

Great Sand Dunes National Park and Preserve



Be Bear Aware

Seeing a wild black bear is an unforgettable experience! Black bears eat, sleep, and live here at Great Sand Dunes National Park and Preserve. Great Sand Dunes is an important place for black bears and we hope you help us protect them.



You can prevent unwelcome bear encounters!!!

TENTS, RVs, AND DAY USERS

When bears become habituated to human food and garbage, they can be aggressive, dangerous and may break into cars, RVs, and tents. If something has a scent, odor, or looks like a food container, a bear will investigate.

Park regulations require all food items with a scent - food, garbage, drinks, cosmetics, toiletries, pet food and bowls - to be properly stored. In addition, dirty stoves, grills, coolers, utensils, and cookware must be washed, stored, and treated like food.

These items must be stored in one of the following methods when not in use:

- Food storage lockers in the Pinyon Flats Campground or campsites along the Medano Primitive Road.
- In the trunk of a vehicle
- In vehicles with windows closed and doors and windows locked. Store as low as possible in the passenger compartment, covered up, and out of sight.
- In hardsided RVs with windows and doors closed and locked, at night and anytime you are away from the site.

**IF YOU ENCOUNTER A BEAR IN THE PARK, REPORT IT
TO A PARK RANGER AT THE VISITOR CENTER OR
ENTRANCE STATION**

HIKERS

- 1) Hike in groups and keep children between adults.
 - 2) Make noise - it's not wise to surprise a bear.
 - 3) Carry bear spray where you can reach it and know when to use it.
 - 4) Don't linger near berry patches, streams, or areas with bear sign (scat, ripped logs, claw marks).
 - 5) Give bears a wide berth; change your route if necessary.
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If you encounter a bear on a trail or in a campground:

- 1) **Stay calm**; if you get excited, the bear may get excited!
 - 2) **Stop**. Avoid direct eye contact.
 - 3) **Slowly leave**. Running or sudden movement may threaten a bear.
 - 4) **Speak softly** to the bear to alert it to your presence. Do not yell.
 - 5) Immediately report the bear sighting to a park ranger at the Visitor Center or Entrance Station.
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CAMPERS IN THE BACKCOUNTRY

--Hang your food, trash, and toiletries at least 10' above the ground and 4' horizontally from the tree trunk, or use bear proof containers. Secure your food, trash, and toiletries whenever they are not in use.

--If you're camping with a vehicle in the preserve, always store your food, trash, and toiletries inside your vehicle or in a bear box whenever they're not in use. Cover coolers with a blanket or sleeping bag so they're not visible.



KNOW THE FACTS

To learn more about black bears' diet, habitat, and other fun facts, pick up an educational handout at the Visitor Center.

Great Sand Dunes National Park and Preserve is open 24 hours a day, all year. Find detailed information on the park website:

www.nps.gov/grsa or call (719) 378-6300