

Bear in a Box

Resource Kit - Draft



Developed for: Lee-Ann Choquette & the Peterborough Ministry of Natural Resources Bear Wise Program

Developed By: Cailey Anderson – Trent University Biology

Future Bear in a Box Recommendations

First off, I would like to say what a great idea! When Lee-Ann Choquette of the Ministry of Natural Resources approached me regarding the rough draft of the Bear in a Box Kit to be used as an educational tool by the MNR, in the public school system I was on board.

Current Content

Currently the kit is small, containing my own researched work outlining bears yearly patterns and hibernation, a list of quick terms regarding bear terminology, games, and a take home checklist for bear proofing your home with your family. I also added some popular camp fire songs regarding bears.

Suggestions for Content

The majority of input on kit contents was generated by responses from mass email sent out by Lee-Ann and myself regarding assistance on the project components. Although not every bear technician for every MNR office in the province responded we did get back some very useful information. Suggestions included bear skulls, teeth, casts of footprints, posters, games, checklists and food samples. The emails outlining this information are attached to this document.

From these emails we generated a mass email to MNR staff asking them to save bear skulls and other remains collected over the summer months which could be preserved at a future date. By spreading the news regarding this project Lee-Ann is hoping that in the future a large kit can be developed.

Lee-Ann also has several MNR published fact sheets, posters, CD's, and most recently the newly created What to Do In Bear Country DVD all of which will also be added to the kit.

My Suggestions

I feel that the casts of the bear prints, and the skulls would be an essential part of the kit. Peggy Wilson from the Sioux Lookout MNR has information regarding how to obtain such items and has offered her input and assistance if contacted. Lee-Ann and I had also discussed contacting everyone in the district and asking them to save skulls and teeth from nuisance bear kills occurring throughout the spring and summer season.

Other items that I feel may be helpful in educating the children include, radio collars, maps, pictures of bears, their habitat and preferred food choices, pelts, and audio recordings of bear sounds.

I have included all of the research and emails that I have obtained from other MNR employees and organizations that would be willing to provide input or ideas in the

creation of this kit. I feel that it should be completed and used. Maybe this could be another Trent Community Based Research Project.

BEAR SONGS

Bear Hunt

I'm going on a bear hunt, (slap thighs)

I see a swamp, (hold hand as if looking)

Can't go under it, (Take hands down low)

Can't go over it, (Hold hands high)

Have to go through it.

Slush, slush, slush, slush, slush (rub hands together)

I'm going on a bear hunt

I see a bridge

Can't go under it

Can't go through it,

Have to go over it

Thump, thump, thump, thump, thump (pound chest)

I'm going on a bear hunt

I see a stream

Can't go under it

Can't go over it

Have to go through it.

Splash, splash, splash, splash, splash (Swimming strokes)

I 'm going on a bear hunt

I see a tree

Let's go see

Up, up, up, up, up (Fingers climb up)

I see a cave.

Down, down, down, down, down. (Fingers climb down)

Let's go see.

I feel something (Feel with hands)

I feel something furry.

I t feels like a bear.

I t looks like a bear.

I t is a bear!

Up.

Down.

Splash, Splash, Splash,

Thump, thump, thump,

Slush, slush, slush,

WOO!

Five Little Bears (counting up)

One little bear

Wondering what to do

Along came another

Then there were two!

Two little bears

Climbing up a tree

Along came another

Then there were three!

Three little bears

Ate an apple core

Along came another

Then there were four!

Four little honey bears

Found honey in a hive

Along came another

Then there were five!

Five Little Bears (Counting Down)

Five little bears

Heard a loud roar

One ran away

Then there were four!

Four little bears

Climbing up a tree

One slid down

Then there were three!

Three little bears

Deciding what to do

One fell asleep

Then there were two!

Two little bears

Having lots of fun

One went home

Then there was one!

One little bear

Feeling all alone

Ran to his mother

Then there were none!

The Bear

The other day (echo)

I met a bear (echo)

A great big bear (echo),

A way out there (echo).

He looked at me

I looked at him

He sized up me

I sized up him.

He said to me,

"Why don't you run?"

'Cause I can see

You have no gun."

And so I ran,

Away from there

But right behind

Me was that bear.

Ahead of me

There was a tree

A great big tree

Oh glory me!

