



INDUSTRY

SAFETY ALERT

Grazing grizzly bear encounters brushing crew multiple times

Location: Donald, BC

Date: July 11, 2023 (submitted by Columbia Extreme Contracting)

Details: A group of 4 forestry workers were brushing on a remote block north of Golden. In the late morning a curious Grizzly bear was spotted by one of the crew members. The bear was positioned about 30 metres away from the individual who was able to access their bear spray and then scare the bear away by yelling and using noise from their brush saw.

The crew discussed the incident and decided to continue working with extreme caution, adjusting their work locations to move closer together where they could communicate both visually and by sound.

A short time later the bear returned, this time moving between two workers. The bear could not be scared away. The crew packed up for the day and reported the incident to their manager.

The following day the crew returned to the block and began cutting, exercising extreme caution. They worked close together and continually scanned the area for the bear. After about an hour of cutting the grizzly once again appeared. This time the bear moved close (within 10 metres) to one worker and couldn't be scared off. That worker had his bear spray in ready position and backed away from the bear to safety of the truck. The crew immediately packed up and left the block, again reporting to the manager and safety officer.

Note: this block was rich in saskatoon berries which is a food source for bears and other animals.

Learnings & Suggestions: It is the time of year when bears feast on berries and potentially bury kills in areas unknown to forestry workers. If you encounter a bear and they are unwilling to leave the area, please listen to their 'signals' and allow them time and space to leave the area on their own.

Wildlife encounters are a reality for forestry workers. Proper education and safe work practices are critical in reducing the risk of harmful incidents while working around wildlife.

Visit BCFSC's wildlife awareness web page for more information on bear safety:

<https://www.bcforestsafe.org/resource/wildlife-awareness/>



BC Forest Safety

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