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Apr 21st, 10:20 AM - 10:40 AM

### Bear Smart UM: Creating a University Campus Safe for Bears and Students

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Blanco, Kailie; Cook, Emily; Hudson, Ridley; Lefevre, Nieset; Lowe, Ellie; Moyar, Josh; and Todd, Kailie, "Bear Smart UM: Creating a University Campus Safe for Bears and Students" (2023). *University of Montana Conference on Undergraduate Research (UMCUR)*. 2.  
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## **Bear Smart UM: Creating a University Campus Safe for Bears and Students**

### *Biological Sciences*

Universities nestled in the mountains across the globe like the University of Montana may find themselves dealing with human-bear conflict while lacking the proper resources to approach management. At UM, there has been an increase in bear activity over the past five years and it is expected to continue to increase.

Developing a plan to prevent bear activity on campus is often costly, time-consuming, and tedious. Our student group's solution includes two intertwining parts: A bear management plan and educational outreach surrounding bear safety. The recommendations in the bear management plan were created by consulting bear-conflict specialists from Missoula County, craftspeople who construct bear-proof enclosures, and hotspots for bear activity gathered by the UM Chapter of the Wildlife Society. The bear management plan includes recommendations related to waste management for different locations on campus, fruit trees and native plants that are bear attractants, and a corresponding budget. The educational outreach has involved creating informational PowerPoints and flyers and presenting them to classes at UM to educate students about bear-safe behavior and to encourage students to attend our bear spray safety demonstration by the Bear Aware Campaign on April 4, 2023. Both parts of our project are essential in providing solutions for the intriguing relationship UM has with bears and preventing any further conflict that can harm the UM community and the bear population.