



Winter 2026 NEWSLETTER

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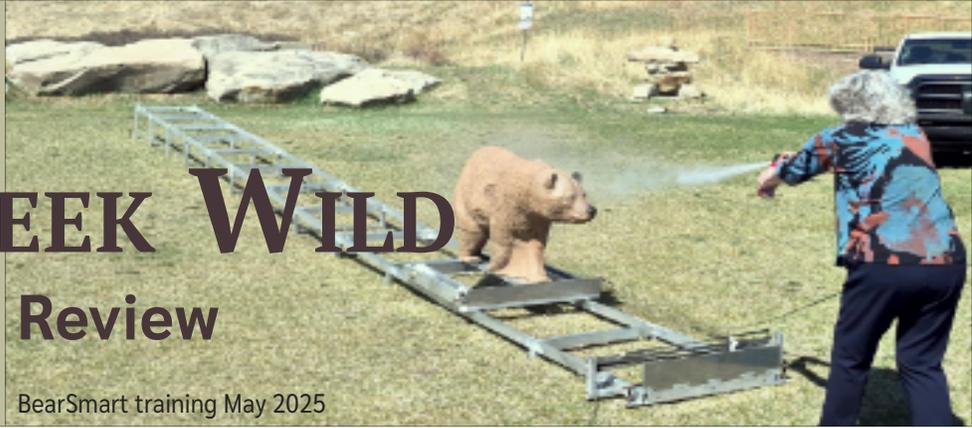
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BRAGG CREEK WILD

A Year In Review

BearSmart training May 2025



There are always 101 things left to do, and progress can feel slow on some fronts. But Rome wasn't built in a day, and neither is a community where people and wildlife truly coexist. This past year brought momentum, challenges, and quiet progress behind the scenes. Here's a glimpse of what Bragg Creek Wild has been up to.

BearSmart program- Last Fall we were invited to submit a five-year plan for funding through the program. We are still awaiting a response from Alberta Forestry and Parks (as are the other BearSmart committees in the province). Meanwhile, the recent heartbreaking incident resulting in the killing of a mama bear, leaving three orphaned cubs and one hunter at the hospital, highlights the importance of this program and that of the Alberta Grizzly Bear Recovery Plan. We remain hopeful that support for this effective program will soon be renewed.

Wildlife Sighting Study - In January we started crunching 4 years of wildlife sighting data, revealing the incredible diversity and presence of our wildlife. Find out more in our next article in this newsletter.

Brian Keating in Bragg Creek - One of the brightest moments of the year came on March 14, when Brian Keating filled the Bragg Creek Community Centre gym with his trademark enthusiasm. Through stories brimming with humour and wonder, he reminded us how lucky we are to share this landscape with such extraordinary wildlife.

Garbage Bylaw Surveys - Shortly after the event, we launched a community survey to understand residents' needs and their awareness of garbage handling challenges at home, in public areas, and across commercial spaces. Around the same time, Rocky View County conducted its own survey. Both efforts received more than 600 responses and revealed a shared set of concerns: the need for better education, the installation of bear-proof bins in the commercial core, and the provision of subsidized bear-proof bins

for residents.

Meetings with Rockyview County- A series of follow-up meetings with County staff and Council produced concrete commitments and a clear communication plan. We are encouraged by this momentum and look forward to seeing these initiatives put into action in our community soon.

Governance Training and Strategic Planning-

In May, the BCW board dedicated two full days to governance training and strategic planning. These sessions were energizing and helped us sharpen our focus for the next five years and improve aspects of our operations. Among our top priorities: regenerative land-use practices and helping residents and visitors become truly "wild smart."

New Website - Meanwhile, our online presence is getting a full refresh. Our redesigned website will be more intuitive, more informative, and a true "hub" for anyone seeking guidance on living safely with wildlife. We expected to launch our new website in January.

