

**For immediate release
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Regional District Partners With Wildsafebc To Promote Community Awareness And Education For A Third Year

WildSafeBC SLRD Coordinator will deliver community outreach and education to aid in reducing conflict with local wildlife

Pemberton, BC - For the third year in a row, the Squamish-Lillooet Regional District (SLRD) is working with WildSafeBC to promote wildlife awareness in communities throughout the region.

Building upon the successes of the past two years, Devin Pawluk, WildSafeBC SLRD Coordinator, will deliver outreach and education programs with a goal of preventing conflicts with wildlife and providing residents with information to keep themselves, and wildlife, safe. "I am excited to be back this season and I am looking forward to continuing to deliver the program throughout the SLRD," said Pawluk.

Through to November, Pawluk will deliver WildSafeBC program initiatives, including Bear Spray workshops, Wildlife Awareness and Safety presentations, social media and door-to-door outreach, display booths at local events, garbage tagging, and WildSafeBC Ranger presentations for children. New this year, the program has secured funds to pilot an electric fencing cost-share program.

"We are pleased to be able to bring back the WildSafe program," said SLRD Board Chair, Jen Ford. "Last year, with the pandemic, we had to scale back a lot of the in-person engagement. So much of this work is about relationships, and that takes time. We are gaining some great momentum throughout the region, in our collective efforts to reduce conflicts between people and wildlife, and it's great to be back at it, and to be able to do more of this work in person."

Based on WildSafeBC's Wildlife Alert Reporting Program (WARP) "Attractants such as garbage, compost, and recycling are the leading cause of human-bear conflicts in the SLRD." "Bears create food maps in their minds and will return to areas where they have found food before. As bears emerge from their winter dens, they are hungry and seeking food. It is important that bears feed on natural springtime vegetation and not our food waste, which is an easy high calorie food reward for them." said Pawluk.

To prevent bears from accessing residential waste, residents are reminded to store waste in a Wildlife Resistant Container or Enclosure located on the property that is suitable for the amount of refuse generated and kept clean, secure and good working condition. Only place Wildlife Resistant Containers to the curb on the morning of collection and during collection hours. If residents are supplied with a bear-resistant cart, then please note these are bear-resistant and not bear-proof. It is always preferred to store them indoors. If an indoor location is not available, then carts should be secured to a solid post or other object with chain to prevent them from being dragged away. Always keep them closed and secure using both clips.

WildSafeBC and the SLRD will continue to provide wildlife activity news and tips through social media channels as the season progresses. Follow @WildSafeBCSquamishLillooetRD on Facebook.

Please report wildlife in conflict to the Conservation Officer Service 24/7 at 1-877-952-7277. Residents should also report bear, cougar, coyote, or wolf sightings in any urban area. Reports are uploaded daily to the WildSafeBC Wildlife Alert Reporting Program (WARP: www.wildsafebc.com/warp), which helps the public track sightings in their neighbourhood and be aware of new wildlife reports.

Residents wanting more information about the WildSafeBC SLRD program can contact:

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- 30 -

About the Squamish-Lillooet Regional District

Located in southwestern BC, the Squamish-Lillooet Regional District (SLRD) is a local government federation consisting of four-member municipalities (the District of Lillooet, the District of Squamish, the Village of Pemberton and the Resort Municipality of Whistler) and four unincorporated, rural electoral areas (A, B, C, and D). Headquartered in Pemberton, which is the approximate geographic centre of the region, the SLRD delivers a wide range of local, regional and sub-regional services to approximately 42,665 residents (2016 Census).

For more information, please contact:

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