. While significant initiatives might include wetland restoration, the removal of invasive species or limiting land overuse by industry or tourism, as individuals, we can also have a positive impact by employing, for example, these thoughtful practices:

- Using biodegradable cleaning products.
- Avoiding pesticides on lawns and opting for native plants to create wildlife-friendly yards.
- Installing wildlife-friendly fences that allow animals to move freely.
- Securing garbage and compost to prevent human-wildlife conflicts
- Keeping cats and dogs under control to prevent harm to wildlife.
- Making windows bird-safe to reduce fatalities.
- Limiting outdoor lighting to preserve dark skies.
- Staying off trails at night to give wildlife undisturbed space to feed, migrate and care for their young.
- Respecting seasonal wildlife behaviours seen in fawning and rutting periods.



Ultimately, regenerative living means first understanding what nature needs to thrive - then stepping aside to allow a pathway for natural processes to take place - and stepping in to repair any damage from the past.

A COMMUNITY'S VISION

Regenerative Living is a growing global movement. It is also a principle that the Community Visioning Committee has incorporated in the new Bragg Creek Area Structure Plan for the hamlet and expansion area. By employing nature-enhancing practices and responsible land use policies, we will shape our future community into a place where both people and nature flourish, side by side.

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KANANASKIS

From Multi-Use to Provincial Park

*'THE LAND CANNOT BE ALL THINGS, TO ALL PEOPLE,
ALL OF THE TIME.'*

Brad Stelfox, Landscape Ecologist at AICES Group

Bragg Creek Wild'S Position On West Fraser's Proposed 2026/2027 West Bragg Creek/Moose Mountain Planned Logging Activities

The West Bragg Creek/Moose Mountain area is presently classified as unprotected "Multi-use Land". Bragg Creek Wild believes that the area should be designated as a Provincial Park and be protected; adopting a management plan that emphasizes biodiversity and environmental sustainability. Such a designation would balance conservation with recreation, ensuring that the natural landscape is preserved for future generations. Precedence for such a move is set by Castle Provincial Park and Castle Wildland Provincial Park—which were designated protected areas in 2017 to curb logging and protect fragile ecosystems.

The 2024 Fraser ['What We Heard'](#) report, released after an open house held in Cochrane, attempts to placate trail users' concerns by adding "aesthetic buffers" around logging zones but neglects essential ecosystem protections. It vaguely justifies cutting for firebreaks, though the cut plans were "in the books" before those were seen as issues.

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The report employed short general statements about stewardship of the land to address key issues like safeguarding the Elbow River watershed, which supports half of Calgary’s population and nearby communities, and protection of crucial wildlife habitats and migration corridors. It also does not reference data on animal migration, sensitive areas, watershed boundaries, water accumulation, terrain types, existing open areas, wind impacts, and diversity of tree species and soil types.

The report does not indicate that any environmental groups or research bodies were consulted, nor that nearby communities, such as Bragg Creek were engaged in the planning process. Similarly, there is no evidence of consultation with local Indigenous communities, including the Tsuut’ina and Stoney Nations, for whom Moose Mountain holds immense cultural significance.

To safeguard this ecologically rich area, we must understand and prioritize land uses, especially in sensitive zones. With increasing tourism, it’s time to reassess land zoning to protect areas and to ensure they are able to provide essential natural services for generations to come.

The Government of Alberta has to figure out exactly what they want the Kananaskis area to be. Either it remains the “free for all” where clear cutting takes place amongst recreational trails painstakingly built and paid for by taxpayers and fundraisers in locations heavily promoted by the tourism industry (at the expense of the watershed and biodiversity) or, it becomes a carefully managed park or protected area where human activities are designed to benefit the land and its biodiversity and visitors for generations to come. We urge our Premier, Danielle Smith, to mandate the ministers of Environment and Protected Areas, Forestry and Parks, Tourism and Sport as well as Travel Alberta to modernize the area’s zoning in light of the changing values, needs and priorities of our communities.



BRAGG CREEK WILD’S Community Garbage Bylaw Survey Report



DID YOU KNOW: Garbage kept unsecured is easily accessible to bears who need to eat over 20,000 calories / day. Other wildlife such as skunks, ravens and rodents, are also attracted to refuse and other food attractants.

“Appreciate the survey, and hope to see a positive outcome in regards to our human/wildlife strategy!”

