

PRESS RELEASE

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BLACK BEARS OUT OF CONTROL – Fourth Attack In Cochrane This Summer.

Cochrane, Ontario – August 19, 2013: – Kim Kruithof and family were stalked for a week by a family of Black Bears repeatedly stalking them right inside their home. When the Kruithof's would call the Ministry of Natural Resources while the Bears were in their home and they were terrified in another room fearing for their lives, the response back was to direct them to their self-help website or call the Police instead. By the time Police arrived, the Bears were gone and nothing else done from that point.

A thirty year old Cochrane man barely escaped being killed by a very large Black Bear last May on Girard Road in the city limits of Cochrane. If not for the fortuitous passing by of two ladies on a drive, we may be speaking about a funeral in Cochrane instead of the heroic rescue of a man struggling for his life. There are two other families in Cochrane who have had similar encounters where the Bears were aggressive and entered their homes to seek them out as food - All within the city limits of the municipality.

Cochrane Mayor Peter Politis blasted the province in reaction by saying, "Bear behaviour is becoming so threatening to northern families now that Bears are uncharacteristically going into people's homes preying on people. In Cochrane we've now had four highly dangerous incidents, one near death, and we're only half way through the summer. There is plenty of food so the behavioural shift should be that much more concerning. For the MNR's response to the pleas of the public inches away from being mauled to death and asking for help is shockingly to tell them to visit the self-help website or call police instead, is nothing short of irresponsible! The province has completely abandoned northerners and this shameful direction needs to change. Northern Ontarians need to be outraged at the blatant lack of value Queen's Park places on our lives and interests. It's a matter of time before someone or an entire family are killed and at that point who will take responsibility?"

Cochrane has passed a resolution requiring the province to delegate some authority to it to try and protect the people of the community. As well, Cochrane will be meeting to discuss a strategy to bring this matter to the forefront of provincial issues.

Cochrane has been at the forefront of drawing attention to the escalating situation by citing that since the cancellation of the spring bear hunt in 1999, complaints and frequency of dangerous interaction have risen regarding a growing problem with nuisance and predatory Black Bears in parts of Ontario. Although this correlation has been disputed by the Ministry of Natural Resources, with the divestment of responsibility by the Ministry of Natural Resources to manage Black Bear incidents and leave the public to a self-help website instead, and the sudden cancellation of the Bear Wise program in 2012, the issue has become a public safety liability and is rapidly escalating out of control.



Cochrane Mayor Peter Politis stated, “When a community is faced with a dangerous encounter with a bear, the only option available now is to call the police, who are not trained or equipped to deal with such incidents. Consequently, the Bear is shot and killed, then left on the spot for the property owner to dispose of. As a result of this direction, not only has public safety been reduced to a bureaucratic afterthought, the status of this majestic animal has been reduced to that of a nuisance raccoon or rodent”.

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