The lowest branch

Was ten feet up

I had to jump

And trust my luck

And so I jumped

Into the air

But I missed that branch

Away up there.

Now don't you fret

Now don't you frown

'Cause I caught that branch

On the way back down.

That's all there is

There ain't no more



Unless I meet

That bear once more.

Black Bear Hibernation



Black Bear Hibernation

- Black bears hibernate during the winter season
- They can sleep for months without eating, drinking or urinating 
- Due to their thick coats bears lose their body heat very slowly allowing them to hibernate through the entire winter
- Bears hibernate to get through the winter due to the little or no water or food available because of snow and cold weather
- Bear fur thickens during the fall to prepare for hibernation 
- They sleep curled up with the crown of their head against the den floor and their noses near there tails
- Bears will rake and drag grass, leaves and other material into there dens to nest in
- Cubs are born during January in the den
- From early fall to late spring bears can lose 15 to 30 percent of their body weight





Feeding Habits



Feeding Habits

Spring

- After hibernation bears emerge and feed on grasses, leafy plants, and any terrestrial meat that may be available

Summer

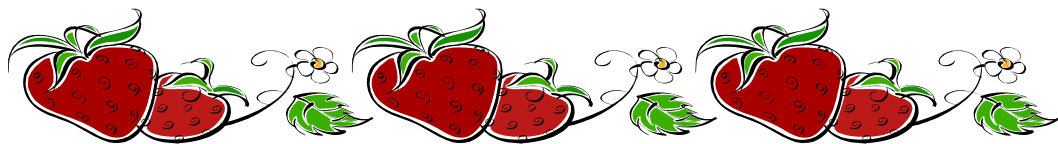
- During the summer months bears feed on berries and fruit such as blueberries and apples. They also prefer acorns and beach nuts. At this time they will also begin feeding on fish and ants.

Fall

- Bears will continue to feed on berries, fish, plants, and small creatures until the end of September when they begin preparing for hibernation

Winter

- When winter hits bears are in full hibernation where they remain until early spring. At this time the bears need no food because they sleep through the entire time to conserve energy.



Bear Proofing Your Home

This checklist has been created for you to hang on your refrigerator and check off each of the items as you do so in your home. By keeping the list handy, and getting your parents help you and your family can practice being bear wise!

Task	Check
Keep garbage behind closed doors in a garage, basement, or storage area	
Avoid stock piling garbage	
Only put your garbage out on the curb during the morning of collection day, not the night before	
Do not leave pet food outside	
Only fill your bird feeders during the winter months	
Do not put meat, fish, or sweet food in your compost	
Pick all ripe fruit off trees, and remove vegetables and fallen fruit from the ground	
Develop a plan with your family to reduce human-bear conflicts on your property	
Make sure after using the barbeque an older sibling or parent thoroughly cleans it	
Clean your garbage containers frequently	
Educate yourself and your family on black bear behavior	
Know what to do if you see a black bear	
To report bear problems contact 1 866 514 BEAR (2327)	



Quick Terms & Information

Names:

- A female bear is a sow
- A male bear is a boar
- Baby bears are cubs
- A group of bears is called a sloth of bears

Colour:

- Bears are not always black, they can also be brown, occasionally blond or have a white chest patch.

Weight:

- Males can be 125pounds to 500 pounds
- Females can be 90 pounds to 300 pounds
- Weight depends on the bears age, the season of the year, and how much food is available

Mating Season

- Is generally between late May and early July

Cubs

- Are usually born in January or early February
- Cubs will weigh ½ to 1 pound at birth
- Cubs will remain with there mothers for up to 17 months

Birth

- Female black bears generally produce cubs when they are between the ages of 3 to 7
- Females give birth in two year intervals unless food is not available

Senses

- Bears can see in colour
- They have very good vision close up
- Bears can hear and smell much better then humans
- They have excellent long term memory
- Black bears have large brains and are one of the more intelligent mammals

Sound

- Black bears grunt when they are relaxed
- When they are angry or scared they make a loud blowing or huffing noise
- Black bears do not growl

Daily Activity

- Bears usually become active a ½ hour before sunrise
- They take a few naps during the day
- They go to bed one or two hours after sunset

