



## COLORADO STATE PARKS STEWARDSHIP PRESCRIPTION



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Parks Affected: All

# Wildlife and Trash Management



### **INTENT-** *What do I need to know about wildlife trash management?*

The intent of this management prescription is to provide park managers with:

- **Information necessary to establish a comprehensive wildlife trash management plan.**
- **Specific information regarding wildlife-proof trashcan and dumpster options, including relevant contact information.**



Courtesy of Big Bend National Park

### **ISSUE-** *Why is wildlife trash management important?*

Trash collection and storage methods can have a profound, and potentially adverse, effect on wildlife living in the vicinity of human activity. Keeping wildlife out of trash and away from areas inhabited by humans is a serious problem in many of our state parks. Although most human visitation is transient in nature, wildlife living within the parks are permanent residents and must survive in a

habitat influenced and manipulated by humans. Due to high visitation rates at state parks, particularly during the summer months, large amounts of trash accumulate and must be disposed of on a regular basis.

### Garbage Raiding puts Wildlife and Park Visitors at Risk

Aside from being a general nuisance to park personnel who must clean up after a trashcan or dumpster has been raided, garbage raiding can pose serious problems for both wildlife and park visitors. While bears are the most visible garbage-raiders, many other smaller mammals and birds regularly supplement their diets with human trash.



Courtesy of Yosemite National Park



## A Cycle of Dependency

Many park visitors may be unaware of the problems posed by improper food storage and garbage disposal, or the consequences of their actions on local wildlife. Like most large carnivores, black bears are a highly charismatic and potentially threatening species. Parks that are located in bear habitat need to be particularly careful about keeping bears away from food and garbage. Once a bear discovers an easy source of food, it will continue to return to that same area in search of another easy meal. Eventually, this behavior can lead to a cycle of dependency in which female bears teach their young cubs to eat food found in trashcans and dumpsters instead of their natural diet. Cubs raised in this manner inevitably become “trash bears”, often remaining near human establishments as adults.



Courtesy of McClintock Metal Fabricators

## “A Fed Bear is a Dead Bear”

Aggressive bears pose a serious risk for park visitors and often need to be removed from the area or destroyed. Bears have an exceptionally keen sense of smell, which they use to locate food sources. Wild bears are naturally wary of humans and human scent and will usually avoid areas inhabited by humans. However, food odors and improperly stored garbage will lure hungry bears into campgrounds and picnic areas, greatly increasing the likelihood for human/bear interactions. As bears become habituated to the presence of humans they begin to lose their wariness of humans. Some bears become aggressive toward humans in their search for food. In the case of powerful animals like bears, this is particularly dangerous and could result in human injuries or fatalities.



Courtesy of McClintock Metal Fabricators

## Reduced Health and Life Expectancy

Habituated bears that supplement their diets with, or depend upon, human garbage are generally not as healthy as their wild counterparts. During the summer and fall months, wild bears spend a substantial amount of their time foraging. Bears are opportunists by nature, but their diet primarily consists of berries and acorns (59%), grasses and forbs (28%) and insects and meat (13%). A less healthy diet leads to a reduction in a bear’s total life expectancy. Living in close proximity to humans also makes habituated bears more likely to be killed by poachers or hit by vehicles, the latter being a potential threat to park visitors.



## Small Mammals and Birds also Raid Garbage

Bears pose a special concern to public safety, however, many other small mammals and birds also raid dumpsters and picnic areas looking for food or a free handout. The most common culprits include raccoons, skunks, magpies, crows, jays and various rodents. Although these animals are not as physically threatening as a bear, many small mammals carry the rabies virus and can become aggressive if approached or cornered. In addition to direct olfactory assault from skunks trapped inside trashcans and dumpsters, the sheer abundance of raccoons and skunks, and the amount of trash they can overturn in one evening, make them a major concern at many parks. From a public health perspective, efforts should be made to keep population densities down in areas inhabited by humans by storing food and garbage in wildlife-proof containers and trashcans.



Courtesy of the U.S. Dept. of Agriculture

## A New Approach- “Prevention is Cheaper than Retroactively Trying to Solve Problems”

Although it is generally agreed that garbage-raiding is detrimental to both wildlife and people, a proactive approach to the issue has not yet been mandated for state parks. In spite of the lack of a centralized set of rules and regulations, some of the parks that are experiencing the most trouble have begun to wildlife-proof their trashcans and dumpsters. However, much still remains to be done. By addressing this issue and enacting appropriate solutions, Colorado State Parks can set an example of the need for better stewardship in the public and private sectors throughout the state. This problem is a direct result of human encroachment into wildlife habitat and it is, therefore, our responsibility to seek solutions that are beneficial for the parks and park visitors, but also for the wildlife that involuntarily share their space with us.

