The Campbell Tract Leaf

News about the
BLM's Campbell Tract
Anchorage • Alaska

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Anchorage Field Office

# Bear sense

When BLM archaeologist Donna Redding arrived at Campbell Airstrip Trailhead on a sunny afternoon in June, she stumbled onto something unusual. No, it wasn't a rare World War II military artifact. Instead, she found a man feeding a small black bear at the trailhead parking lot.

Redding was stunned. She grabbed her small digital camera and shot the photo at right. The dark object you see to the right of the man isn't shrubbery; it's a young black bear eagerly chomping on a snack and learning to associate humans with food, something wildlife managers call habituation. In simple terms, it means sometimes bears are destroyed because they no longer avoid humans.

Photo by Donna Redding

### A clean camp

The BLM is committed to being a good steward and neighbor at Campbell Tract. We know that how we manage the tract, even the kind of dumpster we use to secure our trash at the end of the day, affects the safety of those who live in surrounding neighborhoods.

Employees at our main office building, warehouse and Campbell Creek Science Center follow established safety guidelines designed to reduce human/bear interactions at the Campbell Tract.

- Employees working outdoors receive annual safety training so they know how to respond appropriately during bear encounters.
- Outdoor instructors at the science center carry pepper spray and radios to communicate bear sightings.
- Science center staff remove all bird feeders by April 15 each year to reduce this possible bear attractant.
- BLM posts safety alerts internally year round to warn employees of animal sightings.
- BLM and the Municipality of Anchorage use red or green signs to inform the public of bear sightings and incidents. A green "BEAR ALERT" means repeated sightings in an area and users should proceed with caution. A red "DANGER" sign is used when an actual incident has occurred or when conditions exist that increase the likelihood of bear encounters, such as finding an animal carcass on or near a trail. A red sign means the trail is closed until there is no longer a threat.

Photo by Brad Muir

This summer we've taken additional steps to manage refuse with even greater caution, given the frequency of bear sightings in the Anchorage bowl.

- We switched to heavier bear proof dumpsters.
- We increased the frequency of dumpster service from once to twice a week.
- We installed electric wire along the top of the dumpster enclosure at the science center as an added deterrent to bears.

"We're trying to create a negative association so bears will avoid the area," explains Campbell Creek Science Center manager Jeff Brune.

BLM is committed to running a clean and safe operation at the Campbell Tract, because we know what we do affects our neighbors in surroundings subdivisions. The reverse is also true. Incidents such as the recent bear feeding can have serious consequences to our employees and those who visit the tract.

### How you can help

Abundant wildlife is one of the reasons visitors enjoy using the recreational trail system at the Campbell Tract. And most visitors know that keeping a safe distance and not doing things that invite human/bear interaction is just good bear sense.

But sometimes the temptation to get a little closer or a little too friendly with wildlife can cloud judgment. And that's where we need your help to spread the word that behavior such as approaching, feeding or otherwise habituating wildlife to humans can have serious consequences for both.

"Trail users at the Campbell Tract often look out for each other by passing along information about bear and moose sightings," explains BLM outdoor recreation planner Doug Ballou. "So if you see visitors doing something to endanger themselves or others, or that promotes habituation, you might explain why it's unsafe."

If we all practice good bear sense, says Ballou, we can enjoy living in one of the few remaining places whose residents include healthy populations of brown and black bears.

### For more information…

The Alaska Department of Fish and Game and Defenders of Wildlife are working together to decrease bear-human conflicts throughout the Municipality of Anchorage. These folks offer some good tips for living with wildlife in Anchorage:

- Remove bird feeders during active bear season (March - November).
- Store pet food indoors and bring bowls in when your pet is finished eating.
- Store fish remains in sealed containers until garbage day and keep fish cleaning areas as odor free as possible.

For additional tips, visit www.wildlife.alaska.gov or www.defenders.org.

## Safety reminder

A helicopter conducts GPS calibration checks at the Campbell Tract heliport prior to departing for field survey in late May. Our aviation crew reminds all visitors that pedestrian use of both the airstrip and adjacent heliport is strictly prohibited.

Photo by Richard Stephenson

Photo by Teresa McPherson

## Trail TLC

June 4, 2005 was National Trails Day. BLM thanks the 121 community volunteers who came out to help with these trail projects at Campbell Tract:

- 300 feet of Salmon Run Trail was rerouted away from the creek to prevent streambank erosion and improve visitor safety.
- The fence at Smokejumper Trailhead received fresh stain.
- The forested parking island at Campbell Airstrip Trailhead was brushed and thinned to increase visibility and visitor safety.

BLM thanks the Municipality of Anchorage, REI, and our many other partner organizations and sponsors who helped make the day a great success.

Have a question about the Campbell Tract trail system? Need to report unsafe trail conditions or activities? Want to know more about the airstrip? Here are a few contacts and phone numbers to keep handy:

**Doug Ballou, outdoor recreation 267-1398**
**Brad Muir, outdoor recreation 267-1467**
**Teresa McPherson, public affairs 267-1420**
**Anchorage Field Office 267-1246**

***The Campbell Tract Leaf* is published quarterly to provide news about the 730-acre BLM Campbell Tract, located adjacent to Far North Bicentennial Park in Anchorage, Alaska.**

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