



U.S. Department of the Interior  
National Park Service  
Yellowstone National Park



U.S. Department of Agriculture  
Forest Service  
Gallatin National Forest  
Custer National Forest



Montana Fish, Wildlife,  
& Parks  
Region 3

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**EXHIBIT 5**

**Media Contacts:** Al Nash, Yellowstone National Park, (307) 344-2010  
Marna Daley, Gallatin & Custer National Forests, (406) 587-6703  
Mel Frost, Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks (406) 994-6931

### **Officials Remind Visitors to Be Bear Aware**

Bears are out and active this time of year in the Greater Yellowstone area, including the Gallatin National Forest, Yellowstone National Park, the Beartooth Ranger District of the Custer National Forest, and state and private lands.

The National Forests, Yellowstone National Park, and Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks join in urging visitors who use these areas to practice the tips and guidelines outlined by the Be Bear Aware campaign.

This time of year, bears have emerged from their dens and are feeding primarily on ungulate carcasses and early spring green-up. High winter snowpack levels mean bears are moving into lower elevation areas and are likely to remain there longer than in previous winters. Bears are looking for calories - their springtime primary food source being wildlife carcasses. Numerous sightings of bears feeding on carcasses have already occurred in the Cooke City area, on the Horse Butte Peninsula just north of West Yellowstone, Montana, and throughout Yellowstone National Park. Hikers, campers, hunters—all recreationists and visitors—should use care and be familiar with how avoid encounters in bear country.

Although bears are generally quite tolerant of people and the chances of being injured by a bear are extremely low, the following tips will further reduce the chances of being attacked by a bear while recreating in bear country.

- Always carry bear pepper spray, have it close at hand, and know how to use it.
- If you are going to be alone in bear country, let someone know your detailed plans; better yet, don't go alone.
- Be alert to signs of bear activity—fresh scat, tracks, digging, turned over rocks, tree scratching, concentrations of natural food including carcasses. Avoid recreating in areas with a lot of fresh bear sign.
- Think in advance about what you would do in the event of an encounter.
- Make noise as you travel.
- Educate yourself on how to react or behave should you encounter a bear.
- Cook any meals at least 100 yards from any backcountry campsites.
- Store any attractants, including game carcasses, at least 100 yards from any backcountry campsites.
- Hunters: after making a kill get the carcass out of the area as quickly as possible; while field dressing, keep a can of bear pepper spray within easy reach.
- Do not attempt to frighten away or haze a bear that is near or feeding on a carcass.

The Gallatin National Forest, Beartooth Ranger District on the Custer National Forest and Yellowstone National Park require all attractants be stored appropriately. Unattended food, refuse, and attractants must be stored in hard-sided vehicles or bear-resistant containers, or

be hung above the ground out of the reach of wildlife. Food, cooking utensils and garbage may not be left outside at any time unless in immediate use.

In Yellowstone National Park, regulations require visitors to stay at least 100 yards away from bears at all times. Finally, while in the Park, remember to store all of your food and garbage in a bear-proof manner and never feed bears or any wildlife.

For more detailed information on how you can be bear aware, please visit [www.BeBearAware.org](http://www.BeBearAware.org). Information on avoiding bear encounters can also be obtained at all Gallatin and Custer National Forests, Yellowstone National Park, and Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks offices and visitor centers.