## **Stewardship- *What’s the best trash management plan for this park?***

The most appropriate solutions will vary from park to park based on the degree to which wildlife supplement their diets with human trash at each park and, thus, become a threat to humans and to themselves. Therefore, a comprehensive list of trash management options has been compiled to meet these varying needs.

### **Wildlife-Proof Dumpsters:**

- **Use wildlife-proof dumpster designs.** Several companies offer wildlife-proof dumpsters that have been tested and proven to be truly bear-proof. However, not all dumpster servicing companies will service privately-owned dumpsters, so check with your servicing company before purchasing (see also Dumpster Service Providers below).



### **Companies Manufacturing Wildlife-Proof Dumpsters:**

- **Cubic Container Manufacturing** makes truly bear-proof dumpsters and trashcans in a variety of sizes and dumpster designs. These dumpsters can accommodate front-loading and rear-loading dumpster trucks. The cost per dumpster varies depending on the size of the dumpster, the quantity ordered, and the design desired.

Average costs for single units-

2 yard dumpster = \$450

3 yard dumpster = \$550

4 yard dumpster = \$650

A discount is given for bulk orders.

- **Capital Industries, Inc.** also makes truly bear-proof dumpsters and trashcans in a variety of sizes and dumpster designs. These dumpsters can be built to accommodate rear-loading and front-loading dumpster trucks. The cost per dumpster varies depending on the size of the dumpster, the quantity ordered, and the design desired.

Average costs for single units-

1 yard dumpster = \$465

1.5 yard dumpster = \$550

2 yard dumpster = \$615

3 yard dumpster = \$920

4 yard dumpster = \$1125

A discount is given for bulk orders.

There are not many models of truly wildlife-proof dumpsters currently available that are compatible with existing dumpster services. **The following is a list of options provided by some of the dumpster service providers currently servicing state parks:**

### **Dumpster Service Providers:**

- **Robert's Enterprises** provides a wildlife-proof dumpster, known as a Dempsy dumpster, that has been very effective against bears at Crawford, Paonia and Sweitzer Lake State Parks. **Robert's Enterprises has reasonable rates and services all of Delta County.**



- **US Disposal Service** provides wildlife-proof dumpsters that have been effective against bears at Trinidad State Park. The lid design consists of a heavy steel outer lid with a smaller, lighter-weight lid, cut into the center of the heavier lid, that latches shut. The smaller lid is recessed slightly into the larger lid so that the latch lies flush with the larger lid, making it difficult for bears to catch their claws inside it and pull it open or off. A metal bar goes across the entire lid and locks. A set of two wildlife-proof lids, measuring 31 x 44 inches each, costs between \$600- \$700 (plus an optional \$200 installation fee). **US Disposal Service has reasonable rates and can service the entire southern region of the state park system.**
- **BFI** provides wildlife-resistant dumpsters for lease or sale, however the effectiveness of these dumpsters is uncertain. Jefferson County Open Space and Golden Gate State Park have used the second wildlife-proof dumpster design described below and found it to be fairly ineffectual against bears. These dumpsters seem to work well against small mammals and birds, though. BFI currently has two lid designs available. One model consists of two layers of thick plastic with a metal frame around the outer edges, and a bar that goes across the top of the lid and locks. This model is being used primarily in the Aspen and Glenwood areas. The second lid design is similar to US Disposal's lid design, *except* that the smaller lid is not recessed slightly into the larger lid. This model is being used primarily in the Front Range. The cost of one dumpster with the metal wildlife-proof lid is approximately \$650 or either lid can be leased for about \$70/month. **BFI services most areas throughout the state and will also service privately-owned bear-proof dumpster (Mountain areas must buy rear-loading dumpsters, Metro areas can buy either rear-loading or front-loading dumpsters).**
- **Waste Management Company** does not currently provide wildlife-proof dumpsters for their customers. Due to liability issues, they also refuse to service privately owned dumpsters. They will, however, allow lessees to modify their lids in order to make them more wildlife-resistant. **Waste Management Company services most areas of the state; however, prices vary considerably depending upon competition.**



If the dumpster servicing company in your area does not offer wildlife-proof dumpsters, an alternative option is to construct entirely new lids to be placed on top of your current dumpsters or to modify the lids of dumpsters that are currently in use. Before constructing or customizing dumpster lids, be sure to check OSHA standards regarding employee and visitor safety procedures. The following is a list of suggestions that have proven effective against bears and other small mammals and birds throughout the state and elsewhere.

