



Press Release

PORT COQUITLAM BEAR AWARE COMMUNITY OPEN HOUSE – FUN FOR WHOLE FAMILY

Port Coquitlam, BC – June 1, 2009 ... Where can you go on Saturday, June 6 for some great fun and activities that are not only all free, but will help your whole family learn about bears and keeping safe in bear country?

Saturday, June 6, from 10 am to 2 pm, Port Coquitlam Bear Aware will be hosting a Community Bear Aware Open House. You will be able to visit 11 stations including: bear info and meeting the Bear Aware Coordinator, face painting for the children, dunk the bear (not a real one!), free refreshments, learning how to make your bin bear-resistant, free giveaways, free draw for a great adult bike, free draw for children's prizes, and bear games for all ages. How are you at 'Bear Jeopardy'?

This event will be held at Minnekhada Middle School field- directly across the street from the Hyde Creek Recreation Center on Laurier Avenue. There is lots of parking, lots of fun planned and we hope many people will come out. You are guaranteed to enjoy yourselves!

"This program is important for the safety of people in the community, and the safety of the bears. As we move into territory bears used to have for themselves, we have to decide whether we are going to kill them or live successfully with them," said Louise Williams, Port Coquitlam's Bear Aware Coordinator. "This program can have a huge impact on people – people think they know about bears, but there's so much for us to learn yet about how they tick and how our behaviours influence their behaviours."

Williams noted that it is human activity that creates so-called "problem bears," and the fact that bears can find food year-round has in some cases permanently changed their natural hibernation behaviour. "The exciting thing is this is a problem that can be solved. It just takes time, and the cooperation of residents, businesses, the Conservation Officer Service, the RCMP and the City."

Here are some ways to make your home less attractive to bears:

- Secure all garbage cans or carts and keep them indoors if possible.
- Don't put garbage out to the curb until the morning of pickup day.
- Collect ripe fruit immediately from trees and the ground.
- Don't leave pet food outside.
- Never approach, interact or feed bears.
- Sprinkle lime inside backyard composters to deter bears.

More information can be found at www.portcoquitlam.ca/bears, or by calling the toll-free Bear Aware hotline at 778-822-BEAR. Those interested in volunteering with Bear Aware can also call 778-822-BEAR.

Bears showing aggressive behaviour should be reported to the Conservation Officer Service 24-hour hotline 1-877-952-RAPP or www.rapp.bc.ca. If a bear poses an immediate public safety threat, call 911.

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