

BLACK BEAR MANAGEMENT

2014 Annual Report



Photo: Redwood National Park

INTRODUCTION

This report summarizes black bear management activities that occurred within Redwood National and State Parks (RNSP or “parks”) during 2014. The report also summarizes all important bear observations and incidents, bear-related education efforts, funding, known mortalities, and future priorities for black bear management within RNSP.

BEAR OBSERVATIONS AND INCIDENTS

Wildlife Observation Data

There were 164 observations, totaling 228 black bears, reported on RNSP wildlife observation cards, bear observation logs, or directly to wildlife staff in 2014; twice the number of bear observations, and greater than twice the number of bears, reported in 2013. However, the number of bears reported reflects, in some cases, repeated observations of the same bear, or bears (i.e., when a bear was persistently in an area with high visibility by humans). In an attempt to gain the best estimate of the number of bears observed in the parks in 2014, the reports were evaluated relative to the timing and location of observations along with any descriptive information provided (e.g., estimated weight or size and color). Table 1 provides information on reported and estimated actual numbers of bears in certain locations within RNSP.

Table 1. Locations in RNSP with repeated observations of the same bear or bears.

Location	Number of Bear Observations Reported	Estimated Maximum Number of Bears	Comment
Mill Creek Campground	18	2	Nuisance bear and one other
Lower Bald Hills Road (to Whiskey 40)	38	9	Up to 5 different bears observed near Lady Bird Johnson Grove and Redwood Creek Trailhead; 4 near Whiskey 40
Gold Bluffs Beach Staff Housing	10	4	One sow with 2 cubs and 1 other adult
Bald Hills Prairies	41	18-20	~ 2/3 reported from Coyote Creek Basin/ Lyons Ranch

Based on the above information, along with bear reports from other locations throughout the parks, we estimate (roughly) that 70-80 individual bears may have been observed by visitors and staff in 2014.

The majority of observations were of single bears, however, 2 bears were observed together 19 times, 3 bears were reported together 18 times and there was 1 report of 4 bears in a group. The groups of 3 and 4 were sows with cubs. At least 1 bear was reported in every month of the year; most of the reports (62%) were from May, June and July followed by August and September (22%; Fig. 1).