***Effective Modifications and Designs:***

- The lid should be constructed of 14 or 12 gauge steel in order to withstand the weight of a full-size adult male bear. In order to reduce the overall weight, the lid can be divided into two halves. A steel bar should lie across the top of the lid and latch (no lock is necessary as bears can't open latches) on one side so that the lid is securely pressed against the dumpster.
- To make the lid user-friendly for park visitors, two smaller lids can be cut into the heavy lids. These lids should be recessed slightly, so that the top of the latch is flush with the main lid.
- The dumpster should be attached by chains to lock rings on opposite corners in order to prevent the dumpster from being tipped.
- An alternative to the smaller lid within a larger lid option is to construct a maildrop, or dome, lid that fits onto the main lid. The maildrop lid should be welded securely to the main lid and have a spring-loaded hinge on the door to ensure that it closes properly each time (see Appendix A).

If it is not an option to replace the lids, then old lids can be reinforced so that they are more wildlife-resistant. Although neither of the following options are bear-*proof*, they provide a minimal level of protection and are better options than doing nothing at all. For more information, contact Matt Cox, Park Maintenance Supervisor for Jefferson County Open Space (see Contacts at end of prescription):

- **For metal lids**, weld additional sheets of metal onto the lid to increase the durability and strength. Run a strong chain through the lid, welding it into place. The chain should have a hook on the end that hooks through a clasp on the side of the dumpster (this eliminates the need for a key).
- **For plastic lids**, screw thick plywood to the underside of the lid to increase the durability and strength. If the plastic lid is ribbed, then place spacer boards between the ribs before adding the plywood. Run a chain over the lid and through the handles on the side of the dumpster as indicated above.



- If you are unable to purchase, or rig, a wildlife proof dumpster, try to **reduce the number of dumpsters needed by using larger and more centrally-located dumpsters**. In bear habitat, keep dumpsters out of the campsites to reduce the potential for bear encounters with park visitors.

### **Wildlife-Proof Trashcans:**

- **Supplement dumpsters with wildlife-proof trashcans throughout the park.** There are two basic designs, one of which includes several models from which to choose, that seem to be particularly effective against all forms of wildlife. McClintock Metal Fabricators make several durable bear-proof trashcans that are aesthetically pleasing and very effective. These trashcans open in the back, making them very easy to empty and clean, and can accommodate universal access requirements. McClintock trashcans are in use at Trinidad and Castlewood Canyon State Parks and have proven to be very effective against all forms of wildlife.

#### **Excerpt from the McClintock Haul-All Hid-A-Bag brochure:**

*“Hid-A-Bag Refuse/Recycling Containers are rugged, high-quality metal containers designed for use in a wide range of outdoor settings. They are highly resistant to harsh environmental conditions, vandalism, and even large animals. Their unique design attracts users and enhances the landscape. The tilt-out bag suspension rack facilitates unloading, which helps protect workers from back injuries.”*

McClintock Metal Fabricators specializes in custom-made wildlife-proof trashcans and refuse collection systems.

- Hid-A-Bag Mini I (32 gallons) = \$485
- Hid-A-Bag Mini II (60 gallons) = \$715
- Hid-A-Bag I (70 gallons) = \$565
- Hid-A-Bag II (130 gallons) = \$835

All trashcans have a 15-year life span and are graffiti-resistant. Repainting is necessary every 5 years and costs \$32.50 per trashcan (including labor and transport costs). The trashcans are handicapped accessible and can be used for refuse or recycling (the lids differ depending upon use), and all are wildlife-proof. Bulk discounts (10-15%) are available dependent on quantity purchased.

Another design that is very effective against bears and other wildlife is often referred to as the “maildrop” trashcan or the “dome” trashcan (see Appendix A for blueprints on how to construct a maildrop trashcan lid or contact Ray March (see contacts) at Mueller State Park). The maildrop trashcan lids are easy to construct, less expensive, and equally as effective as the McClintock trashcans. However, they are potentially less aesthetically pleasing, do not



last as long, and require a greater level of physical exertion to remove trash from within the can than their McClintock counterparts. Mueller and Golden Gate State Parks are currently using this design on all their trashcans and have found them to be very successful deterrents against all forms of wildlife.

