

BEARPROOFING SOLID WASTE CONTAINERS FOR GRIZZLY AND BLACK BEARS IN LAKE AND CASCADE COUNTIES, MONTANA^{TWS}

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Abstract: Grizzly bear (*Ursus arctos*) and black bear (*Ursus americanus*) access to garbage at solid waste transfer sites is a serious problem for wildlife managers, county officials, local residents, and bears. We present the design, installation, costs/operation, and politics associated with bearproofing two solid waste transfer sites. Between 1982 and 1992, we documented the removal of four black bears from the Porcupine disposal site in Lake County. During 1993, we documented five black bears and one grizzly bear using the Porcupine site. In 1994, we designed and installed an automatic, hydraulic lid system for the 42 cubic yard dumpsters. Since the system was installed in September 1994, bears have not gained access to garbage, and evidence of bears visiting the site has declined every year. In 1996, Cascade County designed a similar system and installed it at a site we identified as a major problem for black bears. We worked with county officials and attended local public meetings to discuss the advantages of bearproofing the transfer site. The modifications have resulted in cleaner and safer sites, and a large reduction in bears accessing garbage. We plan on expanding the program to include additional transfer sites throughout Montana.