



FWC invites communities to submit proposals for \$825,000 in bear-conflict reduction funding

News Release

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The Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) invites counties and other local governments to submit proposals so the agency can effectively distribute state funding for reducing bear conflicts in Florida communities. The \$825,000 in funding will be dedicated to programs that are committed to taking a BearWise approach and can demonstrate a measurable reduction in human-bear interactions. Gov. Rick Scott and the Florida Legislature invested \$500,000 in this fund and the Fish & Wildlife Foundation of Florida added \$325,000 from proceeds of the "Conserve Wildlife" license plate. Sixty percent of the \$500,000 from the Legislature must go to local governments which have passed ordinances to reduce human-bear conflicts. Local governments have until Oct. 14, 2016 to submit their proposals.

Nick Wiley, FWC executive director said, "Thanks to Governor Scott, the Florida Legislature and the Fish & Wildlife Foundation of Florida, communities across the state will be encouraged to have BearWise programs tailored to meet their specific needs. FWC will continue to work with local community partners to ensure they have the tools and resources necessary to help Floridians avoid conflicts with bears. Balancing Florida's growing bear population with the safety of residents and visitors remains a top priority."

Criteria for selection

Funding for bear-conflict reduction will be provided to local governments in a prudent manner following state contracting requirements as appropriate. Applications will be evaluated based on several factors, including:

- Does the municipality have an ordinance in place that requires residents and businesses to keep trash and other attractants secure from bears?
- How many households within the municipality are in an area with high human-bear conflicts?
- How much funding will the municipality match for the project (funds or in-kind or a combination of both)?
- What is the likelihood the project will result in a community-wide reduction of human-bear conflicts?
- How many residences and businesses are expected to benefit from the project?

Local governments are strongly encouraged to consult with FWC staff to discuss options and implementation before submitting their applications. Completed applications must be received by close of business on October 14, 2016. Applications should be emailed to [BearManagement@MyFWC.com](mailto: BearManagement@MyFWC.com) or mailed to: Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation

Commission, Attention: Bear Management Program, 620 South Meridian Street, 6B, Tallahassee, FL 32399. Upon receiving all applications, a team of FWC staff will evaluate each proposal and will announce funding allocations in the weeks following the application deadline.

Leading up to the submission deadline, the FWC will continue to meet with local governments to encourage and support efforts to enact bear-wise ordinances. The implementation of such ordinances, coupled with this year's bear-conflict reduction funding, can greatly reduce human-bear conflicts.

For the application and more information, visit [MyFWC.com/bear](https://myfwc.com/bear).