### **Wildlife-Proof Storage Bins:**

- **Install bear-proof storage bins at all walk-in tent sites and picnic areas** (see Contact list for company and contact information). **Initiate a food storage regulation** (see Appendix B) **requiring all food, cosmetics, etc.. to be stored in a hard-sided vehicle or in the bear-proof storage bins provided.** This regulation is in effect at Mueller State Park and has contributed to a significant decline in bear problems related to trash management. Mueller State Park has also designed and manufactured their own bear-proof storage bins that have proven to be successful against bears. Contact Ray March (see contacts) for further information and manufacturing instructions.

*McClintock Metal Fabricators, Cubic Container Manufacturing, and Capital Industries, Inc.* all offer bear-proof food storage lockers. Call for current pricing (see contacts at end of prescription).

McClintock price list:

9 cu.ft. Hyd-A-Meal = \$575 (plus \$145 for installation)  
24 cu.ft. Hyd-A-Meal = \$800 (plus \$170 for installation)  
30 cu.ft. Hyd-A-Meal = \$835 (plus \$170 for installation)

### **Visitor Education:**

**Initiate an aggressive educational program for park visitors that includes both a written and verbal component.**

- Hand out flyers to park visitors as they enter the park and post signs throughout the park explaining why it is important to keep trash and all food away from wildlife, emphasizing that problem animals often need to be destroyed to protect public safety.
- Bolt signs to picnic tables or in picnic areas that demonstrate appropriate ways to dispose of trash and explain why it is important not to leave food around or throw food or food-related items into the fire rings (see Appendix C for examples).
- Lead interpretive programs demonstrating why it is important to keep wildlife out of trash and encourage continued vigilance from park visitors.
- Post signs on dumpsters and trashcans reminding park visitors to make sure that the lids are closed after each use and to alert park staff if the trash has begun to overflow.
- Carry books on the ecology & biology of bears in the Visitor Center bookstore.



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### **Alternative Approaches:**

- **Adopt a “pack it in, pack it out” philosophy, thereby eliminating the need for dumpsters, trashcans and dumpster services.** Arkansas Headwaters Recreation Area State Park has adopted this philosophy and eliminated all dumpsters and trashcans from the park. The park has five campgrounds, including several walk-in tent sites, and several large picnic areas. This approach to trash management works well at this park, with most park visitors respecting the “pack it out” philosophy, and may be appropriate and useful at other state parks.
- **Shift work schedules and Day-Use Area hours to accommodate the longer daylight hours of summer.** During the summer months when visitation is high, have some maintenance staff work a later shift (for example, 1pm-9:30pm). Close all day use areas at 8pm so that maintenance staff has time to check garbage cans and ensure that all areas are clean of litter before nightfall. Great Smoky Mountain National Park adopted this strategy a few years ago and has found it to be particularly successful at deterring night-time wildlife visitation.
- **Increase public awareness of companies that provide wildlife-proof trashcans and dumpsters.** Increase public awareness of the problem by placing stickers on all wildlife-proof trashcans and dumpsters within the park, indicating that they are wildlife-proof and praising the company that provided those trashcans, dumpsters and storage containers. In essence, this is free advertisement for your disposal company or trashcan manufacturer, and could encourage other dumpster services or trashcan manufacturers to switch to wildlife-proof containers. The increased public awareness resulting from this effort may be especially effective in conjunction with the aggressive educational campaign outlined above.
- **Take over dumpster servicing responsibilities.** One possibility for *regions* where the *cumulative dumpster servicing expenses exceed \$100,000 annually* is to purchase a few dumpster trucks, and a sufficient number of dumpsters. The region would then take over all servicing responsibilities. The most profound disadvantage is the substantial capital investment required to purchase the equipment and staff necessary to make this an effective option. However, once the initial investment is paid-off, this option may become a cost effective long-term solution. McClintock Metal Fabricators makes high-quality trucks (Haul-All trucks) and wildlife-proof dumpsters (Hyd-a-Way dumpsters) in several sizes. The trucks use a “no contact” hydraulic system to lift and dump the dumpsters, so the dumpsters never touch the truck and, therefore, can last up to 20 years. The same trucks can be used to dump the McClintock Hid-A-Bag trashcans, thereby reducing staff time allocated to emptying trashcans. The company specializes in designing systems that are tailored to the needs of the particular parks/regions. For more information or to receive a quote call Linda Surrey, Product Manager for McClintock Metal Fabricators (1-800-350-3588).



