



News Release Chequamegon-Nicolet National Forest



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Dedication of bear resistant dumpsters August 1 at Day Lake Campground; Bear country education will also be discussed

Rhineland and Park Falls, Wis. –July 23, 2007 – Bear Trust International recently received a grant allowing them to donate 11 bear resistant dumpsters to the Chequamegon-Nicolet NF. This is part of the Bear Trust Adopt a Dumpster Program, a joint effort of Bear Trust International, the National Wildlife Federation, and state and federal wildlife and land management agencies to protect bears, other wildlife, and people on public and private lands. A dedication honoring this donation will take place on August 1 at the day use site at Day Lake Campground, located about one mile northwest of Clam Lake, WI in Ashland County. The event will begin at noon.

Bear Trust International is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit wildlife conservation organization founded in 1999 to protect all eight species of bears. Bear Trust believes that wild bears in their natural habitat are key indicators of ecosystem health, and that the ability of wild bears to sustain themselves is critical to all wildlife. The organization is headquartered in Missoula, Montana. The Bear Trust Adopt a Dumpster Wisconsin project is funded by a \$20,000 grant.

Dealing with Black Bears in the National Forest

Black bears populations in the state are very healthy. The latest survey data suggest there are 11,300 black bears in the state, and the majority of them call northern Wisconsin home. A sighting of a bear is not uncommon on the Chequamegon-Nicolet, and aggressive behavior is exceptionally rare. Bears normally leave an area once they've sensed a human, but if you see a bear, take the time to enjoy the encounter from a distance. Here are a few basic guidelines to follow when visiting the National Forest:

DO remember that bears are wild, powerful, unpredictable animals and need to be treated with caution and respect.

DO be aware of bear signs such as tracks, droppings, diggings, rocks rolled over, scratch marks on trees and logs torn apart. Carry binoculars and scan ahead periodically.

DO make your presence known by making noise (talk, sing, or clap your hands; don't rely on bells because they are usually not loud enough) and waving your arms if you see a bear while hiking so it knows of your presence. Shout often, especially when traveling upwind, near streams and waterfalls, or when you can't see the path ahead.

DO walk away slowly if you surprise a bear nearby.

DON'T climb a tree, but wait in a vehicle or building for the bear to leave.

DO keep dogs on a leash and under control. A roaming dog might be perceived as a threat to a bear or its cubs.

DO leave food or beverages with strong odors, scented deodorants and lotions and other odorous items at home when day hiking. A bear's acute sense of smell can detect odors from great distances.

DON'T cook food near your tent or store food inside your tent. Instead, keep food in a secure vehicle or use a rope to suspend it between two trees at least 10 feet from the ground.

DON'T feed the bears. Bears will then associate people with food and that leads to trouble for bears in the future.

Once in a while, nuisance bears found in campgrounds need to be removed. They are generally younger bears whose mothers teach them to visit campgrounds for food. Some are not as fearful of humans as bears in the wild. If you think there is a bear causing problems while you're camping, talk to Forest Service employees or your campground host.

To remove a nuisance bear, live culvert traps are baited and set. Once the bear is trapped, experts from the United States Department of Agriculture Wildlife Services will move it to a remote area at least 30 miles from where it was trapped.

Black Bears in your back yard

If you are a home/cabin owner in the Northwoods, black bears are/will more than likely be some of your neighbors. They have been known to wreak havoc on bird, deer, and even hummingbird feeders. They also like to dine on what's in your garbage can and sometimes the compost pile. Here are some precautions for homeowners living in bear country:

DO NOT feed bears at your house - ever.

DO manage your bird feeders so they are not visited by bears. Some tips include:

- Avoid using bird feeders during the spring, summer or fall. Birds have access to plenty of natural foods during this time.
- Store birdseed securely indoors at all times.
- As an alternative to hummingbird feeders, plant red or pink native flowers which appeal to hummingbirds.
- Bird baths area great way to attract birds to your yard without attracting bears.
- If you still want to feed birds, hang your feeder well out of the reach of bears or electrify your pole. Bears are also attracted to bird seed under the feeders. This substance is usually millet, which are small round white seeds the birds don't eat. Switch to more deluxe seeds that don't contain millet or use chips of sunflower seeds which will attract birds but leave nothing under the feeder.

DO NOT store garbage outside, unless it is in a bear-proof container. Never leave garbage on your deck or porch (even if it's screened).

DO burn your barbeque clean and wash immediately after use, removing all grease and food residues. Remove and dispose of the grease in the drip can or grease tray every time you grill. Clean it thoroughly before returning it to the barbeque or store it securely indoors.

DO NOT feed your pets outside. Feed them inside and store their food indoors. Don't leave dog bones lying around your yard.

DO keep doors and windows closed and locked. Food smells can lure hungry bears inside your home. Do not store food of any kind outside unless it is in a locked refrigerator or freezer.

DO NOT plant shrubs or trees in your yard that will produce bear food like apples and berries. If you plant them, situate them away from areas where you don't want to find bears, such as entryways, busy paths, or around children's play sets.

DO keep your compost pile clean and odor free. Never compost meat, fish, oil, grease, or dairy products. Sprinkle your compost with lime to aid in decomposition and reduce odor. Cover kitchen waste with brown material (dried leaves or grass clippings). Keep the compost aerated and properly turned.

Bear Trust and the Chequamegon-Nicolet want you to enjoy the great Northwoods, whether as a hiker, camper, or home/cabin owner. Following the tips above will help you have a safe, enjoyable Northwoods experience and protect our bear population.