

BearWise®

Recognition Requirements



BearWise: A Commitment and a Way of Life

Why become [BearWise](#)®? The most important reason to become BearWise is to protect both people and bears. BearWise helps people live responsibly with black bears. When people intentionally or inadvertently feed bears, both people and bears lose. Black bears are naturally shy and wary of people. However, when bears have easy access to non-natural foods such as garbage, pet food, and bird seed, they become habituated and may seek out places where these foods are abundant, putting bears uncomfortably close to people. Fortunately, most unwanted encounters with bears are preventable.

BearWise communities commit to co-existing responsibly with bears, securing all potential food sources, and knowing when and how to report bear activity.



Benefits of Bearwise Communities*

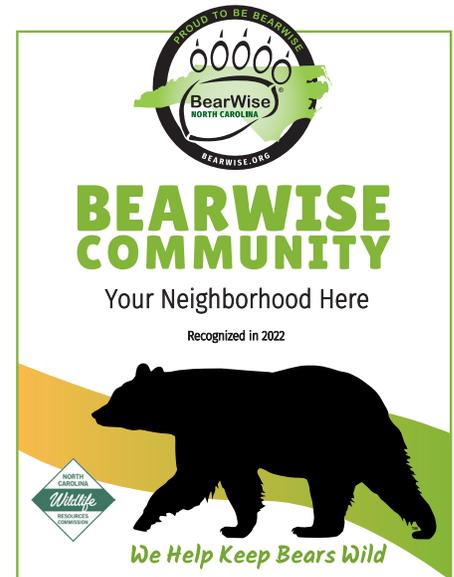
- Reduce human-bear conflicts,
- Increase residents' confidence in enjoying the outdoors in their neighborhoods,
- Attract fewer raccoons, rodents, and other undesired wildlife,
- Empower residents to be involved in finding solutions to wildlife encounters, and
- Receive recognition for high standards of safety and prevention of human-bear conflicts.

5 Steps to Become BearWise Recognized*

Step 1: Investigate

- Assess if bears are in the area and possibly getting into human-provided attractants such as garbage, pet food, and bird feeders.
- Consult with N.C. Wildlife Resources Commission (NCWRC) staff (bearwise@ncwildlife.org) regarding bear issues in your community and North Carolina's BearWise Recognition Program.

*A BearWise-Recognized community is defined as a neighborhood, town, business, campground, park, college, or other type of land-based organization.



Step 2: Organize

Contact the NCWRC at bearwise@ncwildlife.org to express interest in becoming BearWise Recognized and learn more about the requirements for recognition.

- Host a neighborhood meeting to introduce BearWise and discuss recognition.
- Request a BearWise presentation from NCWRC staff.
- Discuss bear issues with your neighbors.

Step 3: Establish a BearWise Liaison

- Designate a BearWise Liaison to serve as the point of contact between your community/business and the NCWRC.
- BearWise Liaisons are not vigilantes or law enforcement officers. They alert their neighbors to ways to resolve current issues and report bear incidences if needed.

Step 4: Implement BearWise Recognition Requirements

- Each community is unique, as such, the BearWise Liaison and other community members must work with the NCWRC to determine the best way to implement the requirements below to become a BearWise-recognized community.
- Bearwise recognition requirements are:
 1. Identify and secure all potential food sources and attractants. Including but not limited to: bird feeders, garbage, pet food, compost piles and any other human-provided attractants
 2. Educate current and new community members on how to prevent and respond to human-bear interactions.
 3. Develop a system to alert community members to non-compliance issues and maintain BearWise-recognized practices. Establish protocols for when and how to report bear activity to neighbors and the NCWRC.
- Continual compliance to the requirements is necessary to ensure the continuation of BearWise Recognition status.
- The NCWRC can provide example ordinances from other BearWise communities.

Step 5: Recognition

- Once the three BearWise Recognition requirements have been implemented, contact the NCWRC to be officially recognized.
- The NCWRC will work with recognized BearWise communities on signage that can be displayed showing they are BearWise Recognized.
- To maintain recognition, work with NCWRC staff to ensure continual compliance with the requirements.



Fred McCormick



Helping People Live Responsibly with Black Bears

Learn more: bearwise.org