## CONTACTS

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### **Colorado Division of Wildlife (CDOW)**

*To report bear break-ins, garbage-raiding, or aggressive bears in the park.*

***For Emergency Response  
Dial 911***

*District Wildlife Managers should be notified in case of an incident involving a bear.*

#### *CDOW Regional Offices*

Colorado Springs	719-227-5200
Denver	303-291-7227
Ft. Collins	970-472-4300
Montrose	970-252-6000
Grand Junction	970-255-6100

### **Educational Materials Available from the CDOW via the Internet**

Living with Wildlife in Bear Country

<http://www.dnr.state.co.us/wildlife/Education/LivingWithWildlife/BearCountry.htm>

### **Wildlife-Proof Trashcan and Dumpster Companies**

McClintock Metal Fabricators, Inc. (dumpsters, trashcans, food containers & hauling equip.)  
455 Harter Ave  
Woodland, CA 95776  
1-800-350-3588  
(ask for Linda Surry, Product Manager)

Capital Industries, Inc. (dumpsters, lids, food containers)  
5801 Third Ave. South  
Seattle, WA 98018  
206-762-8585

Cubic Container Manufacturing (dumpsters, lids, food containers)  
11619 Pendleton Street  
Sun Valley, CA 91352  
818-504-0722

### **Dumpster Servicing Companies**

BFI- 303-286-2414  
(ask for Glen)



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## US Disposal Service

Trinidad Office- 719-846-6366  
Colorado Springs Office- 719-591-5000  
Pueblo Office- 719-948-0047  
Canyon City Office- 719-269-7039

(There are several other offices as well- check local phone book)

Robert's Enterprises- 970-527-3602

## Waste Management Company

Mountain Region (all of Colorado)- 303-797-1600  
(Call for a local contact number)

- Ron Flasco is the person to contact regarding making modifications to existing lids in order to make them more wildlife-resistant.

## Other Resources

United States Department of the Interior

National Park Service

Great Smoky Mountain National Park

107 Park Headquarters Road

Gatlinburg, Tennessee 37738

865-436-1251

Contact: Bill Styber (An extensive bear management policy can be mailed upon request)

United States Department of the Interior

National Park Service

Rocky Mountain National Park

1000 Highway 36

Estes Park, CO 80517-8397

970-586-1250 970-586-1364 (Steve King); 970-586-1364 (Mr. Kim Slininger)

United States Department of the Interior

National Park Service

Yosemite National Park

Superintendent

PO Box 577

Yosemite National Park, CA 95389

209-372-0200 (Park Headquarters)

Matt Cox

Park Maintenance Supervisor

Jefferson County Open Space

303-271-5925 (7:30am- 5:30pm Mon-Fri)

Ray March

Mueller State Park

719-687-2366



## SELECTED REFERENCES

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Great Smoky Mountain National Park. 1996. Great Smoky Mountain National Park Management Folio #1- Black Bears. Pamphlet.

Great Smoky Mountain National Park. 1993. Black Bear Management Guideline. 20 pp.

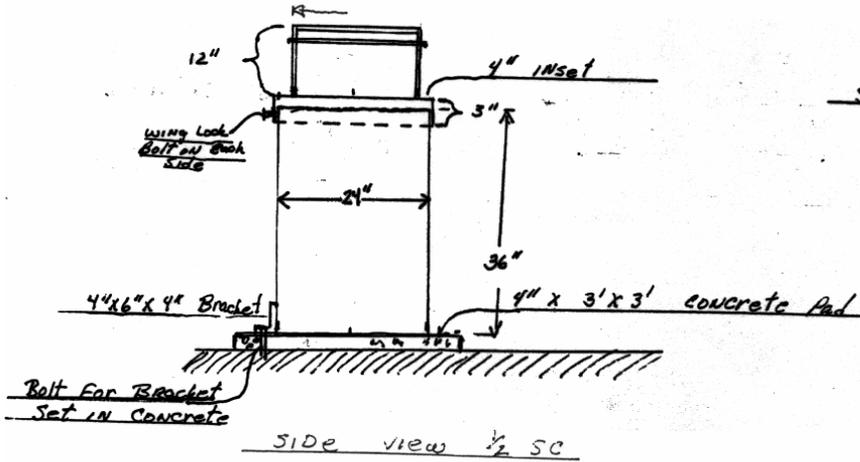
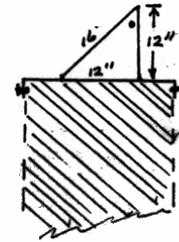
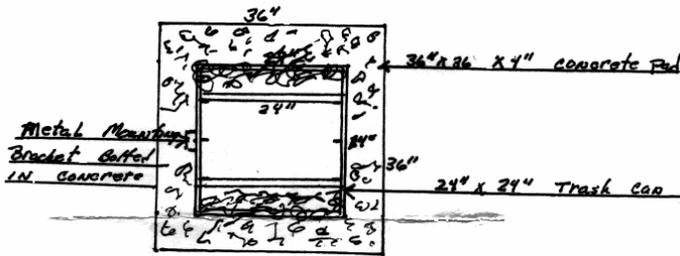
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Great Smoky Mountain National Park. 1997. Bear-Proof Food Lockers. 8 pp.