Food

- Ideal food for bears includes fruit, nuts, acorns, insects, succulent greens, and meat.
- They will eat human waste so it is important to pick up garbage and waste

Hibernation

- They can hibernate up to 7 months from September to April
- Hibernation length depends on food availability
- Hibernation is a way for the bear to maintain energy and survival when there is no water or food availability due to cold temperatures

Habitat

- They like large forests with different fruit and nut trees
- Wetland areas provide succulent vegetation for eating and water for drinking
- Streams and ponds are ideal for drinking water and swimming
- Mother bears like large trees for bedding sites because the cubs can climb them

The Year of the Black Bear

January

- Cubs are born and the mother cares for them

February

- All bears continue to hibernate
- The mothers continue to care for cubs
- Some cubs are born in February

March

- Hibernation continues

April

- The snow melts and bears leave their dens
- Adult males are the first to leave their dens
- Due to food scarcity bears do lose weight at this time
- Bears will feed on aspen catkins and pussy willows

May

- Begin feeding on budding green vegetation
- Cubs continue to grow and nurse

June

- Bears begin eating ants
- Mating season begins and males roam looking for females without cubs
- Cubs begin eating solid food

July

- Bears begin to gain weight rapidly because of more food variety

- Berries begin to develop and provide essential food sources

August

- Bears continue to gain a lot of weight
- More berries and fruit produce

September

- Cubs stop nursing completely
- Bears begin to become sluggish as they prepare for hibernation

October

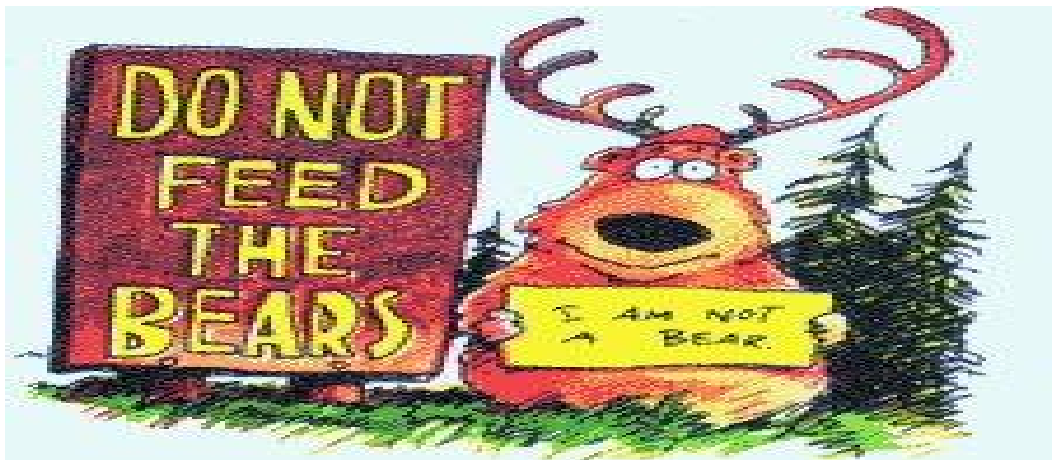
- Bears enter dens and begin a light hibernation
- Cubs born during the last winter will share dens with their mothers

November

- Hibernation begins
- A bear's heart rate can slow down to 8 beats per minute
- Breathe every 45 seconds

December

- Hibernation continues



Why are we seeing more black bears?

- With increasing town development more forested area is being cleared to provide room for more houses. This effects the routes that black bears take through the forest and decreases there living space
- Humans that are neglectful in bear proofing their homes attract bears with the smell of food
- Bears have excellent long term memories which means that once they are able to get food and if it was easy to get they will remember this and continue to return to the same place
- Longer summer seasons allow for plants to produce fruit for longer periods of time.
- I ncreasing human population has allowed for an increase in waste thrown into landfill sites which attracts bears providing an easy food source



E-Mails & Comments from MNR Staff

This was the first email that Lee-Ann sent out to see what the response would be from other MNR staff involved in the Bear Wise program throughout the province.