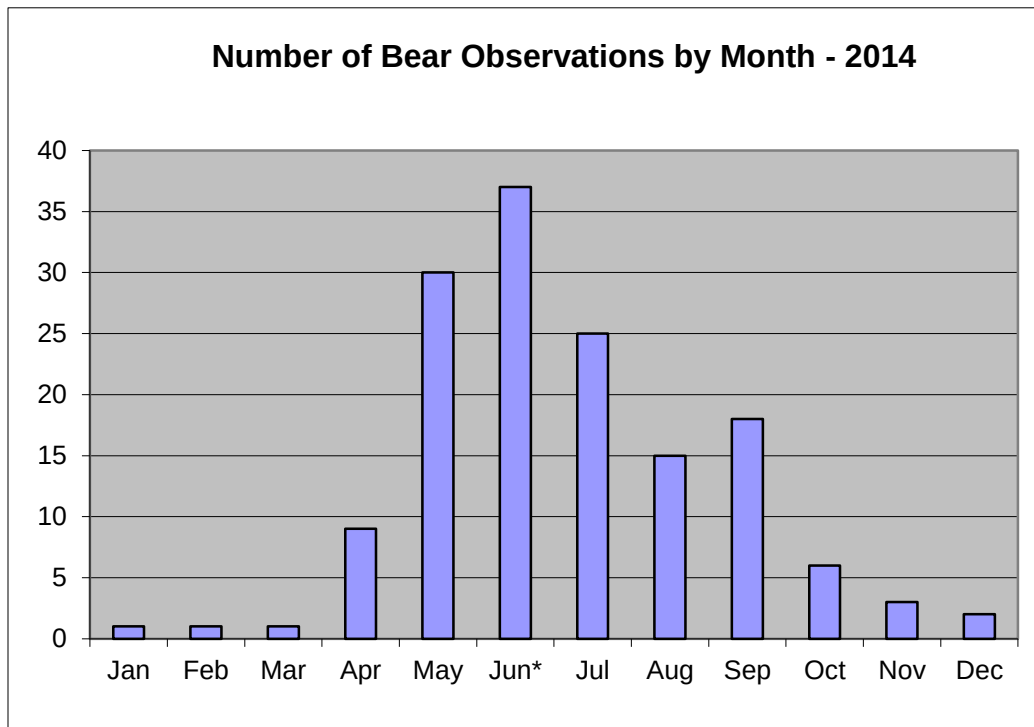


Figure 1. Number of bear observations reported on RNSP wildlife observation cards and by park employees, and month that the observations occurred, during 2014.

***Not including repeated observations of the nuisance bear in Mill Creek Campground.**

All but 1 observation were of bears within the parks. The vast majority of reports (94%) were of bears south of the Klamath River (see map at end).

Approximately half of all reports (54%) were of bears crossing a road or near a road or parking lot. Thirty-five percent of observations were in “back-country” areas including along trails, along the Redwood Creek gravel bar, or in prairies away from roads. Overall, 22% of observations were of bears in prairies (some seen from vehicles). There were numerous reports of up to 4 bears (a sow and 2 cubs plus one other adult), that frequented the area around the Gold Bluffs Beach entrance kiosk and staff housing. There was a report of one bear near Jedediah Smith Redwoods State Park campground, and 2 bears were reported in the Mill Creek Campground, including one bear reported multiple times that ended up becoming a nuisance (see below). Again this year, a bear was reported on the east side of the ephemeral wetland across Highway 101 from the Kuchel Visitor Center. There was one report of a bear on Gold Bluffs Beach north of Ossagon (see Fig. 2 at the end of this document). There were no further observations worthy of note in 2014.

Incidents

There was one major bear incident in RNSP in 2014, at the Mill Creek Campground in Del Norte Coast Redwoods State Park. What follows is from the *Mill Creek Campground Bear Dossier* (RNSP file document).

On June 7, a seasonal interpreter in the campground was stopped by “agitated” visitors who informed her that a young bear was under their camper trailer and would not leave. The employee went to the campsite in question and found a young bear trapped under a pop-up camper that was surrounded by the site occupants and other visitors. The small bear had gotten into a trash bag that was tied to the camper. The occupants believed the bear wasn't afraid of people and were concerned that a mother bear was around. The employee observed that the bear was “agitated” and there was no evidence of a mother bear being in the vicinity. The employee was eventually able to coax the bear out from under the trailer and up a tree. The visitors then cleaned up their site and put all food and smelly items in the bear locker, including food that was inside the pop-up. After numerous attempts to radio for help Norcom picked up the employee’s transmission and notified park law enforcement (LE). In the meantime, 2 maintenance workers- one with supposed experience with hazing bears- and the interpreter “steered” the bear out of the campground. It is uncertain whether or not an LE ranger showed up at the campground on this day. It was the weekend and no one from the Fish and Wildlife Branch was contacted. Wildlife staff did not learn about the incident until the following Monday, June 9.

An RNSP wildlife biologist met NPS and CSP LE rangers, and a state wildlife warden in the campground on June 9. The small bear had come back that morning and entered a campsite in the north loop of the campground. It was hazed by an LE ranger with paintballs and was not seen for the remainder of the day. One of the rangers said that a young girl in the campsite was tapped on the head by the bear and during the previous weekend it had eaten food off a plate in another campsite. There was evidence that this bear had been in the campground for many days prior to the incident being reported to any park staff. We decided to bring up the bear live trap and haze the bear or euthanize it. Campers in the north loop were asked to relocate to the south loop and the north loop was closed. The culvert trap was set up on an abandoned road on the southwest corner of the north loop between sites 108 and 109.