**APPENDIX A- BLUEPRINTS FOR MAILDROP TRASHCAN LID  
(BLUEPRINTS COURTESY OF MUELLER STATE PARK)**

< Bear Proof Trash Cans >

- Materials List*
- ② 14" X 36" X  $\frac{1}{8}$ " steel
  - ② 24" X 36" X  $\frac{1}{8}$ " steel (Sides)
  - ① 24" X 24"  $\frac{1}{8}$ " steel (Bot 4" x 2")
  - ① ~~42"~~ 24" X 24"  $\frac{1}{8}$ " steel ~~flap~~ (A) Flap (C) Top of slot (B) Sides
  - 4' of ~~42"~~ 2" X  $\frac{1}{8}$ " steel (Top)
  - ~~8'~~ 12' of 4" X  $\frac{1}{8}$ " steel (Sides)
  - 12" of 4" X 6" X  $\frac{1}{4}$ " Angle (Mu)
  - ⑦ 16" of Smooth  $\frac{3}{8}$ " Rod (For Bolts for mounting to concrete)
  - Wing Bolts & Nut to Attach to





**Appendix B- Food Storage Guidelines & Regulations**  
(Courtesy of Mueller State Park)

**MUELLER STATE PARK**  
***FOOD STORAGE & BEAR WARNING GUIDELINES***

**BACKGROUND**

When Mueller State Park opened to the public in August 1991, we did so with open trash cans, dumpsters, no food storage requests or bear management policies. We soon learned that we had created a buffet of sorts for local populations of black bears. Thus, we had significant problems with bears getting into trash cans, tipping over dumpsters and raiding campsites. At times in 1991, 1992 and 1993, we had up to eight different bears working day use and campground trash cans at one time. Some of these bears included sows with cubs. This created a dangerous situation for park visitors, for park rangers responding to bear calls and a dangerous/unhealthy situation for the park's bears.

To begin to resolve the situation we took the following steps:

1. Installed bear proof trash cans at all day use areas.
2. Installed bear proof trash cans at all campground locations where trash cans were out.
3. Requested park visitors to store all food and beverages in a hard sided vehicle.
4. Undertook a campaign of educating park visitors on food storage, bear behavior and biology.

This food storage policy request was modeled after National Park areas such as Yellowstone and Glacier, where food storage is a requirement, not a request.

Over the next several years, we had a high compliance rate with food storage requests. This did help reduce bear/human conflicts significantly. In fact from 1994 to 1996, we had very few bears raiding campsites, or visiting the campgrounds. However, we have always had visitors who: refuse to put food away because they feel we are harassing them, who misunderstand the request or who simply ignore it because we are not going to tell them what to do.

1997, (for reasons not yet determined), we saw more bear activity in the campground. Most of the problem revolved around dumpsters being tipped over. We did have reports of bears walking through campsites late at night, but since food was properly stored, there were no damages to report.

Again, for reasons not yet determined, food storage has become a problem in the campground again in 1998. While there has been only a few bear sightings in spring, if we do not get it under control by late August, *we will have serious problems in September and October*, when bears go into their feeding frenzy.

Around 1994/95, bear/human conflicts began to escalate state wide. The cause - rapid habitat loss due to the booming real estate markets. This was especially true of Teller County, which has been one of the fastest growing counties in the nation the last several years. Along with the real estate boom, the population dynamics of the state and

county were moving from a rural based population and economy to an urban based population and economy. In other words, city people were moving to the country and expecting the same luxuries and conveniences of the city. Those conveniences did not include having wildlife in their back yard. Along with this shift from rural to urban, came little understanding of the natural world, wildlife behavior and wildlife related issues.