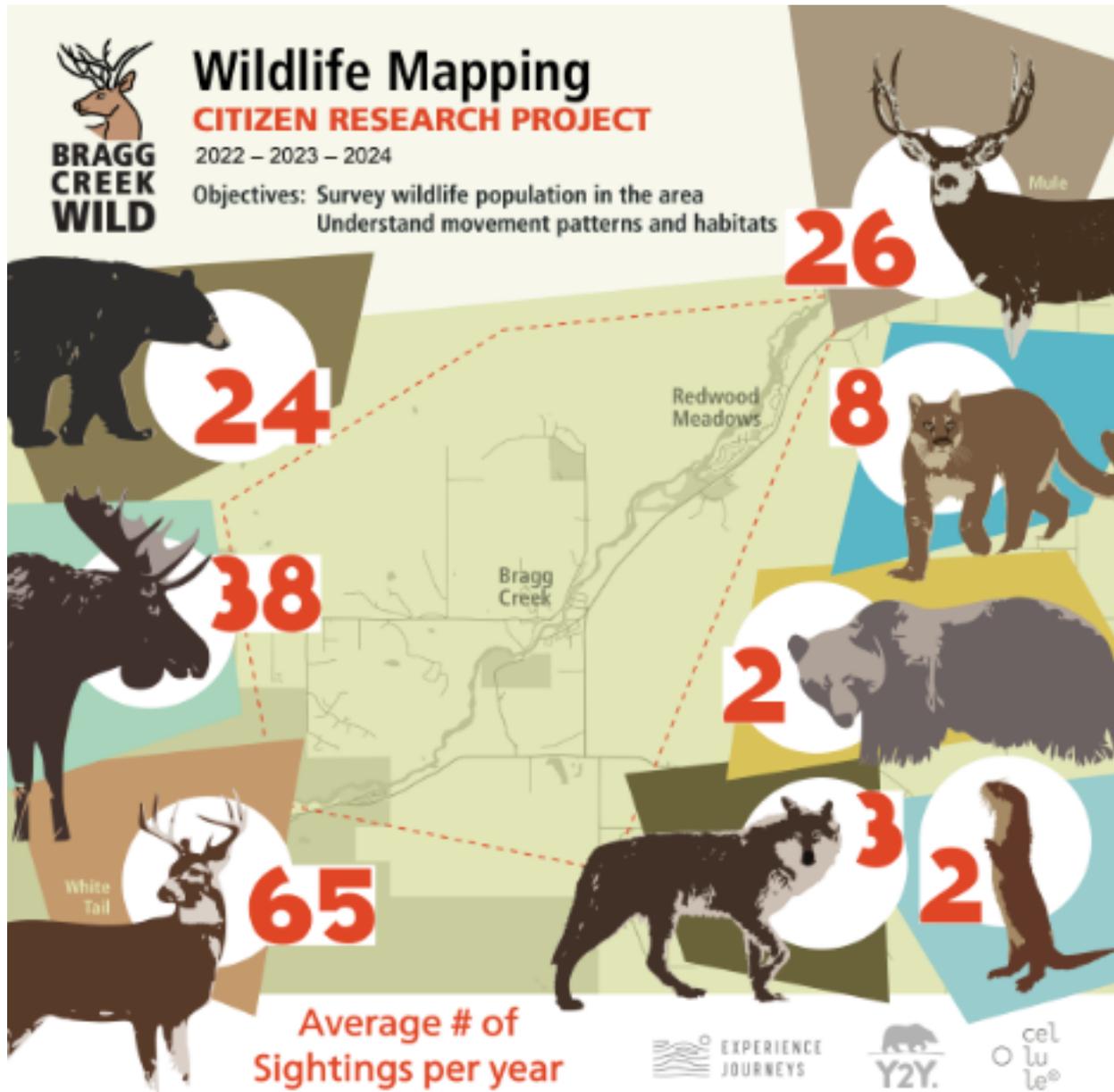
Education and Awareness- Education remains at the heart of everything we do, from monthly articles in the High Country News and quarterly newsletters to active social media outreach and rotating messages on our road signs. Bragg Creek Days brought extra joy, as kids and adults alike learned how to use bear spray and followed our "moving bear on a track," an idea sparked by an Alberta BearSmart workshop we attended this spring.

Bragg Creek Wild is 100% volunteer-powered. Our community is rich with skilled, knowledgeable people who care deeply about our environment, understand our connection to wildlife, and belief in protecting and restoring our wild spaces. To everyone who lends a hand, whether for an hour or a whole project,

THANK YOU!

WILDLIFE SIGHTING DATA

Four Years of Reporting



Shortly after Bragg Creek Wild was formed, a key initiative was established to begin collecting wildlife sighting information. This was set up to help substantiate our mission of improving human-wildlife interactions by understanding to some degree what the residents of Bragg Creek have seen.