There was conflicting information regarding the nature of the bear’s contact (or not) with the young girl (whose family had departed the campground) among kiosk staff, interpreters, and Camp Hosts. Due to the conflicting accounts, the course of action decided upon was to trap, sedate, ear tag, etc., the bear then let it go in hopes it would decide “enough already” and leave the campground. Despite assertions that the bear had been stealing food and trash from campsites since at least May 31, no entries were made in the entrance station’s Black Bear Observation log that alluded to bad behavior except what was described on June 7.

On June 10, the bear was trapped and sedated by late afternoon. The bear, estimated by sight to be around 40 lbs, weighed 24 lbs. It seemed to be in decent physical condition. The bear was ear-tagged with a plastic orange tag in one ear and a silver metal tag in the other. The bear was released at 2100 hrs; it wandered down the road westward, away from the campground and was observed eating vegetation. The next day the little bear was on the Mill Creek access road just west of the campground, feeding on roadside

vegetation. Biological technicians hazed it by shooting paintballs around it (versus trying to hit it) and it ran away from the road.

On June 12 a meeting was held at the campground with fee collectors, interpreters, campground maintenance staff, law enforcement, and natural resource staff. During the meeting (held near the entrance station) vehicles were slowing down or stopping to look at the bear which was on the side of the road. No one attempted to feed it. Prior to the start of the meeting the biologist and an LE ranger walked up to it and it fled down slope into the trees, but eventually came back up to the road and walked up to one of the parked government vehicles. An LE ranger sprayed it with bear spray while waving his arms and yelling. It ran down slope into the trees where it sat down in the shrubs.

On June 13 the bear was observed by wildlife staff at 0815 hrs. The bear spent most of its time between Highway 101 and the entrance station, moving westward; it was feeding on dandelions and other vegetation. From this day until June 19 the bear stayed along the road west of the entrance station, feeding on dandelions and ignoring people as they stopped to look or take pictures; it fled if there were any movements outside of a vehicle. However, on June 15 as wildlife staff was watching the bear, a vehicle traveling toward the entrance station stopped and a man tossed food out the car window at the bear. He then got out of the vehicle and picked up the food (a large soft pretzel), and threw it closer to bear before getting back in his vehicle and driving on. Entrance station staff were notified, law enforcement was called and the person was cited for violating park regulations that prohibit the feeding of wildlife.

By June 19 the bear was back in the campground and observed near a picnic table; it was hazed with a paintball gun and air horn. Inspection of the campsite revealed a greasy food container, an empty 12 pack of beer, and cardboard products inside a brown paper bag that the bear had gotten into. This debris was left in the unoccupied campsite despite the fact a bear-proof garbage container was located close to this site. Over the next hour, the bear was hazed up one tree after another as it was chased or shot with paintballs. In the next few days hazing proved to be futile and ultimately it was determined the bear's behavior posed a "threat to public safety" and the decision was made to destroy it. The bear was killed by a gunshot from an LE ranger in the campground on June 26.

For at least 19 days, and probably closer to a month, this small bear (believed to be a yearling versus an abandoned cub of the year) was in the campground being fed, "protected" by well meaning- albeit misguided- citizens, and getting into available food and trash. In the end it was killed to avoid a serious human injury. All of this took place despite bear-proof food storage lockers in every campsite, readily available bear-proof trash and recycling receptacles placed throughout the campground, signs warning visitors not to feed bears and other wildlife, information given out at the entrance station regarding proper food storage and trash containment, and obtaining visitors' signatures on the back of the entrance receipt stating they understood they would be fined if in violation of regulations requiring proper food/trash handling and prohibiting the feeding of park wildlife.

