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*Managing fish and wildlife resources for their long-term well-being and the benefit of people.*

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MyFWC.com

## Technical Assistance Regarding the Florida Black Bear

Dear Applicant, Property Owner, and Interested Parties:

According to Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) data, there is the potential for Florida black bears (*Ursus americanus floridanus*) to occur in the project area. The FWC has received a sufficient number of reports of human-bear conflicts, evidence of bears collected by researchers, reports of bears killed by vehicles surrounding the project, or other data to recommend measures be taken to prevent or reduce conflicts with bears.

While black bears tend to shy away from people, they are adaptable and will take advantage of human-provided food sources. This includes sources that are available near this site or may be available after construction, including unsecured garbage, pet food, and bird seed. Once bears become accustomed to finding food around people, their natural wariness is reduced to the point that there can be an increased risk to private property and public safety.

During the construction phase, construction sites should be kept clean, with refuse that might attract bears kept separate from construction debris and stored securely in bear-resistant containers or removed daily from the construction site before dark. Refuse that might attract bears includes all food and drink-related materials, as well as any items with strong scents like cleaning agents. If a homeowners' association or community covenants are planned, bylaws that would require residents to take measures to prevent attracting bears into the neighborhood are recommended. By-law language used by other Florida communities is available at (<http://myfwc.com/wildlifehabitats/managed/bear/living/community-group/bylaw/>). Once the development is completed, residents should be provided with bear-resistant garbage cans as part of their regular waste service and any larger waste storage containers should also be bear-resistant. Providing residents with information on how to avoid human-bear conflicts is also recommended. This information can include:

- Options for keeping garbage secure which can include using bear-resistant garbage containers, modifying regular cans to be bear-resistant, or keeping cans secure in a garage or sturdy shed and then placing garbage on the curb the morning of pick-up rather than the night before (<http://myfwc.com/wildlifehabitats/managed/bear/living/attractants/>);
- Removing bird and wildlife feeders, or modifying them to exclude bears (<http://myfwc.com/wildlifehabitats/managed/bear/wildlife-feeders/>);
- Using electric fencing to secure outdoor attractants like fruiting trees/shrubs, gardens, compost, and small livestock (<https://myfwc.com/media/1886/ElectricFence.pdf/>);
- Proper composting in bear range (<https://myfwc.com/media/1888/howtocompostinbearcountry.pdf/>);
- Keeping pets safe (<https://myfwc.com/media/1892/protect-your-pet.pdf/>); and
- Cleaning and securing barbecue grills.

Information should also include guidelines for how residents should respond to bears in the area, such as:

- what to do if they encounter a bear, whether from a distance or at close range (<https://myfwc.com/wildlifehabitats/wildlife/bear/living/encounter/>), and
- when and how to contact the FWC regarding a bear issue (<https://myfwc.com/wildlifehabitats/wildlife/bear/nuisance-contact/>).

FWC staff is always available to assist with residential planning to incorporate the above recommendations and reduce the potential for unwanted interactions between bears and humans. Please feel free to contact our office at [Conservationplanningservices@myfwc.com](mailto:Conservationplanningservices@myfwc.com) for technical assistance. Further information can also be found on the FWC website at <http://www.myfwc.com/wildlifehabitats/managed/bear>.

Sincerely,

**Jason Hight**  
Land Use Planning Program Administrator  
Office of Conservation Planning Services

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