

Hello Mayor and Council,

Yesterday I went down to walk on the valley trail from our house on Buckhorn Drive. Once again, I chose to go left towards Meadow Park. I have not turned right to walk alone towards Lorimer since the grizzly bear took up residence within Whistler.

As a 71-year-old woman, I am afraid to walk alone through an area bounded by warning signs about a grizzly. COS telling me we need to "learn to live with" grizzlies does not make me feel safer.

The COS suggests walking in a group. Do two parents with a baby in a stroller--a common occurrence on the valley trail--constitute a group? I suspect not. A lone jogger, another common user, is not a group either.

The valley trail between the bottom of Lorimer and Meadow Park is a popular way for people to get from one place to another to avoid travelling by car, an important goal of the RMOW. This part of the trail is incredibly well used by locals and visitors alike.

We can see part of the trail from our house and it seems there have been fewer people using this portion since the grizzly arrived, even considering it's off-season. Even though the COS says the bear is ensconced near MPCS happily eating grass grown by the Muni, this portion of the valley trail is just a short jaunt away.

I have had many conversations about this grizzly, and opinions vary from having some empathy for the bear to "just shoot it". *Not one* person I have spoken with thinks it is a good idea for a grizzly to become accustomed to living in the centre of Whistler.

Like almost everyone, I have flown over BC and marvelled at the incredible amount of untouched wilderness--vast areas of snow-topped mountains and deep valleys without human habitation. There is lots of room in BC for grizzlies besides right in the middle of Whistler.

I understand the grizzly was relocated, and it marched right back to the grass in the lower MPCS field, undisturbed. Let him be, said COS. Taking the time and effort to capture, tranquilize and transport this grizzly to an area so close by (Callaghan? Soo Valley?) made relocation success unlikely. If this was a COS decision it does not seem a wise one.

We have lived with black bears in our yard for the entire 30 years we have lived in Whistler. I watched out for bears in the yard when my children were young and played outside. I have observed a bear eating huckleberries directly below me from my deck. Twenty feet away from my house I came across a bush splayed from a sleeping bear. I stood in my garage while a bear sauntered right past both open doors. My neighbour across the street watched a bear repeatedly come down our front entranceway to our front door, and veer left down the rest of the walkway to the back yard. Our neighbours, a young family who moved in a couple of years ago, call the trail up from the valley trail

between our two houses "bear alley" as so many come up that way. This summer while working in the garden, alone, I heard a thunk sound. I turned to faced a bear not 10 feet away. The sound was a huff, not a thunk.

Black bears are in Whistler to stay. I can deal with that. A grizzly is a step too far for me, and I am not alone in feeling this way. I have read that black bears kill more people than grizzlies. I have had countless fairly close encounters with black bears, but none with a grizzly. No wonder the stats show more black bear attacks.

By not discouraging this grizzly in any way, we have made it extremely comfortable for it to stay right here in town. The sex of the bear remains a mystery. Perhaps next year we will have a couple of cubs as well, trained by mama to live in the centre of Whistler too. Where does that end?

I would really like to know where the grizzly is now. I have seen no information about its whereabouts and the warning signs are still there. Is it still munching grass near MPCs? Has it bedded down comfortably nearby, so that it will wake in the spring and go back to eating grass near MPCs or on the golf courses?

When can I feel safe walking alone from my house to the bottom of Lorimer?

Regards,

Jane Reid

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