Confrontations

There were confrontations between 2 or more bears and visitors at the Lady Bird Johnson (LBJ) Grove and Redwood Creek Trailhead parking lots, and along Bald Hills Road in the vicinity of LBJ Grove. From April to early August there were consistent reports of bear nuisance; on more than one occasion a bear put its paws on a vehicle and begged “like a dog” for food. This bear was hazed repeatedly by LE rangers and wildlife staff. A dossier was kept.

On June 15, an LE ranger notified an RNSP biological technician that a young bear walking along Bald Hills Road below Lady Bird Johnson Grove was: 1) not afraid of a vehicle or other horn blast; 2) skinny looking and covered with vegetation vines (not grooming properly); and 3) appeared in a “drug-like” state. In discussion with the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) wildlife biologist it was decided to monitor the situation.

On June 23, the bear was pepper-sprayed and chased from the LBJ parking lot by LE rangers. The bear was sniffing around cars, had gotten a food reward, and was not acting afraid. Around the same time a lone backpacker on Redwood Creek Trail said she turned around and headed back to the parking lot because a bear was following her near an open prairie.

In further consultation with the CDFW biologist after he received additional reports of the bear along Bald Hills Road that was not afraid of people or cars, it was suggested the best strategy was to remove any food source and close LBJ parking lot, however, closing the parking lot was not possible. Instead, warning and “Do Not Feed Wildlife” signs were posted at Redwood Creek Trailhead and the parking lot bathroom, LBJ Grove trailhead, and at the LBJ bathroom. An RNSP work crew traveling on Bald Hills Road took a video of the bear, which was in “bad condition” and “sickly looking”. The bear did not hesitate to walk up to the vehicle.

This bear was repeatedly hazed with paintballs, pepper-sprayed and chased by park staff over many days. Staff also picked up fresh trash along Bald Hills Road near the location where the bear was sprayed. Trash included a Vienna sausage can, an Evergoods Louisville Hot Link wrapper, a few beer cans with teeth marks, and a Mentos candy box. On June 30, it was reported to staff that the bear was fed a loaf of bread. The poor condition of the bear caused concerned citizens to want to “help” it by feeding it. All bear activity in these 2 areas ceased around the first part of August, indicating that hazing efforts were successful or the bear succumbed to its poor condition.

There was one report of a bear that would not be scared off at the Flint Ridge backcountry camp.

MEETINGS

The Bear Panel convened twice in 2014. Meeting notes are attached to this report as Appendix A.

EDUCATION

Bear safety and reporting orientations were given to seasonal RNSP interpreters. A bear information sheet was provided to Camp Hosts in the wake of the bear incident in Mill Creek Campground. Numerous informal contacts were made with RNSP personnel regarding bear-garbage and bear-human issues. The RNSP Interpretation staff also informed visitors about basic bear safety during campfire programs and at the beginning of various interpretive programs and hikes at RNSP.

FUNDING

Oil spill mitigation funds were made available to replace worn out animal-proof equipment. Eight *Backpackers' Cache* bear-resistant canisters for loan to campers on Redwood Creek were purchased in 2014.

MORTALITIES AND HARVEST

There were 2 known bear mortalities within RNSP in 2014, both due to vehicle collisions on the west end of Howland Hill Road. The California Department of Fish and Wildlife's *2013 California Black Bear Take Report* (2015) indicated 1,078 bears taken in the state in that year. This number represents a 45% decrease in the number of bears taken compared to previous years, due primarily to the prohibition of bear hunting with dogs. Humboldt County ranked 5th for numbers of bears taken, or 6% of all bears harvested in the state (CDFW 2015).

PRIORITIES

- ❖ Meet with seasonal and permanent staff working in campgrounds and visitor centers and present information on bear safety and the importance of proper food storage.
- ❖ Continue use of the RNSP Intranet (RNSP News and InsideREDW) for effective communication regarding bear management issues.
- ❖ Develop a communication plan to relay bear information to California State Parks staff that do not have access to RNSP News and InsideREDW.
- ❖ Work with California State Parks and California Department of Fish and Wildlife on an MOU for bear management on state land within RNSP.
- ❖ Install new picnic table signs and stickers in all areas still in need.
- ❖ Encourage use of the "Bear Interaction Report" form when a bear problem arises.

