

Living with Bears in Saddle Ridge

Bears are an important part of this beautiful place we call home. They are always here in the woods, living their bear lives and keeping their distance so we rarely see them. Unfortunately, in the past few weeks, due to several factors, we have had some close encounters between bears and Saddle Ridge residents. Bears are very actively looking for food right now. The bear population is unusually high this year and their natural food supply is lower than normal. Some of the bears in Saddle Ridge have lost their natural fear of humans because they are finding easy food around homes.

Once they start associating humans with food, it is difficult to get bears back to their natural instinct to avoid humans. TWRA (Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency) has been contacted but this is the last resort for handling nuisance bears. Sadly, a fed bear is a dead bear. Every resident can help the community and the bears get through this period of high bear activity.

DON'T ENCOURAGE THEM TO GET CLOSE

We can all help by making sure that there is no easy food for them:

- Do not feed the bears
- Remove bird feeders (including hummingbird feeders)
- Make sure there is no garbage food, pet food or composting food anywhere around your house
- Keep your BBQ grill clean and free from grease or store it inside
- Don't leave food in your car.

DISCOURAGE THEM IF THEY DO GET CLOSE

Get an air-horn or noise-making device so that if you see a bear around your house, you can scare it off and help retrain it to not approach humans in their habitat.

BE AWARE

Attacks by bears are very rare, but nuisance bears are thinking of one thing right now - find food and/or protect cubs, and you don't want to be the main thing keeping them from either.

- Look and listen if you are outside, carry an air horn while out hiking
- If you see a bear, don't approach it
- Don't run - that will only trigger the bear to chase you.
- Back away slowly, make noise, blast air horns, shout, wave your arms, look as big and unfriendly as possible.

If you do have a bear encounter, report it to the SR POA Board at saddleridgepoa@gmail.com or contact a Board Member.