ABSTRACT

TITLE:	Researching Ways to Reduce Black Bear/Human Conflict in Urban Environments
AUTHOR(S):	Meighan, John
PRESENTED AT:	7th Annual Natural & Behavioral Sciences Undergraduate Research Symposium Program, Fort Lewis College, 2012

ABSTRACT: As human settlements and urban sprawl continue to encroach upon prime habitat of the black bear (Ursus americanus), there has been a significant increase in human/bear encounters in the American West. These conflicts create unsafe communities for the people that live in them, while also creating financial cost for implementing inefficient management techniques that try and prevent conflicts between humans and bears. This research examines various management techniques that are used to try and reduce the amount of human-bear interaction in many wildlife agencies, including the translocation of bears, the removal of anthropogenic food, increasing awareness through public education, and enhancing enforcement techniques within the community to give members incentive to act responsibly and avoid negative interactions with bears. The study describes the possible positive and negative outcomes of each technique in an attempt to identify the ways to limit interaction between humans and bears. The population of black bears in western Colorado rising above 15,000, Durango, Colorado has one of the highest annual human/bear conflict rates in the state, making this rural city an exceptional study area. An efficient black bear management plan must take into account many different factors and management techniques to successfully lower human/bear conflicts. This research examines these different management factors and techniques that can be applied to rural developments around the world that constantly are at battle with reducing these conflicts. This research will prove useful to rural territories around the world that lie on borders of black bear habitat in hopes to reduce black bear human conflict. Our population will continue to expand and we will see a large rise in the number of human/bear conflicts if changes are not made now.