Prepared by: Kristin Schmidt, Wildlife Biologist

Reference: California Department of Fish and Wildlife. 2015. 2013 California black bear take report. Natural Resources Agency, 12 pp.

Appendix A. Bear Panel Meeting Notes

SPRING 2014 BEAR PANEL MEETING NOTES

April 24, 2014

Present: Samantha Cowan, Terry Hines, Ben Littlefield, Kristin Schmidt, Jim Wheeler

Agenda:

- 1) Discuss development of an information sheet for new employees, for Admin new employee packets, that would include safety information, reporting observations, etc. (from last meeting).
- 2) Ranger orientation for seasonal campground staff regarding the food storage message (from last meeting).
- 3) Status of "less lethal" 12 gauge rounds?
- 4) Signage
- 5) Pepper Spray- do we need to do anything on this?
- 6) Other

Employee Information

Kristin supplied Samantha with the large mammal safety write-ups designed for the revamped Redwood National and State Parks public website. Samantha edited the write ups for appropriate use in housing packets to be given to park tenants.

An action item from the fall bear panel meeting was:

“Action: Develop a form (2 pages max.) for Admin (both CSP and NPS) to provide to new employees that includes information about what to do when in bear country, safety information (bears, lions, and elk), and how to report relevant wildlife information. Have employees sign that they have read it and understand it. Also probably should resurrect orientation for new LE rangers. Ensure seasonal employees are trained on how to operate trash cans, etc.”

New Action: Kristin will take Samantha’s document and add reporting instructions and contact information for new employees when they observe a large mammal and (especially) a large mammal incident. This will be done soon (in time for new employees this year). This information also will be available to RPA staff in visitor centers. Everyone signs off that they have read and comprehend the information.

Ranger Orientation

No LE rangers were in attendance. Kristin will follow up with Dave Keltner on this item. Kristin has drafted information regarding bears, lions, and elk for Camp Hosts and will finalize it soon.

Less Lethal Ammunition

This mainly pertains to rubber bullets, bean bags, etc. for use in hazing. Mark Andrews has been approved to purchase these materials. There is a green ammunition stock in the north district and a weapon has been designated for its use. Note: later in the day Terry and Kristin spoke with Mark Andrews and confirmed that a shotgun at SOC would also be designated for less lethal/green ammunition.

Signage

The sign subcommittee met in January and decided to revamp the picnic table sign with actual bear and Steller's jay photos. The bear photo comes from the CDFW "Keep Me Wild" poster and the jay from NPS photo archives. Ben is currently working on this sign revision and it will be circulated to the sign subgroup for review when completed. We will need to come up with funds to pay for these signs, Kristin will send Ben Mary Read's cost estimates for the last batch of metal signs.

Mike Goss had a stash of the "hand" image/direction stickers for opening bear proof trash cans. He replaced stickers where needed on all trash/recycling cans in the national park and in Mill Creek Campground (thank you Mike!). Someone still needs to go around and replace these stickers in Jed Smith Campground and Prairie Creek/Gold Bluffs Beach. We need to find someone in State Parks who can do this. Stickers need to be adhered in a specific way or they won't last; most of the stickers in Mill Creek were attached improperly and were peeling off. We will ask Mike if he would be willing to instruct either CSP staff or an NPS volunteer in the proper application method.

The sign subcommittee also discussed stickers for food lockers throughout the parks. It was decided that one sign/sticker would be developed and used on all food lockers regardless of whether they are in front country, back country, horse camps, etc. Ben has drafted a sign the size of a bumper sticker that reads "KEEP BEARS OUT STORE ALL FOOD INSIDE LOCKER". This will go on top of the food locker along with the "Keep it Crumb Clean" logo. The old bear paw "Please pack out all trash" sticker will be remade for the bear canisters loaned out at Kuchel VC, except "please" is being removed from the message.

