



THE STATE  
of **ALASKA**  
GOVERNOR MIKE DUNLEAVY

## Department of Fish and Game

DIVISION OF WILDLIFE CONSERVATION  
Southcentral Region

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September 28, 2021

Rabbit Creek Community Council  
1057 W. Fireweed Lane, Ste. 100  
Anchorage, AK 99503

Dear Members of the Rabbit Creek Community Council:

Thank you for your letter and your interest in wildlife management in Anchorage, specifically bears.

The Alaska Department of Fish and Game addresses wildlife nuisance calls and is responsive to public safety concerns, including those you mentioned on both public and private property. Anchorage is unique for its wildlife viewing opportunities; however, bears can represent a public safety concern when in the urban environment and especially after developing an affinity for anthropogenic foods. We take these concerns very seriously and look for ways to address them when identified through either management or research actions.

As you mentioned in your letter, ADF&G personnel have visited Mr. Ziegahn's property and agree there do not seem to be any significant bear attractants. However, neighbors nearby could have material that draws bears up and down the watershed, and Rabbit Creek is a riparian corridor used by all wildlife, including bears. The annual return of salmon is a natural food for bears and will draw them to the creek. We discussed this specific area with our ADF&G Division of Sport Fish staff and they are not aware of any specific stream features that would create an unusually high congregation of fish at this location. The ADF&G Sport Fish Division may be able to provide more information on the process for requesting culvert replacement, another aspect you mentioned in your letter. The Sport Fish biologists for this area are Jay Baumer and Brittany Blain ([jay.baumer@alaska.gov](mailto:jay.baumer@alaska.gov), [brittany.blain@alaska.gov](mailto:brittany.blain@alaska.gov)).

Your suggestion for bear awareness signage in the Snowshoe Park area and along the stream is a good idea. ADF&G can provide examples of signage used in other areas and parks if the RCCC would like to work with the appropriate landowner to determine locations where the public may be accessing the stream to ensure they are aware of the potential to encounter bears in the area.

We share your concern for bear-trash issues in Anchorage. Other areas within the Municipality of Anchorage have become Secure Trash Zones, which is a great step toward limiting bear access to garbage and other attractants, while increasing awareness of wildlife issues in our community. We would strongly support the Rabbit Creek Community Council pursuing this designation.

Future research priorities and funding are determined across the Region (Anchorage, Kenai Peninsula, Kodiak, and Prince William Sound) based on the highest need to inform management decisions and provide for sustained yield of resources. We currently have active bear research projects on the Kenai Peninsula (brown and black bears), Kodiak (brown bears), and in Prince William Sound (black bears). Previous work done in Anchorage, like the camera collar and movement studies you mentioned, have helped us with management decisions including recommending areas for bear resistant trash cans and increased public outreach for wildlife safety. ADF&G wildlife staff in Anchorage have discussed the potential merits of conducting bear research in the area spanning from Birchwood to east of Potter Marsh. A similar study was conducted in 2005-2007, but newer techniques could provide a population estimate, identify the importance of anthropogenic vs. natural diet items, and interpret movements of bears relative to habitat. These types of data will be most useful as we contemplate management decisions on harvest levels, hunt locations, and addressing potential urban areas that are attractive to bears in a rapidly changing and highly human-populated environment. However, the implementation of this project will be dependent on completion of existing projects to allow for adequate funding and staffing.

We will continue to look for the best path forward for managing Anchorage's wildlife, new research opportunities, and preventing human-wildlife conflicts. Thank you for your comments and interest in this subject.

Sincerely,

Cyndi Wardlow, Regional Supervisor  
Jeff Selinger, Regional Management Coordinator