BACKGROUND AND OBJECTIVES

In 2023, Bragg Creek Wild began collaborating with Rocky View County to explore the potential need for a garbage bylaw in the Greater Bragg Creek area. The objective: To reduce human wildlife conflict, particularly incidents involving bears.

This initiative was prompted by several local and regional incidents, including the Fall 2022 euthanization of a bear that had become habituated to unsecured household waste, an event that left three cubs orphaned. Similar occurrences such as in the community of Discovery Ridge in 2023, have led to immediate changes to the Calgary municipal waste bylaws aimed at limiting attractants and protecting both wildlife and people.

Recognizing Bragg Creek’s rural setting and unique waste management practices, a proposed bylaw would aim to improve refuse storage through strategies such as



requiring wildlife-resistant, lockable bins for residential waste pickup and improving waste management at commercial and pedestrian-accessible locations.

To better understand community concerns and preferences, Bragg Creek Wild conducted a public survey to gather feedback on:

- Personal experiences and concerns related to garbage access by wildlife
- Attitudes toward current storage practices and potential regulations
- The role of other attractants such as bird feeders, compost and pet food
- Additional ideas for enhancing human-wildlife coexistence

The feedback collected through this process will help to inform evidence-based recommendations for a garbage bylaw and education initiatives for the Greater Bragg Creek area.

METHODOLOGY

The survey consisted of ten (10) questions, nine (9) closed-ended and one (1) comment section. It was designed by Bragg Creek Wild with input from Rocky View County and took approximately two minutes to complete.

Promotion was carried out through local businesses, community publications, social media channels, local email lists, and signage posted throughout the area. The survey remained open from (date) to April 28, 2025.

SURVEY RESULTS

149 individuals responded to the survey. Demographic questions captured whether each participant identified as a resident, visitor, business owner, or other. Bragg Creek residents were also asked how long they had lived in the community.

Respondent Types	Length of Residency Among Residents
▪ 125 (84%) residents	▪ 53% have lived in Bragg Creek for 11+ years
▪ 12 (8%) visitors	▪ 10% have lived in Bragg Creek between 6–10 years
▪ 3 (2%) business owners	▪ 37% have lived in Bragg Creek for less than 5 years
▪ 9 (6%) other	

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COMMERCIAL GARBAGE MANAGEMENT AND PUBLIC BINS

“The main shopping center is not set up with bear-proof bins and I often see animals making their way into these parking lots to access garbage left out by tourists.”

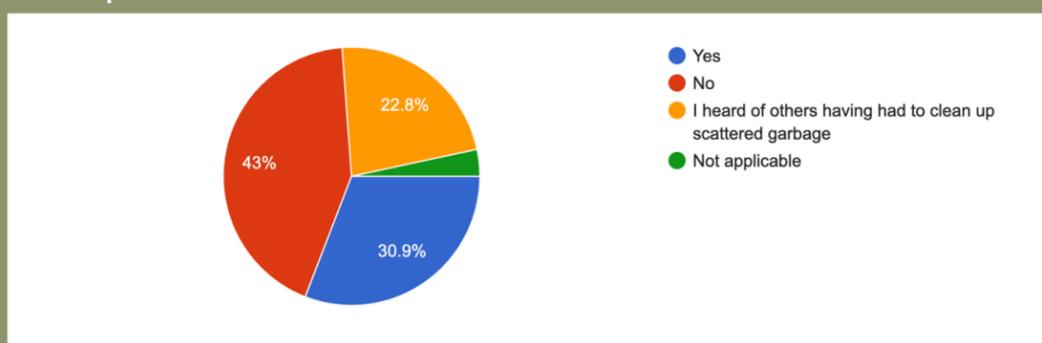
KEY ISSUES

- Overflowing public and commercial garbage bins.
- Inadequate maintenance by vendors/property owners.
- Frequent misuse by tourists and locals.

SUGGESTED ACTIONS

- Mandate wildlife-proof bins in commercial and public areas.
- Require vendors/property owners to maintain bins throughout the day.
- Require the use of bear-proof bins in business licensing.
- Increase pickup frequency in high-traffic seasons.

Have you had to clean up garbage that wildlife scattered in your yard or neighbourhood? For example, bears, crows, skunks, rodents, etc.
149 responses



EDUCATION AND AWARENESS

“The public needs to be better educated. ie: the presence of fruit bearing trees and shrubs, pumpkins, bird feeders etc. that are attracting wildlife.”