Since the inception of this wildlife sighting initiative in January 2021, the team at Bragg Creek Wild set up a simpler way to submit observations on their website. This Google form was live in 2022 and in the current second version, over 350 observations have been added - reported largely by citizens in the greater Bragg Creek area.

In an April 1st, 2022 article in High Country News, an infographic represented what was largely observed from January through September 2021. As with any data analysis, some items fell into the “other” section. For example, an observer reported a bear sighting but was unsure if it was a grizzly or black bear. This was still valuable information! The data on the infographic was a representation of all of the data collected and was used to show species clearly identified by the observer only.

In early 2025, a Geographic Information Systems (GIS) expert was involved in a full review of the data. Working with members of the Bragg Creek Wild team, the data was scrubbed (detailed analysis of each observation) to look at various attributes and put them into 1 of 2 categories: Firstly, solid location observations with species either solidly or partially-identified (e.g. unsure of what bear species was observed) and secondly, unusable observation locations with species not clearly identified (rendering unusable data). In the end, only 6% of all data collected was deemed unusable.

Looking at all sightings and counts observed, here is an update on what the Bragg Creek Wild team have logged:

- 2021 data - 90 sightings - a total of 135 counts observed
- 2022-2024 data – 341 sightings – a total of 669 counts observed

Wow! Thank you to all participants for your valuable (and continued) input into this sighting initiative.

Along with the data collection and mapping, additional species were observed. BCW received over 26 different fox observations, 2 bobcat observations, 6 observations in the otter / mink / pine marten category, 8 observations in the porcupine / raccoon / skunk category and 15 observations in the large bird category (owl, crane, heron, eagle). This reporting clearly indicates the diversity of wildlife that exists in the Greater Bragg Creek area.

As part of the early 2025 GIS data analysis, each wildlife sighting was mapped to look for trends. For example, although deer are seen everywhere, moose sightings are a different story. Exact sighting locations were mapped along with “heat maps”, generated to show approximately where the observations were made - given that these species are often on the move.

The Alberta Government “Wildlife Watch Animal Carcass Records” data from 2022-2024 was also imported into the GIS to view alongside our sighting data. These types of GIS data techniques can be used to indicate accurate wildlife crossing locations for speed reduction signage placement to help reduce wildlife-vehicle collisions.

What’s next?

In the coming weeks, we will be sharing some of our GIS mapping heat maps on the Bragg Creek Wild website. In the meantime, we encourage you to continue using the Bragg Creek Wild sighting form at <https://www.braggcreekwild.ca/wildlife-mapping> whenever you see wildlife in the area. Your input is valuable!



BRAGG CREEK WILD

MEETS ROCKY VIEW COUNTY LEADERSHIP

Despite a summer dominated by heavy rains and flooding challenges, Rocky View County's top leadership made time to meet with Bragg Creek Wild (BCW). On the agenda: strengthening partnerships and moving closer to addressing key issues in the coming year.

Joining the discussion were Reegan McCullough (Chief Administrative Officer), Byron Rieman (Chief Operating Officer), Mason Austen (Manager of Utility Services), and our Councillor Kevin Hanson. Bragg Creek Wild was represented by Lucy Curtis and Renée Delorme.

The conversation was engaging and forward-looking, reflecting the community's deep commitment to safeguarding Bragg Creek's natural environment while navigating increasing pressures from tourism and growth.

Protecting What Makes Bragg Creek Special

At the heart of the discussion was the need for land use policies that preserve the unique character and ecological health of Bragg Creek. With rising visitation

and early signs of over-tourism, BCW emphasized the importance of balancing community needs with environmental stewardship. The group highlighted the community's recent Area Structure Plan vision for Regenerative Living and Regenerative Tourism. This philosophy recognizes that healthy functioning ecosystems are essential if we want both residents and visitors to thrive. Maintaining healthy functioning ecosystems first starts with adapted land use policies. It also includes measures that, while seemingly mundane, profoundly impact our wildlife and their habitats.

Current concerns Bragg Creek Wild is focusing on include:

Wildlife pathways in the flood berm: Since 2022, BCW has been working to retrofit the hamlet's berm with three safe wildlife access points to the river.

Garbage management: Since 2023, efforts have been underway to establish a refuse bylaw to reduce human-wildlife conflicts.



Wildlife safety signage: With the support of RVC Transportation Services, signage has been installed to remind motorists to drive safely and protect wildlife along county roads. These efforts must now expand to our provincial roads (White Avenue and Hwy 8, 22, 22X and 66). All these roads experience a high incidence of wildlife-vehicle collisions.

