



Governance Committee

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| Subject: | Exploring Waste and Wildlife Solutions in Bragg Creek |
| Date: | July 17, 2025 |
| Presenter: | Mason Austen, Manager |
| Department: | Utility Services |

REPORT SUMMARY

The purpose of this report is to provide the *Exploring Waste and Wildlife Solutions in Bragg Creek* public engagement results. Administration conducted public engagement in Bragg Creek from April 9 to May 14, 2025, to better understand human-wildlife interactions, gather residents' views, and explore solutions. Resident feedback and key findings are provided in Attachment A. Residents shared support for the following options:

- A Garbage Bylaw: 59%
- Increased information campaigns: 51%
- A Wildlife Attractant Bylaw: 36%
- Program changes (i.e. bear-proof communal bins or expanded compost programs): 30%

The next steps will include implementing a large communication campaign consisting of public education and signage within the next 3 months, and potentially new program changes like bear-proof communal bins over the next 9 months. Administration will continue to engage with the Bragg Creek community prior to the next bear season to evaluate the success of the communication campaign and further assess the need for additional garbage or wildlife attractant bylaws. Creating a new bylaw is estimated to take 12-18 months.

ADMINISTRATION'S RECOMMENDATION

THAT the Governance Committee receives the Exploring Waste and Wildlife Solutions in Bragg Creek report for information.

BACKGROUND

At the July 17, 2024 Public Presentation Committee (PPC) meeting, the Bragg Creek Wild group presented on the need for a garbage bylaw to minimize human-wildlife interactions and conflicts, as well as to protect the safety of the public and help the wildlife population thrive in the wild. This matter was recommended to Council.

At the September 10, 2024, Council meeting, Council directed Administration to further explore this topic.
MOVED by Councillor Hanson that the Public Presentation Committee recommends to Council that Administration be directed to explore the potential for a garbage bylaw as discussed during the Bragg Creek Wild Presentation at the July 17, 2024 Public Presentation Committee Meeting.

At the March 11, 2025, Governance Committee meeting, Administration provided an update that public engagement will be conducted in the Bragg Creek area. The engagement process included an online survey and two in-person events, which were conducted from April 9 to May 14, 2025.

DISCUSSION

Administration has met with the Bragg Creek Wild group regularly since September 2024 to understand their perspective on the issue and work collaboratively on a solution. Administration has also met with numerous Municipalities, Alberta Fish and Wildlife, Alberta BearSmart, and neighbouring BearSmart communities to better understand the issue as a whole, which is adverse human-wildlife interactions.

While reviewing existing municipal bylaws, garbage is a factor in avoiding negative human-wildlife interactions, but there is a larger list of wildlife attractants that are often included. These include bird feeders, fruit bearing trees or shrubs, barbecues, proper pet food storage, and feeding wildlife. Public engagement feedback shows people feeding wildlife (84%), garbage bins (78%), and bird feeders (64%) are the main wildlife attractants in the Bragg Creek community.

It is important to note that 73% of respondents rarely (annually) encounter bears, with 12% reporting no bear sightings. Additionally, 92% of respondents properly store their garbage indoors or in wildlife-proof bins, and 81% believe they have the appropriate information to coexist with wildlife.

The County is investigating all options to reduce wildlife attractants in the Bragg Creek area. Possible solutions include increased information campaigns to help educate residents on best BearSmart practices, as well as creating a new garbage or wildlife attractants bylaw. Another option is to implement program changes, such as bear-proof communal bins for garbage and compost.

Over the next 3 months, Administration will work on implementing a large communication campaign, which will include public education and signage on best BearSmart practices. These public education campaigns will also be targeted at both tourists and new residents. New program changes, such as the potential for bear-proof communal bins and expanded composting programs, will also be considered over the next 9 months. Additionally, Administration will continue to engage with the Bragg Creek community prior to the next bear season, which will help further evaluate the need for additional garbage or wildlife attractant bylaws as creating a new bylaw is estimated to take 12-18 months.

ALTERNATE DIRECTION

Alternate Direction 1

THAT the Governance Committee direct Administration to bring forward a draft Wildlife Attractant Bylaw for consideration of first reading.

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment A: What We Heard Report: Exploring Waste and Wildlife Solutions in Bragg Creek
Attachment B: Presentation