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KEY ISSUES

- Widespread belief that education is needed.
- Residents and visitors lack information on attractants and best practices.

SUGGESTED ACTIONS

Comprehensive education and awareness program including:

- Clear, consistent signage in public areas.
- Information packages for new residents.
- Targeted education for tourists and vacation rental users.



ENFORCEMENT FEASIBILITY AND BYLAW OPPOSITION

"We have enough bylaws"

KEY ISSUES

- Concerns about enforcing bylaws on private, secluded properties.
- Skepticism over government capacity and effectiveness.
- Belief that most residents are already compliant.

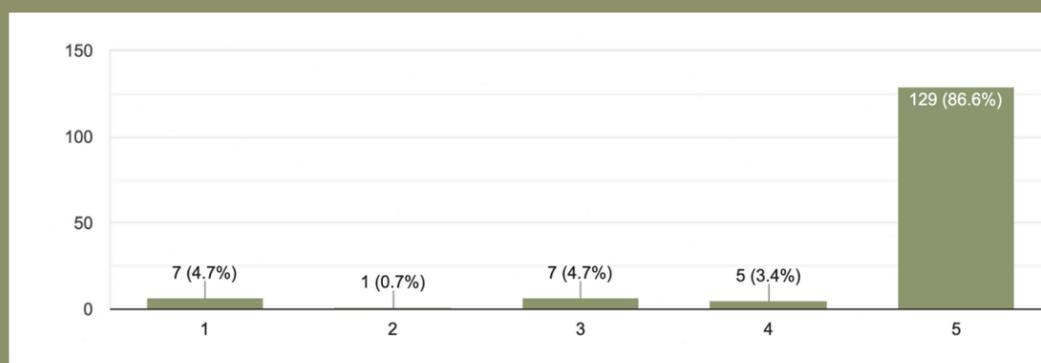
SUGGESTED ACTIONS

- Consider education-first approaches.
- Ensure clear enforcement plans are communicated.

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Storing household garbage in garages and sturdy sheds are appropriate ways to keep refuse out of reach of wildlife, however, some residents prefer leaving the garbage outside. In those cases, would you support a bylaw requiring residents to store garbage in wildlife-resistant bins?



Did you know that a bear may become habituated to human food after only one encounter?

Once a bear develops a taste for human food it will come back to visit you and others in the area. They will lose their fear of people and be at risk of conflicting with them. The losers are usually the bears as they will be deemed a safety concern and either be euthanized or, at best, relocated.

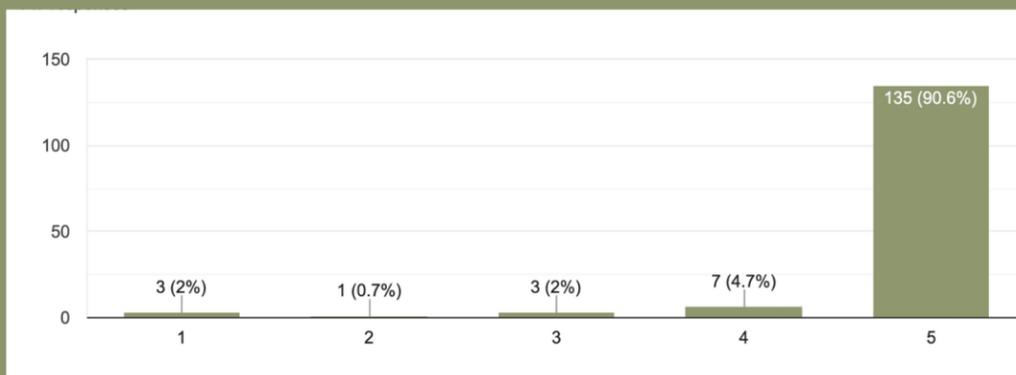
The best defence is keeping your garbage in a secure building. However, if that is not possible, a bear proof or bear resistant garbage bin is the next best thing.

Example of a residential bear proof bin.

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Do you believe improperly stored garbage increases the risk of human-wildlife conflicts? For example, by habituating wildlife to feeding on it?



Bear-Resistant Residential Garbage Solutions

“The residential bins could be a great addition to our community that co-exists with all the critters of the foothills.”

