

****A Framework for Prioritizing Attractants to Reduce Black and Grizzly Bear Conflicts (Poster)**

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Human-wildlife conflict is a growing challenge worldwide, particularly in regions where species must navigate fragmented landscapes and increasing interactions with people. For grizzly and black bears, unsecured attractants such as food, garbage, and livestock carcasses can bring bears into close proximity to humans, leading to increased conflicts and undesired outcomes for people and bears alike. However, securing attractants often requires significant financial and time investments, leading to gaps in mitigation efforts. This study aims to develop a prioritization framework to identify attractant reduction efforts with the greatest potential for reducing human-bear conflict at the community level. Drawing from a community-based social marketing model, we adapt a behavior ranking methodology to the context of wildlife management. This adapted framework will help communities identify priority attractants to target by considering the likelihood of behavior change among residents, current rates of securement, and the extent to which each attractant contributes to overall human-bear conflict. To test this framework, we focus on the Bitterroot Valley in Western Montana, a region currently home to black bears but without an established grizzly bear population. This will allow us to evaluate the framework in managing black bear conflicts while preparing for the potential recovery of grizzly bears in the area. Ultimately, this framework is designed to inform mitigation efforts in regions facing conflicts with black or grizzly bears, offering a guide for resource allocation among agencies and organizations.