From Ideas to Action

While BCW's initiatives have enjoyed strong support, the challenges of staff turnover and complex bureaucracy have slowed progress. The meeting was an opportunity to request advice and assistance from the County to ensure these projects reach fruition. Encouragingly, several concrete next steps emerged:

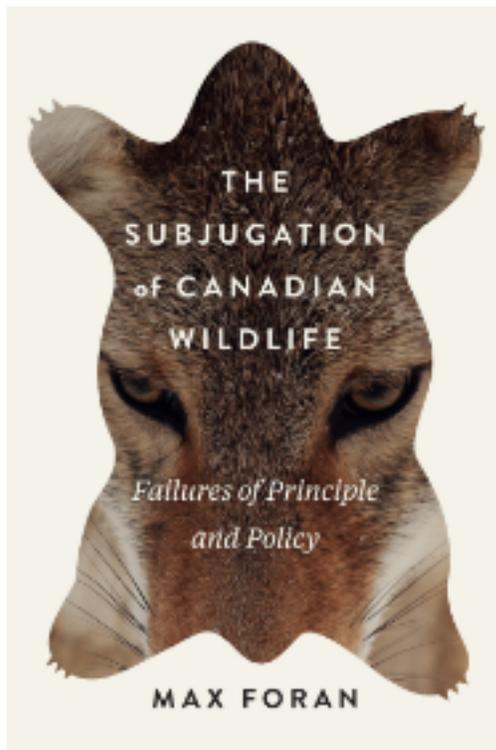
Garbage Bylaw: The County will investigate the current status and explore options for moving it forward including educational activities, and strategies to support commercial and residential areas while the bylaws process carries through.

Flood Berm Modifications: Costs and approval processes for new wildlife access points will be confirmed, with a view to possible inclusion in the 2026 budget. The hope is that these access points will reduce the incidence of broken legs in our deer population and facilitate their movement through this wildlife corridor.

Wildlife Signage: Opportunities for expanded signage or other strategies on County and Provincial infrastructure will be explored to further reduce wildlife encounters.

Member's Suggested Reading

Did you read a book you wish everyone should read?
Share it with us in an email and we'll publish your suggestion in the next newsletter.



Hardly a day goes by without news of the extinction or endangerment of yet another animal species, followed by urgent but largely unheeded calls for action. An eloquent denunciation of the failures of Canada's government and society to protect wildlife from human exploitation, Max Foran's *The Subjugation of Canadian Wildlife* argues that a root cause of wildlife depletions and habitat loss is the culturally ingrained beliefs that underpin management practices and policies.

Tracing the evolution of the highly contestable assumptions that define the human-wildlife relationship, Foran stresses the price wild animals pay for human self-interest. Using several examples of government oversight at the federal, provincial, and territorial levels, from the Species at Risk Act to the Biodiversity Strategy, Protected Areas Network, and provincial management plans, this volume shows that wildlife policies are as much - or more - about human needs, priorities, and profit as they are about preservation. Challenging established concepts including ecological integrity, adaptive management, sport hunting as conservation, and the flawed belief that wildlife is a renewable resource, the author compels us to recognize animals as sentient individuals and as integral components of complex ecological systems.

A passionate critique of contemporary wildlife policy, *The Subjugation of Canadian Wildlife* calls for belief-change as the best hope for an ecologically healthy, wildlife-rich Canada.

McGill-Queen's Rural, Wildland, And Resource Studies
Publisher: McGill-Queen's University Press ISBN: 9780773553163
Available at Indigo

Wild Safe Holiday Season

A sampling of our social media wild safe tips series
short, to point, content rich, attention grabber



Holiday lights brighten our homes, but they can create problems for nocturnal wildlife

Excessive or bright lighting can:

- ✗ Disrupt feeding and hunting
- ✗ Cause temporary blindness in animals with rod-based night vision
- ✗ Increase predation risks

Tips for wildlife-friendly lighting:

- ✦ Choose warm-coloured LEDs (amber/red)
- ✦ Use low-intensity lighting
- ✦ Put outdoor lights on timers (off by 10-11 p.m.)
- ✦ Keep trees and shrubs dark for wildlife refuge

Let's light up the season responsibly. ❤️

✦ Share this post to help protect nocturnal wildlife!

