



**SANTA ROSA COUNTY  
ENVIRONMENTAL DEPARTMENT**

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To: Tony Gomillion

From: Ronald Hixson

Thru: Roger Blaylock, P.E., County Engineer

Date: August 15, 2016

Re: BearWise Grant Funding



**DISCUSSION:**

Santa Rosa County is eligible to apply for a portion of an \$825,000 grant from the Florida Wildlife Commission Eligibility allocated to reduce human / bear interaction. BearWise Grant funding requires participating counties to have a Bear Ordinance in place or be committed to implementing a bear ordinance when applying for BearWise Grants. Staff has developed two options to use BearWise funding to help reduce the human / bear interactions in south Santa Rosa County. Both options would serve a limited number of residents within the target areas. Total funds available would determine the number of residents served.

**Option 1** would supplement the cost for residents to acquire bear resistant trashcans from their franchise haulers, Waste Management or Waste Pro depending on the franchise area for a period of two years.

**Option 2** would allow the county to purchase and provide fully automatic bear resistant trashcans to residents with some level of cost share from the residents.

**BACKGROUND:**

The State Legislature has allocated \$825,000 to the FWC's Bear Management Program to help counties implement programs that reduce and prevent human/bear interactions. The funding includes \$376,900 from the 2015 bear hunt permit fees, \$325,000 from sales of the Conserve Wildlife license plate, and \$123,100 allocated by the Legislature for FY 2016/2017. Based on the percentage of bear related calls in 2014 the FWC has identified 15 counties with the highest percentage of human/bear interactions. Of the 15 counties identified, five are in the panhandle with Santa Rosa County ranked 7<sup>th</sup> with 7% of statewide calls followed by Okaloosa 4%, Bay 4%, Franklin 3%, and Gulf also at 3%. Bear related calls are categorized into nine general types with the highest percentage, 82%, being general interaction, bears in garbage and bears responsible for property damage.

**ACTIONS TO BE CONSIDERED:**

That the Board of County Commissioners authorize Staff to apply for a BearWise Grant in the amount of \$150,000 with a 100% matching contribution from the Environmental Department Enterprise Fund for a total budget of \$300,000. In the event that the BearWise Grant is less than \$150,000 the county's matching funds would be reduced to provide a 100% match for any grants funds provide by the Florida Wild Life Commission. The grant would be used to fund efforts to reduce bear / human interactions in southern Santa Rosa County.



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**BearWise Funding Grant**

The State Legislature has allocated \$825,000 to the FWC’s Bear Management Program to help counties implement programs that reduce and prevent human/bear interactions. The funding includes \$376,900 from the 2015 bear hunt permit fees, \$325,000 from sales of the Conserve Wildlife license plate, and \$123,100 allocated by the Legislature for FY 2016/2017.

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FWC has provided funding to six counties for bear related projects. The grants range from \$40,000 to Marion County to as little as \$5,000 to Okaloosa County and were used to purchase bear resistant cans, rebates for service and delivery charges and kits to modified existing collection cans.

Marion County	Cost share purchase price of bear-resistant trashcans, where the first 166 residents who buy bear-resistant trashcans get a \$120 credit (residents pay \$60.00 – 50% match)	\$40,000
Seminole County	70% cost share to modify 14 school dumpsters - \$6,000, 50% cost share for 16 bear-resistant county dumpsters – \$3,900, and \$40 credit to the first 500 residents who buy bear-resistant trashcans	\$29,900
Lake County	Purchase / service of bear-resistant dumpster for rural communities	\$20,000
Franklin County	Purchase 900 kits to modify regular cans to make them bear-resistant -\$9,006 and \$6,000 to cover the \$6.00 extra monthly (\$18/Qtr.) service charge for residents to try bear-resistant cans for 6 months.	\$15,006
Leon County	Cover \$8 extra monthly service charge (\$24/Qtr.) and \$30 delivery charge for residents to try bear-resistant cans for 3 months free.	\$10,000
Okaloosa County	Cover \$5 extra monthly service charge (\$15/Qtr.) and \$5 delivery charge for residents to try bear-resistant cans for 3 months free.	\$5,000

Staff has discussed various options to utilize the FWC BearWise grant and developed two possible options for the grant funding.