We discussed the need for SOC wildlife staff to have access to, or possess our own, bulletin board keys. When checking on a report of a bear in Flint Ridge Campground earlier this week the keys we borrowed for the bulletin case there didn't work. We also noted the plexiglass on the case was very dirty and needs cleaning. Jim said he would discuss this with Jeff Denny and Carrie Wells.

Pepper Spray

For the national park, we decided to address employees' needs/desires to carry pepper spray on a case by case basis. Currently LE and F&W branch staff are the only ones trained/ authorized to carry pepper spray, with a few exceptions. The main use for pepper spray is aversive conditioning as we don't have a real need to use it for bear activity in general. Ben, as Safety Officer, will take this item to the management team for assistance with how to proceed with issuing pepper spray on a park-wide basis. The BLM has good information on training/use of pepper spray. We also agreed it was time for another refresher on its use with F&W and LE staff.

Other (Bear Culvert Trap)

The bear trap needs to be sandblasted, painted, and have a new axle. Terry will try to find year end funding to pay for supplies. The "sand" (glass bead) for sandblasting is expensive. There may be some at NOC available for use (Ben will check). This would be done in the fall, after visitor season.

FALL 2014 BEAR PANEL MEETING NOTES

November 19, 2014

Present: Terry Hines, Aida Parkinson, Robert Toler, Joel Leachman, Steve Troy, Ben Littlefield, Dave Roemer, Lynn Erickson-Levi, Kristin Schmidt, Jim Wheeler, Kyle Max, Maunda Hagen; Colleen Wendt and Connie Battles (conference phone); Amber Transou, Jay Harris, and Carol Wilson (conference phone)

Agenda:

"New Business"

- 1) Debrief on this year's bear incident in Mill Creek Campground and "problem" bear at Lady Bird Johnson area: what went right, what went wrong, MOU with CDFW re bear management
- 2) Discuss new signs: picnic table, food locker, canister
- 3) Bear proof equipment: inventory, purchases, out-moded recycling containers
- 4) Training for seasonal staff (and LE rangers?): Who does What, Where, When, and How (from Bear Management Guidelines)
- 5) State Parks: Any concerns, issues, etc. to share

"Old Business"

- 6) Share housing unit and new employee information with new panel members
- 7) "Less lethal" ammunition for hazing
- 8) Pepper Spray
- 9) Culvert Trap

Mill Creek Campground Bear

Terry summarized, from the bear's dossier, the series of events associated with this incident, that started with the bear getting garbage in a campsite during the weekend of June 7. The bear was "hazed" out of the campsite by a seasonal interpreter. Fish and Wildlife Branch staff didn't learn

about this until the following Monday, June 9. That Monday Dave Keltner, Rob Toler, Brett Silver, and Paul Weldon (CDFW warden) went to the campground and hazed the bear with paintballs. The story at that time was that the bear had “tapped” a child on the head, and had gotten food at another site. However, the family in question had left the campground by Monday and these reports could not be verified.

The decision was made to set the culvert trap to haze (or euthanize) the bear. On Tuesday June 10, the bear was captured, sedated, weighed, ear-tagged and released on the west side of the north loop which had been cleared of all visitors and closed. The bear weighed roughly 24 lbs and was determined to be a yearling.

The bear stayed out of the campground for about a week, although it was observed along the access road between the entrance kiosk and Hwy 101, feeding on dandelions. On the Sunday following its capture a visitor tried to feed it from his vehicle by throwing food out the window. This was observed by Terry Hines; the man was issued a citation (case still pending). By June 18 the bear was back in the campground and had entered campsites. It was hazed multiple times with paintballs, air horns, etc., by both wildlife staff and law enforcement.

