



Got bear poop? CNC Research Forest asks public to help monitor urban bears

Prince George

The CNC Research Forest team is once again asking Prince George residents to lend a hand, or rather, a scoop, to an important wildlife research project.

For the second year in a row, community members are invited to help collect bear feces samples to support ongoing research into urban bear activity. New this year, the project is expanding through a partnership with the Calgary Zoo, adding a valuable scientific comparison to better understand bear behaviour and stress levels.

And yes, the job is exactly what you think it is.

“Pick it up just like you would dog poop,” said Vanessa Fetterly, Senior Researcher with CNC Research Forest. “We only need a small amount, about the size of a golf ball, and the fresher, the better.”

The project saw strong community participation in its first year, with more than 66 residents contributing over 130 samples from across the city, including areas like College Heights, downtown, Moore’s Meadow, and Ginter’s Meadow.

“We were thrilled with the level of engagement from the community last year,” said Fetterly. “Every sample helps us better understand where bears are spending time, whether those interactions are positive or negative, and how we can make Prince George safer for both people and wildlife.”

By analyzing the samples, researchers can determine whether the bear is male or female, assess stress levels, and identify patterns in urban bear activity. Through the partnership with the Calgary Zoo, the team can now compare samples from wild bears with those from captive bears living in low-stress environments.

“This collaboration allows us to validate our research and better understand what stress looks like in urban bears,” said Fetterly. “If bears in the city are experiencing higher stress, it can influence behaviour and increase the risk of negative encounters.”

The ultimate goal of the project is to identify areas with high bear activity and better understand what may be attracting them, helping inform strategies that support bear-smart practices across the community.

“Being bear smart makes our community safer,” added Fetterly. “This project is a unique way for people to directly contribute to that.”

How to participate

Anyone interested in helping can participate in one of two ways:

1. Snap and send

Take a photo of bear feces and text it, along with the general location, to 778-349-4813. The research team will collect the sample.

2. Scoop and drop

Collect the sample using a bag (just like dog waste) and drop it off at the designated “bear poop fridge” located beside the geodome greenhouse near the ATCO trailer at CNC’s Prince George campus.



Scan the QR code or [click here](#) for the exact location of the CNC bear feces fridge.

Participants are asked to:

- Collect a small sample (golf ball size is plenty)
- Label the bag with the date and general location (street name only)
- Take a photo of the sample before collecting
- Store samples in a freezer or cooler if they can’t be delivered right away
- If you happen to capture images of bears on a trail or security camera, those can also be shared with the research team.
- Samples will be accepted until late October, when bears begin hibernation

For more information, contact the CNC Research Forest at research@cnc.bc.ca



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