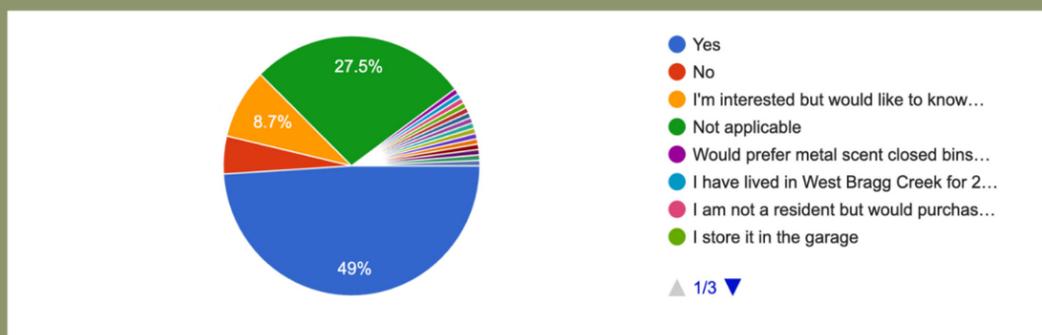
KEY ISSUES

- Strong interest in secure bins balanced by concerns over cost and usability.
- Practical challenges for seniors.

SUGGESTED ACTIONS

- Explore subsidized or shared bin programs.
- Offer community transport or pickup assistance.
- Prioritize truly bear-resistant designs.

If you store your garbage outside, would you be willing to use a wildlife-resistant garbage bin if it were offered at a reduced cost or with a subsidy?
149 responses

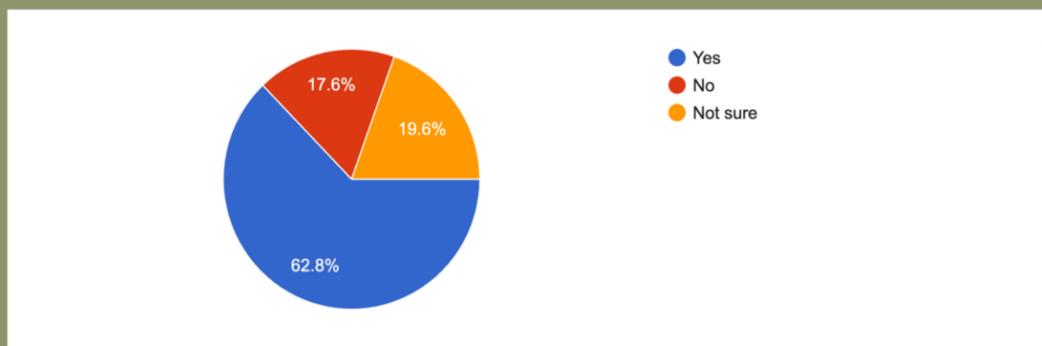


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Example of bear-proof bins for public areas

Do you believe mitigating "food attractants" such as kitchen scraps, bird feeders, and pet food left outside should be considered as part of the proposed bylaw? 148 responses



FEEDING WILDLIFE (DEER, PETS, BIRDS)

“Neighbours feeding the deer are a big problem in town as the deer draw in predators.”

KEY ISSUES

- Deliberate feeding of deer and wildlife remains a serious attractant.
- Bird feeders are a nuanced topic; seasonal and placement considerations noted.
- Outdoor pet food storage identified as high risk.

SUGGESTED ACTIONS

- Provide clear guidance on acceptable wildlife-friendly practices. • Enforce rules on deer feeding.
- Include education around attractants beyond garbage.

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COMPOSTING AND FOOD WASTE

"We have successfully used a bear-proof compost for 2 years without incident."

KEY ISSUES

- Support for secure composting options.
- Desire for home compost solutions to be addressed.

SUGGESTED ACTIONS

- Permit bear-proof composters.
- Include composting best practices in educational materials.

CONCLUSION

The survey data suggests strong support for addressing human-wildlife conflict through improved commercial garbage management, public education, and practical tools like bear resistant bins. While concerns remain about enforceability, community interest in effective, locally tailored solutions is clear.

NEXT STEPS

- Prioritize outreach to commercial property owners.
- Roll out education campaigns across multiple platforms.
- Consider phased or pilot bylaw approaches with clear communication and community input.