Fireworks may be a tradition but they're harmful to animals, pets, and the environment

They cause:

- 🚨 Loud noises that trigger fear and panic
- 🐾 Stress in dogs, cats, and horses
- 🌿 Chemical and metal debris that pollutes habitats
- 🔥 Fire hazards in dry conditions

Wildlife-safe alternatives:

- 🔥 Backyard firepit gatherings
- 📺 Drone light shows
- ✦ Laser-based light displays
- 🏮 Glowing lanterns

Let's choose celebrations that are safe for everyone – wildlife included.

✦ Share this post to encourage low-impact holiday celebrations!





Bragg Creek Area Structure Plan

Last Call to Share Your Views and shape Bragg Creek's future

Protecting what makes Bragg Creek area so special

The Provincial Government is targeting communities, including Bragg Creek, to become tourist hubs. The Calgary Regional Board is targeting our area as a “growth node”. Regional cautionary tales clearly show us that the land (water, ecosystems, wildlife, forests) cannot be all things to all people all of the time. The question then is: how can we protect what makes our area special for the proverbial seven generations? To that end, BCW believe the ASP should, at a minimum, include:

- A **“Natural Asset Management Plan”** (NAMP) that will align Rocky View County's corporate asset management process in support of our natural features.
- A comprehensive **“Management Plan”** or **“Road Map”** mirroring the NAMP, which would bring together approaches and policies supporting human activities, such as tourism, transportation, and development by being nature-first (i.e. regenerative)

The RVC DRAFT Area Structure Plan (ASP) for Bragg Creek is now open for final feedback.

Are you concerned about Bragg Creek and what it may become or lose? This is your last chance to formally influence the decisions being made about land use and design - the plan that will affect our wild spaces, wildlife, local character and sense of community.

How to share your views

Review the Draft ASP and Draft Design Control Plan, as well as the technical studies, before commenting.

- Consider our initial feedback on the technical studies
- Consider our in-depth Bragg Creek Wild review of the ASP and design control - Coming Soon
- Complete the Phase 2 Engagement online survey - by January 19th, 2026

For more visit our website [Link](#)

Keeping Our Skies Dark

All lives, even human lives, rely on the cyclical rhythm of Earth's days and nights.

We can reduce night-sky glow by keeping outdoor lights off at night, using timers, reducing the use of Christmas lights, and using low-intensity lights. All small steps matter in support our ecosystem.

“The natural night is part of Earth’s heritage, as vital as forests, oceans, and wildlife.” DarkSky International



Loose wires, ribbons, tinsel, and netting might look festive but they pose serious risks for birds, squirrels, and other wildlife. These materials can entangle animals, cause injury, or lead to death.

Safer decorating ideas

- 🌿 choose natural, biodegradable materials
- 🏠 use cord-free outdoor decorations
- 🌲 bring lights indoors to create festive window displays

Let's make our holiday season joyful and safe for the animals who share our community.

👉 **share with a neighbour who decorates early!**



🌲 ✨ Holiday decorating season is here – let's keep it wild-safe!

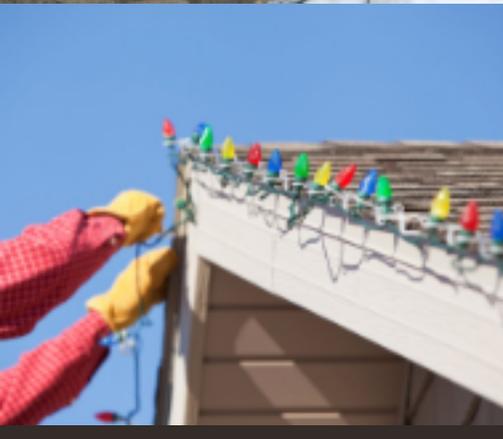
Wildlife naturally explores around trees, and low-hanging lights or garlands can get tangled in antlers. This can cause panic, injury, and dangerous situations for both wildlife and people.

How to decorate safely:

- ✓ Avoid hanging lights on trees or across open spaces
 - Keep lights at least 3 meters off the ground
 - Take decorations down as soon as the season ends
 - Encourage neighbours to decorate wildlife-friendly, too

Let's celebrate beautifully while protecting our wildlife. ❤️

👉 Share this post to spread awareness!





HOW YOU CAN HELP

Follow us on our [social media](#)

Become a member - [it's Free](#)

Encourage others to become members

Consider becoming a volunteer

Support our efforts through [a donation](#)

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