

DOW Insider

BE BEAR AWARE WHEN CAMPING

The Colorado Division of Wildlife (DOW) is urging campers to keep their campsites clean to avoid attracting wildlife.

Every year bears go into campgrounds because food is often available around tents, camp trailers and in dumpsters. Problems result when bears and humans come into close contact.

"Bears are built to eat and their sense of smell is incredible," explained Mark Caddy, district wildlife manager for the DOW in the Telluride area. "They can smell food from miles away and they'll travel to find it."

Bears that become habituated to human food often must be euthanized.

"Bears get into trouble because humans leave food around," Caddy said.

Here are a few tips for campers in bear country:

- Keep a clean site and clean up thoroughly after every meal;
- After grilling meat allow the fire to continue until the scraps and grease are burned completely off the grill.
- When you are not eating or preparing a meal, store food inside locked vehicles;
- Do not eat in your tent or keep food in your tent;
- Store scraps and garbage in a secure container or vehicle;
- In the back country, place food well away from the camp site and hang food in trees.
- If you see a bear in a campground, report to the local DOW office as soon as possible.
- If you come in close contact with a bear, talk to it firmly and make yourself look as large as possible. Back away slowly, don't run.
- Speak to children and others who might be unfamiliar with bears.

"Bears are not naturally aggressive toward humans, they are actually very shy creatures," Caddy said, "However, bears are on a mission to eat as much as they can. We need the public's help when it comes to making sure they don't become accustomed to human food."

The Colorado Division of Wildlife is the state agency responsible for managing wildlife and its habitat, as well as providing wildlife related recreation. The Division is funded through hunting and fishing license fees, federal grants and Colorado Lottery proceeds through Great Outdoors Colorado.

For more information about Division of Wildlife go to: <http://wildlife.state.co.us>.