As bear/human conflicts began to rise, the Colorado Division of Wildlife developed the 3 strike policy to deal with bears. The important thing to understand is there are no bear problems, only people problems, but politics said that the bears had to be dealt with. The 3 strike policy stated:

- \* the first time a bear got into trouble it was trapped and tagged.
- \* the second time the same bear got into trouble, it was trapped and relocated.
- \* the third time the bear got into trouble, it was killed by wildlife officers.

This policy soon developed into the 2 strike and your out policy. This states that if a bear gets into trouble:

- \* the first time it may be trapped and tagged or killed by officers.
- \* the second time it is killed by officers.

The wildlife resource at Mueller State Park is one of our most important natural resources, with most park visitors hoping to catch a glimpse of our wildlife. Again - there is not a bear problem, but a human problem. The bears are only doing what comes naturally. Therefore, it is important that we enforce our new food storage regulation to preserve and protect the integrity of our wildlife resources. We would hate to see a bear have to be destroyed because of human carelessness.

## FOOD STORAGE REGULATION ENFORCEMENT GUIDELINES

Regulation: #100-d.7.(c) pursuant t 33-10-106 (2) (h)  
Fine: \$25.00 Penalty Assessment  
Viol. Code: 6294A  
Wording: Unlawful storage of food, beverage, food containers, food preparation items cooking utensils or trash while camping at Mueller State Park.

The regulation reads: *The park manager may designate all or a portion of a park area where food, trash and equipment used to cook or store food must be kept sealed in a hard-sided vehicle, in a camping unit that is constructed of solid, non-pliable material or in a food storage box provided by the park for those persons entering the park in something other than a hard-sided vehicle or appropriate camping unit. This restriction does not apply to food that is being transported, consumed or prepared for consumption.*

*A hard-sided vehicle is defined as: the trunk of an automobile, the cab of a pickup truck, the interior of a motor home, fifth wheel, camping trailer or pick up camper. A hard-sided vehicle does not include any type of tent, pop-up camper or pick up campers with nylon, canvas or other pliable material, car top carriers or camper shells on the back of pickup trucks.*

This new food storage regulation exists for two very simple reasons:

1. **Visitor Safety** - safety of visitors in a campsite, their neighbors and all other campers at the park.
2. **Resource Protection** - specifically the park's black bear and other wildlife populations.

The keys to enforcing this policy are:

- **Consistency**
- **Common sense.**

### Hard-Sided Vehicles

1. Food is never to be stored in any type of tent or under a tarp.
2. Food should not be stored in pop-up campers. However, you can only suggest this to campers. You should not go looking into pop-up campers for food - that is a violation of search and seizure laws.
3. It is OK to store food in a camper shell, as long as that shell is made of hard-sided fiberglass or other hard, non-pliable material. For now, this will include aluminum camper shells.
4. Pick-up campers will be OK. The newer styles of pick up campers do have nylon or canvas near the top of the shell. This will be considered a hard-sided vehicle and OK to store food in, especially if its the only vehicle the camper has.
5. All motor homes, fifth wheels and camping trailers are OK for food storage.
6. The trunk or cab of an automobile is OK.
7. The cab of a pick up truck is OK. An open bed of a pick up truck is not.

### When to Issue Verbal Warnings

- Food, food items, beverages (other than water) are not in use *AND* people are present in the campsite. However, this will require some discretion. If the people in the site don't seem to understand or are going to be non-compliant, then issue a written warning. When issuing a verbal warning, you must explain to the visitor the reason for the food storage regulation.
- Bird feeders, including humming bird feeders, will justify a verbal warning
- Public relations (PR) contacts, drop a reminder about the food storage regulation. Here, it will not hurt to remind campers that storage also includes gas stoves, charcoal grills, dishes, coffee pots and grills.
- Verbal warnings will require you to follow up at a later time to make sure the campsite is in compliance. If on your follow up, the campsite is still not in compliance, then issue a written warning.

**ALL WARNINGS (WRITTEN AND VERBAL) NEED TO BE DOCUMENTED ON YOUR PATROL LOG AND COMMUNICATED TO THE NEXT SHIFT OF RANGERS.** PR contacts should also be documented on your patrol log, though not to the same detail as verbal warnings.

### When not to issue Written Warnings

- Water jugs alone
- Gas stoves alone or with water jugs
- Grills alone or with water jugs and/or gas grills
- Clean and washed cooking utensils, coffee pots or dishes - this means you will have to get out of your vehicle and do a physical check.