From : Choquette, Lee-Ann (MNR) <lee-ann.choquette@mnr.gov.on.ca>
Sent : April 11, 2006 5:49:16 PM
"Vaughan, Owen (MNR)" <owen.vaughan@mnr.gov.on.ca>, "Wall, Linda (MNR)" <linda.wall@mnr.gov.on.ca>, "Koski, Marvin (MNR)" <marvin.koski@mnr.gov.on.ca>, "Hissa, Norm (MNR)" <norm.hissa@mnr.gov.on.ca>, "Randa, Dale (MNR)" <dale.randa@mnr.gov.on.ca>, "Nyman, Lisa (MNR)" <lisa.nyman@mnr.gov.on.ca>, "Austen, Kim (MNR)" <kim.austen@mnr.gov.on.ca>, "Evens, Ed (MNR)" <ed.evens@mnr.gov.on.ca>, "Johnston, Ross (MNR)" <ross.johnston@mnr.gov.on.ca>, "Weber, Ingo (MNR)" <ingo.weber@mnr.gov.on.ca>, "Beaudin, Leeanne (MNR)" <leeanne.beaudin@mnr.gov.on.ca>, "Bickerstaff, Kerry (MNR)" <kerry.bickerstaff@mnr.gov.on.ca>, "Johnson, Marc (MNR)" <marc.johnson@mnr.gov.on.ca>, "Ukrainetz, Ken (MNR)" <ken.ukrainetz@mnr.gov.on.ca>, "Woods, Doug (MNR)" <doug.woods@mnr.gov.on.ca>, "McInnis, John (MNR)" <john.mcinis@mnr.gov.on.ca>, "Morrison, Randy (MNR)" <randy.morrison@mnr.gov.on.ca>, "Ingwersen, Tanya (MNR)" <tanya.ingwersen@mnr.gov.on.ca>, "Mcfarlane, Glen (MNR)" <glen.mcfarlane@mnr.gov.on.ca>, "Landry, Jacques (MNR)" <jacques.landry@mnr.gov.on.ca>, "Devos, Stephen (MNR)" <stephen.devos@mnr.gov.on.ca>, "Hebner, Bud (MNR)" <bud.hebner@mnr.gov.on.ca>, "Scott, Keith (MNR)" <keith.scott@mnr.gov.on.ca>, "Floean, Bob (MNR)" <bob.floean@mnr.gov.on.ca>, "Arola, Dave (MNR)" <dave.arola@mnr.gov.on.ca>, "Blakemore, Colin (MNR)" <colin.blakemore@mnr.gov.on.ca>, "Almond, John (MNR)" <john.almond@mnr.gov.on.ca>, "Johnson, Fred C. (MNR)" <fred.c.johnson@mnr.gov.on.ca>, "Walroth, Robert (MNR)" <robert.walroth@mnr.gov.on.ca>, "Malhiot, Mike (MNR)" <mike.malhiot@mnr.gov.on.ca>, "McNaughton, Jeff (MNR)" <jeff.mcnaughton@mnr.gov.on.ca>, "Coleman, Kerry (MNR)" <kerry.coleman@mnr.gov.on.ca>, "Hawthorne, Kevin (MNR)" <kevin.hawthorne@mnr.gov.on.ca>, "Dodge, Kathy (MNR)" <kathy.dodge@mnr.gov.on.ca>, "Walsh, Pat (MNR)" <pat.walsh@mnr.gov.on.ca>, "Moreau, Paul (MNR)" <paul.moreau@mnr.gov.on.ca>, "Mulder, Gerry (MNR)" <gerry.mulder@mnr.gov.on.ca>, "de Almeida, Maria (MNR)" <maria.dealmeida@mnr.gov.on.ca>, "Hall, Mike (MNR)" <mike.hall@mnr.gov.on.ca>, "Obbard, Martyn (MNR)" <martyn.obbard@mnr.gov.on.ca>, "Cailey Anderson" <paddle2water@hotmail.com>, "Wilson, Peggy (MNR)" <peggy.wilson@mnr.gov.on.ca>
To :
CC :
Subject : Ideas for Ed project - help needed please

Folks:

Cailey Anderson is a Trent University student who is helping us out with our educational stuff. One of the things she is checking into is a "bear in a box" educational program. The idea is to develop a kit that District staff could use to discuss Black Bears with young people, school students, etc. She has already been in touch with Peggy Wilson.

If you have any ideas or suggestions for contents, please do email Cailey - Cailey Anderson [paddle2water@hotmail.com] with a copy to me. We would need this information by end of week if at all possible.

