

News From The  
*White Mountain*  
*National Forest*

**For Immediate Release:** July 6, 2010

**Contact:** Tiffany Benna, (603) 536-6241

**Bear encounters increase on the White Mountain National Forest**

Human encounters with black bears have increased across the White Mountain National Forest. While many visitors and campers never encounter a bear, black bears are a part of the Forest and can quickly become habituated to human food. Several incidents have been reported this year involving bears looking for food at recreation sites and other locations on the Forest. Bears have been seen rummaging through coolers, crawling into tents and underneath shelters, and reaching food in improperly hung storage bags. Increased encounters lessen the bear's fear of people. Some bears have even stopped reacting to pyrotechnic pistols and rifles and other loud noises.

It is vital that you keep a clean campsite to ensure bears and other animals don't forage for your food. Improperly stored food not only attracts bears to people currently camping at a site, but it lets the bear know that it can find food at that campsite in the future. The bear may return to the site when other families are recreating there.

Read the rules and signs about bears posted at campgrounds and trailheads, and follow the instructions on how to properly store food. Too many times, visitors believe they have stored their food safely, but in reality have left it within a bear's reach. A properly hung food bag is hung so that the bottom of the bag is at least 10 feet off the ground and 5 feet out from a tree limb that could support a bear.

Bears are meant to be wild and feeding them creates negative consequences for them. Bears that get too used to people may have to be trapped and relocated. If they continually return, may even be killed. Remember, "A fed bear is a dead bear."

The feeding of bears, intentional or unintentional, is prohibited on the White Mountain National Forest. Visitors who have not properly stored their food risk their own safety and receiving a citation. Following safe food storage practices protects both you and the bears.

"If people continue to improperly store food or throw food at bears, attacks on people are imminent," said Katherine Stuart, District Ranger for the Androscoggin Ranger District, "The worst possible thing you could do is throw food at a bear."

It is your responsibility to ensure your safety and that of future campers by not purposefully or inadvertently feeding bears. So remember:

- Always keep a clean camp.
- Do not leave any food (including condiments) out when not in use.
- DO NOT throw food at bears
- Store food in bear-resistant units, hard-shelled vehicles or car trunks.
- Keep sleeping areas, tents, and sleeping bags free of food and odor.
- Do not sleep in clothes you cooked or handled fish or game in.
- Never bury or burn food waste.
- If camping in the backcountry, hang your food bag at least 10 feet off the ground and 5 feet from a tree limb that could support a bear.

- In backcountry areas, place sleeping tents at least 100 yards away from food storage and cooking areas, if possible.

For more information on dealing with black bears, visit the New Hampshire Fish & Game Department's website at [www.wildnh.com/Wildlife/faqs\\_black\\_bears.htm](http://www.wildnh.com/Wildlife/faqs_black_bears.htm). For information on the White Mountain National Forest, go to: [www.fs.fed.us/r9/white](http://www.fs.fed.us/r9/white).

###end###