Up to this time the bear wasn’t considered a public safety bear under CDFW policy. Dave Lancaster, CDFW biologist, was contacted and agreed it could be relocated, by CDFW, 20 miles outside the park on the Six Rivers National Forest. However, before that could happen the bear did become a nuisance and was deemed a public safety issue. On June 26 the bear was killed in the campground by a ranger.

At some point during this incident Dave Roemer spoke with Karen Kovacs (CDFW Sacramento) and she politely reminded Dave that we (NPS) have no authority to trap a bear in state parks, although she was somewhat grateful for our efforts nonetheless.

What can we do to prevent this from happening in the future? Some things were identified including the need to train and instruct camp hosts, fee collectors, and others that could be involved in a response. This is especially important in Mill Creek where communication via radio or cell phone is difficult or non-existent. We now recognize that Park Aides (fee collectors) in CSP have a different training session than our seasonal interpreter staff so we need to coordinate with CSP LE rangers and be available to attend their training. Campground maintenance workers and NPS fee collectors also need training; until this incident happened it was not known that employees in the kiosk at Mill Creek do not start work until after the seasonal interpreters and do not have the benefit of seasonal interpreter training.

Robert Toler suggested that we create a flow chart or checklist to keep in the kiosk that guides employees as to how to assess a bear situation and what to do. For example, is the bear an immediate threat to public safety? Is it a nuisance that may become a problem bear? Or is it eating daisies on the side of the road, minding its own business? Then, depending on the assessment- who gets contacted? Law enforcement or wildlife staff? Robert shared a one page key to help wildlife, law enforcement, or other personnel determine the appropriate response, and who should be contacted. It is somewhat similar to our Mountain Lion Observation form, very easy to use.

Rob stated that it's important to expedite the response so that rangers in the north district aren't pulled off duty elsewhere for long periods of time, as happened this year in Mill Creek.

Karen Kovacs indicated to Dave Roemer that an MOU should be developed between Redwood National Park and CDFW that allows us to work with the state to more effectively manage bears on state land, thus, avoiding bear "fatigue" that ultimately ends with the bear being destroyed regardless of the effort put in to save it. Karen shared some examples of MOUs/Agreements that they have with other partners we might be able to use. Jay's been working with Marc Kenyon, the bear management coordinator in Sacramento, and thinks the state Wildlife Branch will decide what the content of our MOU will be. CDFW is changing its bear policies at the Wildlife Branch level. (Marc.Kenyon@wildlife.ca.gov 916-212-3233)

Lady Bird Johnson Bear

For at least 6 weeks, from mid-May to late June, there was a young bear hanging out near the LBJ parking lot and nearby along Bald Hills Road. The bear acted like a "Yosemite bear", going up to cars, putting its paws on cars, and begging for food, which it received probably on numerous occasions. It was obviously not afraid of people. The bear was hazed with paintballs and pepper spray; it was determined there wasn't really anywhere suitable to set a trap. In this case the hazing seemed to have worked as the bear ran away when Kyle and Terry or the rangers approached it. During this time a mountain of trash dumped in the Redwood Creek Trailhead parking lot didn't help; the bear was seen there as well as on the Redwood Creek Trail. Eventually the bear went unseen, apparently keeping away for longer periods of time, until it was no longer seen at all.

Signs

Ben shared the original "new" picnic table sign that the sign subcommittee decided wasn't acceptable. The stock has run out so it was revamped; basically the same layout but with photos of a bear and jay versus drawings, and reduced messaging and larger font. The bear photo is the State's "Keep Me Wild" bear. They gladly allowed us to use the photo and support our effort.

We agreed to remove "air tight containers" from the sign as an option for where to store food. "Air tight" could mean almost anything to un-informed people (think air tight Ziploc baggie) and this could make it more difficult for rangers to cite people for improper food storage. Ben worked with Michael Glore, who designed the original "new" sign, to fine tune it and they have agreed on the content.