Many thanks and cheers.
Lee-Ann Choquette

Senior Communications Advisor - Bear Wise

The following emails are responses from MNR staff with the suggestions that they feel should be included in the Bear in a Box Kit

From : Ingwersen, Tanya (MNR) <tanya.ingwersen@mnr.gov.on.ca>

Sent : April 12, 2006 9:38:23 AM

To : <paddle2water@hotmail.com>

CC : "Choquette, Lee-Ann (MNR)" <lee-ann.choquette@mnr.gov.on.ca>, "Morrison, Randy (MNR)" <randy.morrison@mnr.gov.on.ca>

Subject : RE: Ideas for Ed project - help needed please



Hi Cailey,

One idea for an educational tool that has worked well in our District over the years is a "fridge checklist" for kids to take home and go through with their family to ensure their home is bear proof (and at the same time, raccoon and other garbage eating critters proof).

I think this is a great idea as it gets the family thinking about bear proofing and the messaging comes from kids (often better received from them than other adults!). The list can be put together from one of our fact sheets – how to bear proof your house.

Tanya Ingwersen

IRM Technical Specialist – Wildlife

North Bay District

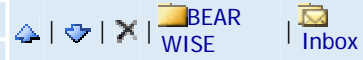
From : Inglis, Jeremy (MNR) <jeremy.inglis@mnr.gov.on.ca>

Sent : April 24, 2006 9:03:34 AM

To : "Cailey Anderson" <paddle2water@hotmail.com>

CC : "Choquette, Lee-Ann (MNR)" <lee-ann.choquette@mnr.gov.on.ca>

Subject : RE: Bear Wise Education Kit - LeeAnn Choquette



Hi Cailey,

I'm really sorry its taken so long to respond. I really get inundated with these darn e mails sometimes. I do remember you from the 'Brady days'; nice to hear from you. Are you pursuing a career with MNR?

Anyway, I think it's a great idea for districts to have education kits, including some of the props you mention. Maybe we should send out an e mail requesting the collection of these items (including bear skulls).

Jeremy

From : McCloskey, Devon (MNR) <devon.mccloskey@mnr.gov.on.ca>

Sent : April 13, 2006 10:11:07 AM

To : <paddle2water@hotmail.com>

CC : "Austen, Kim (MNR)" <kim.austen@mnr.gov.on.ca>, "Choquette, Lee-Ann (MNR)" <lee-ann.choquette@mnr.gov.on.ca>

Subject : Bear-in-a-box



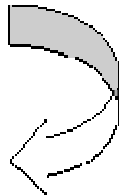
Attachment : [image001.gif](#) (< 0.01 MB), [image002.gif](#) (< 0.01 MB), [image003.gif](#) (< 0.01 MB)

Hello Cailey,

I was forwarded a message originally sent by Lee-Ann Choquette, where she has asked for ideas to add to your Bear-in-a-Box project. I have started the second season of our Bear Education program in a small Northwestern Ontario community, which is highly populated with human-food-conditioned-bears. Last year, I visited all of our local elementary schools and daycares to discuss Bear issues.

I'm imagining that you are considering a variety of props to fill the box. A game idea I have is to create playing cards where you pull out a deck and play a game like 'go fish'. Have to find the match to a card chosen, see below for example. This would work well for any # of students in a classroom setting.

100x



A
bear's
scent
of
smell

Secondly, you could show photos of various bear food sources which are difficult to preserve otherwise i.e. blueberries or pin cherries. I am located in Northwestern Ontario, so many of the food sources listed within the Bear Wise program are not applicable to our area, as our forest cover type is boreal, dominated by Black Spruce, Poplar; we have no acorns, beech nuts, etc. It might be interesting to use this inconsistency as part of your education program though: what do bears eat in your area?

Thirdly, you could create a measuring tape where as the tape is extended further the size of a

bear's paw is shown, or the size of a cub in it's first spring and finally the height of a bear.

Another prop is a 'crow bar'. A garbage container is not bear proof unless it cannot be opened without a crow bar.

I hope some of these ideas are helpful to you. Good luck. Please feel free to call me if you want to discuss any other ideas.

Devon

Lands Intern

Ministry of Natural Resources

227 Howey Street

P.O. Box 5003

Red Lake, Ontario

POV 2M0