*However, if you are stopping by a campsite to issue a warning for other items such as coolers, food, etc., then also check the above items on the warning form, if they are applicable.*

### When to issue Written Warnings

The following items left out unattended (people not at campsite) will justify a written warning being left:

- coolers
- lunch boxes
- food, food items
- beverages, other than water
- trash
- coffee pots with beverage in them
- unwashed cooking utensils and dishes (this means you will have to do a physical check).
- pet food
- 2nd warnings on bird feeders.

## How to Issue Written Warnings

- Record the campsite number where violation took place
- Record registered camper's last name (take name off of reservation card or camping permit).
- Check all appropriate violations on the warning form
- Fill in date
- Sign your name
- Record the time in AM/PM, not military time
- Leave top copy of warning on the picnic table, where it can easily be seen by returning campers. Do Not attach to a tent or campsite marker.
- Attach carbon copy of warning to your patrol log
- Document the warning on your patrol log.
- When issuing a 2nd warning - write "2nd warning" across the top of the form.

## When to Issue Citations

The issuance of citations is not the overall objective of this program - compliance with the regulation is. We can put in writing when to issue a citation, however, as with all violations, officer discretion must be used. The following are only guidelines that can be followed when issuing a citation.

As a general rule, citations should be issued when:

1. You have provided a campsite with both verbal and written warnings that you have documented and they have repeatedly ignored.
  - Example  
On a Friday night you stop by site 90 at 5 PM and issue a verbal warning for food (not in use) left out on the picnic table. At 8 PM you notice that food (not in use) is still left out on the picnic table, so you stop and issue a written warning to campers. On Saturday afternoon at 3 PM, you once again notice that food is left out on the picnic table and no one is around. The next time you see a camper at site 90, you should stop and issue a citation.
2. You have provided a campsite with two written warnings about storing a particular item(s) and the violation for the same item(s) continues.
  - Example  
On Thursday at 12 PM, you notice that a cooler is left out at site 125. No camper is around in the site, so you leave a written warning. Later that afternoon at 4 PM you notice the cooler left out and again no one is around, so you leave another written warning. That evening, you notice the campers have returned and put away the cooler. You should make contact with the site to inform them about the food storage guidelines and that another violation will result in a citation being issued. At 1030 AM on Friday, the cooler is again left out, with no one around. The camper returns at 5 PM and contact is made by a ranger to issue a citation.

All normal procedures for issuing a citation will be followed. Please cite the regulation number, the violation code and the wording outlined at the beginning of this policy. If you have any questions at all - please contact a FTE officer.

**Appendix C- Examples of Interpretive Signage**  
(Courtesy of Mueller State Park and Great Smoky Mountain National Park)



# FEEDING BEARS KILLS BEARS

Letting a bear have human-related food causes the bear to lose its fear of humans, greatly increasing its chances of being hit by a car or shot by a poacher. It also creates habitual "beggar" bears which must be trapped, relocated or destroyed. Feeding bears has resulted in serious injuries to visitors and can result in fines of up to \$5,000 and jail sentences lasting up to six months.

- **Do not leave food unattended at campsites or picnic areas**
- **Store food in your car, preferably in the trunk**
- **Do not leave garbage outside over-filled garbage cans**
- **Never give handouts to bears**

**The 500 wild and healthy black bears in Great Smoky Mountains National Park thank you.**



## **WARNING FOOD & ODORS ATTRACT BEARS**

The following items (new, clean, dirty, empty or full) may NOT be left outside, in tents, or in tent trailers at any time, DAY OR NIGHT, unless they are in immediate use!

- |  |                         |
|--|-------------------------|
| WATER CONTAINERS                                 | FOOD                    |
| COOKING UTENSILS                                 | COSMETICS               |
| EATING UTENSILS                                  | TOILETRIES              |
| DRINKING UTENSILS                                | PET FOOD                |
| STOVES   | PET FOOD BOWLS          |
| BEVERAGE CONTAINERS                              | PET WATER BOWLS         |
| GRILLS   | PAILS                   |
| COOLERS  | BUCKETS                 |
| ICE CHESTS                                       | WASH BASINS             |
| TRASH OR TRASH BAGS<br>(in the site or fire pit) | ANY ITEM WITH FOOD ODOR |

A violation of these rules may result in a CITATION.

**THE BEARS FUTURE AND THE SAFETY OF OTHERS DEPENDS ON YOU!**

P-3569

J. L. DARLING CORP  
(253) 922-5000



(At Mueller State Park, this sign is printed on yellow paper, laminated, and bolted to all tables in the campgrounds.)