Kristin shared the new food locker "bumper sticker" directing people to store food inside the lockers, which will be placed on all lockers along with the "Keep it Crumb Clean" circular sticker. We also decided to remove the "Please" from the Pack it Out stickers that go on the backpacking canisters.

Bear-Proof Equipment

Kristin summarized the can situation and our inventory stock. Thanks to Mike Goss in the north, and Kyle and Heather Brown in the south, we now know what types of bins are where in the entire national park and Mill Creek Campground. It's come to Kristin's attention that some recycling bins have round holes in the top for depositing a 12 oz. can or bottle (maximum size). As a result, larger recyclables are being piled outside the cans for pick up. There are quite a few

of these scattered about the park and there are 8 new ones at NOC. Lynn will look into how they are put together and see if we can retrofit the tops with larger openings. It also was suggested that maybe Bear Saver would take the 8 back and send us the kind we need. Would cost us something in freight but if they're not usable it may be worth it.

The double, dual recycling/trash bins are a problem for maintenance workers when being emptied. The heavy back of the bin swings up and needs to be propped open so the bags can be taken out. This is difficult for smaller people and there have been a couple known instances of the backs slipping and coming down on people's heads. CSP fabricated a little device to help keep the backs propped, but it isn't safe and backs have come down with the device in use. Pete Monahan is going to address this for state parks. There are lifting and safety issues for both state and NPS employees.

Unfortunately, since this hasn't been known until now, the double bins have been the ones purchased; there are 7 new ones at NOC and new bins were installed recently in some places. In the future we will purchase single barrels and line them up next to each other. Also, there seems to be a need for additional recycling containers in some locations- recycling is popular!

A small sub-group of the panel was formed to address the bear-proof equipment issue. This includes Kristin, Terry, Lynn, Ben, and....[someone from state parks?]. This is timely because CSP just received funding for bear-proofing Grizzly Creek and Humboldt Redwoods State Parks. Kristin et al. plan to go out and look at what it would take to replace double bins with singles.

Kristin shared that \$56,396.84 have been spent on bear proof equipment from 2010 through 2013.

Training

Rob Toler mentioned Bill Stiver from Great Smokies has a checklist and training guide for using pepper spray and projectiles. He sent these out to the panel. Terry suggested we get with Law Enforcement to see what they've got in their arsenal. Mark Andrews will set NPS Wildlife staff up with a firearm that can handle the less-lethal ammunition.

As stated above (see Mill Creek Campground Bear above) we need to get fee collectors trained in bear response and in the use of Rob's assessment form. Interpreters, fee collectors and others could use this form in the same way we use the lion form, except that it wouldn't apply to all bear observations as does the lion form, but only for bears that don't immediately run off when encountered. Campground maintenance workers also should be included in the training. It was remarked the form could be used for tailgate safety sessions.

State Parks

Jay will be working on a bear management plan for Humboldt Redwoods and Grizzly Creek Redwoods State Parks.

Staff wants to put the Crumb Clean round stickers on food lockers along with the Keep Bears Out bumper sticker, all agreed. The full Crumb Clean poster with the 2 kids cleaning the picnic table is still useful for bulletin boards.

"Old Business"

Housing unit and new employee information

These 2 documents have been shared with Colleen Wendt, who took the Admin slot on the panel when Samantha Cowan left.

"Less lethal" ammunition

Discussed above.

Pepper Spray

Nothing changed on the national park side of things; only trained wildlife staff and LE rangers currently may use this. No other employees involved in hazing are allowed to use pepper spray even if it's their own personal property.

State Parks staff do not use pepper spray but do use pepper balls, a form of less lethal ammunition that can be fired from a paintball gun.

Culvert Trap

Still rusting, the paint's peeling and it can't be sandblasted because it's toxic. Still can be used but it would be good to fix it up and repaint it.