



Date: September 2, 2026

Subject: Bear conflicts from unsecured garbage and attractants

To: All residents, businesses, and contractors in Gallatin, and Madison Counties.

From: Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks, Region 3

Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks staff are seeing an increased number of bear conflicts within Bozeman City limits, Big Sky, and surrounding areas. We are requesting all residents, businesses, and contractors secure garbage and other attractants (e.g. garbage, bird seed, pet food, barbeque grills, coolers, etc.). This action is necessary to correct current and chronic problems bears becoming food conditioned and habituated. Bears that are accustomed to finding food in neighborhoods pose human safety risks and can cause property damage. Please help us eliminate the need to relocate or euthanize bears.

All garbage should be secured in certified bear-resistant containers or in a secure building/enclosure. For many, this can be accomplished by simply storing garbage cans in a garage. Only place garbage cans outside on pick-up day and return the cans to the garage after they have been emptied. In construction areas, food trash should be removed daily and not discarded in on-site dumpsters.

For those that do not have a garage or storage facility, there are several options:

- 1) Construct a building or fenced compound with a roof
- 2) Use a metal storage box, such as a jobsite box with lock
- 3) Consolidate with neighbors
- 4) Request a bear-resistant metal dumpster or garbage can from your garbage company

Residents can help reduce conflicts with bears by securing other common attractants:

- Store bird feeders inside from March until December when bears are active.
- Pick up fruit that has fallen from fruit trees.
- Secure chickens and other small livestock with electric fencing.

By keeping attractants secured, you're helping make your community safer and keeping wildlife wild. We appreciate your help!

Purposely or knowingly providing attractants to game animals can result in misdemeanor criminal prosecution in addition to the lethal removal of habituated animals.