Bear Smart beekeeping

KEY FINDINGS

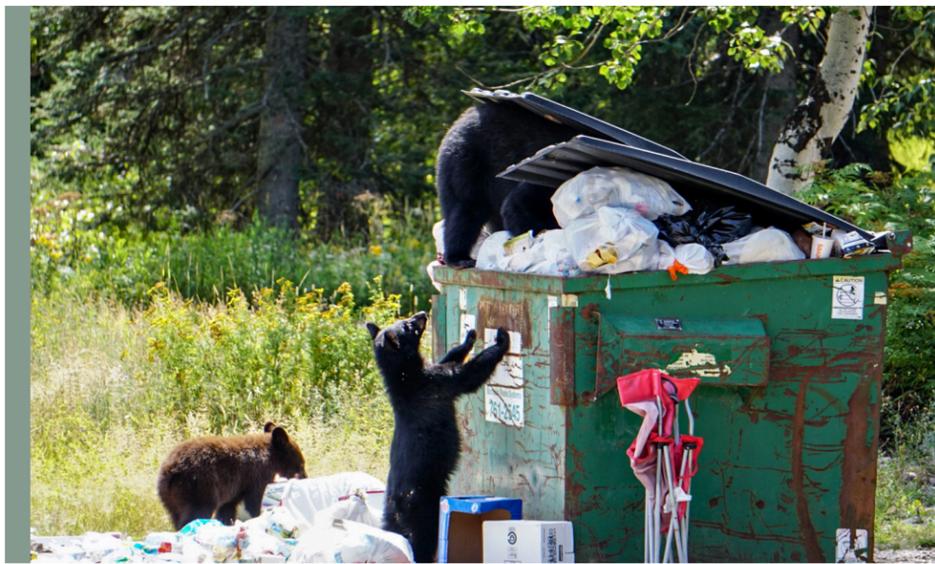
- Residents often gain awareness of attractants only after experiencing wildlife conflict firsthand.
- There is strong support for proactive solutions, particularly in commercial areas.
- Many residents are already taking responsible steps but desire more consistency and support across the community.
- Education is seen as essential, both as a standalone strategy and to complement bylaw implementation.
- Cost and logistics are concerns, particularly for seniors.

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RECOMMENDATIONS

- Introduce a formal bylaw to address unsecured garbage and food attractants.
- Launch a comprehensive educational awareness program targeting residents, visitors, and short-term rental users.
- Implement a bear-proof bin program for residents, with consideration for service and accessibility.
- Require all garbage receptacles in the commercial area, including large bins and small outdoor containers, to be wildlife-proof.
- Explore a subsidy or rental program to support both residential and commercial adoption of bear-proof solutions.
- Make the use of bear-proof bins a condition of commercial operating permits in Bragg Creek.
- Support a commercial compost collection system that includes wildlife-resistant containment.



Example of Commercial bear proof container

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ROCKY VIEW COUNTY
Cultivating Communities

WHAT'S NEXT?

Bragg Creek Wild will share the results of its survey with the County of Rocky View and compare notes with that of the County's own survey.

We will share the outcomes of this ongoing effort over the course of the coming year.

BCW's
Board - 2025-26

 PRESIDENT Renée Delorme	 VICE PRESIDENT Lucy Curtis	 TREASURER Brian Wilson	 SECRETARY Terrill Gordon
 DIRECTOR Shannon Bailey	 DIRECTOR Tiffany Lucas	 DIRECTOR McKenzie Latham	



LINKS TO WILD SMART TIPS

- [Learn to use Bear Spray - link to video](#)
- [Living Wild Smart in Bear Country](#)
- [Camping The Bear Smart Way](#)
- [Becoming Cougar Smart at Home](#)
- [Deer Smart at Home](#)
- [Protecting our fine feathered friends from hitting windows](#)
- [Find out about dogs and wildlife](#)
- [Find out about cats and wildlife](#)
- [So, you want to build a fence on your acreage? Find out wildlife friendly designs](#)

Thank you
RockyView County for your generous
financial support



ROCKY VIEW COUNTY
Cultivating Communities



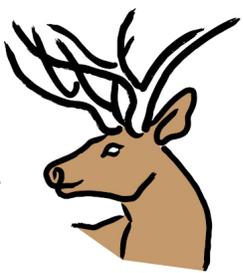


Wildlife and People living in Community



HOW YOU CAN HELP

- Follow us on our social media
- [Become](#) a member - it's Free
- Encourage others to become a member
- Consider becoming a volunteer
- Support our efforts through a donation



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