➤ Option 1

BearWise Grant funding with matching county funds from the Landfill Enterprise Fund would be utilized to offset the quarterly franchise collection fee by offering residents a two-year rebate to offset the quarterly franchise collection fee.

- Residents must complete a program application and agree to the terms and conditions.
- The program would be limited to approximately 4000 applicants, assuming grant and county matching funds are approved.
- Residents applying for BearWise Grant funding rebate must subscribe to the franchise hauler in their area and maintain the franchise service for a two-year period.
- Residents would be paid the subsidy at the end of each year after submitting 4 quarterly bills showing payment of service fees to their franchisee.
- At the end of the rebate period residents would be responsible for the quarterly cost to maintain use of bear resistant cans from their franchise hauler.

➤ Option 2

The county would purchase fully automatic trashcans that do not have to be opened by either the resident or the waste hauler prior to dumping.

- Residents must complete a program application and agree to the terms and conditions.
- The program could provide bear resistant cans to between 4,000 and 6,000 applicants depending on the BearWise Grant and resident co-pays and assuming grant and county matching funds are approved.
- Residents would be required to pay a percentage of the cost of a fully automatic trashcan. The county would use BearWise Grant funding and equal matching funds from the Landfill Enterprise fund to purchase the cans.
- Residents applying for BearWise Grant funding rebate must subscribe to the franchise hauler in their area and maintain the franchise service for a period of two years.
- Residents would be required to sign a Hold Harmless Agreement with their franchise haulers to service the trash receptacles.
- Residents would be responsible for maintaining the can and paying for any future repair / replacement cost.
- The franchise haulers, Waste Pro and Waste Management, would provide curbside services with no increase in the resident's quarterly fees for the use of the fully automatic cans.

➤ In determining the possible number of households that could be served utilizing BearWise Grant funding, staff use the following:

○ Grant funding requested under the BearWise Grant	\$150,000
○ In kind funding from the Landfill Enterprise Fund	\$150,000 (100% match)
○ Total BearWise Funds available for SRC program	<b><u>\$300,000</u></b>

➤ In discussions with FWC staff tried to get a feeling on how much funding would be available to individual counties making requests for BearWise Grants. While FWC didn't have a maximum dollar amount that would be acceptable they did provide the following:

- Of the total funds available 60% or \$495,000 is for bear resistant "equipment" which includes bear resistant cans and hardware to improve existing cans.

- The other 40% is open for any of the 15 counties (no ordinances required).
- FWC requires a minimum 20% match of funds or in-kind services.
- Applications will be evaluated by FWC on the following:
  - Does the county have an ordinance in place that requires residents and business to keep trash and other attractants secure from bears?
  - How many households are within the counties that are in an area with high human/bear conflicts?
  - How much funding will the county match for the project (funds, in-kind, or a combination of both)?
  - What is the likelihood the project will result in a community-wide reduction on human/bear conflicts?
  - How many residents and business are expected to benefit from the project?
- FWC did indicate that if the requests for funding exceeded the available \$825,000 then FWC would award funds to cover all the request submitted which may reduce individual requests, however if the total funds requested from all applicants did not fully consume the \$825,000 FWC would increase individual request to utilize all available funding.
- The percentage of bear interactions for the 15 counties and current FWC funding is listed below:

County	% Interactions	Current Funding
Volusia	17%	
Seminole	16%	\$29,900
Lake	12%	\$20,000
Marion	9%	\$40,000
Collier	9%	
Orange	8%	
<b>Santa Rosa</b>	<b>7%</b>	
Okaloosa	4%	\$ 5,000
Bay	4%	
Franklin	3%	\$15,006
Gulf	3%	
Putnam	2%	
Leon	2%	\$10,000
Wakulla	2%	
Lee	2%	