

**A SUGGESTED PLAN FOR CONTROLLING  
DESTRUCTIVE BEARS**

March 4, 1933

Herewith is submitted for approval a plan or policy to be followed in controlling destructive bears during the 1933 season.

This policy is based on the policy that was outlined last year, on statistics that were gathered during 1931 and 1932, on suggestions from rangers who have been in the field, and on past experience.

Obviously the bear problem hinges on the number of bears and the scarcity of food. There have been two factors in the past three years which have made this problem more acute. One is the increased number of bears dependent upon garbage as a food, and second, the diminishing amount of garbage due to fewer visitors.

To balance this condition and thereby make it unnecessary for the bears to raid auto camps and cabins in quest of food, we have three courses open: (1) Reducing the number of bears dependent on garbage, (2) Driving and excluding bears from populated areas, and (3) Furnishing an additional supply of food.

The first is the most direct, surest, and cheapest method, but the method that requires the most care and the one that draws the most criticism from the public. For the present, as in the past, we should dispose of only those bears that are crippled or in ill health, and those bears that can be identified as being destructive.

Various means for identifying can be employed. The easiest is by markings such as color, white markings on the breast, size, deformities, etc. For bears that are not easily recognized by natural markings a pyrene gum filled with a thin mixture of white paint could be used. When this sort of a bear is caught in the act of damaging property, he could be sprayed with the paint. This would make identification certain when conditions were favorable for the disposal of that bear. In the past both means of identification have been used successfully.

Disposing of bears by shipment to zoological institutions doesn't offer much of an outlet under present conditions, and is not satisfactory if such an outlet were possible.

During the summer when disposal is necessary the weather is so warm that shipping bears is impractical. Also these institutions want the bears that we shouldn't eliminate; that is the healthy young animals in perfect condition. It is the exception rather than the rule to find this type of bear destructive. The demand for live bears at the present time is not great; due, I suppose, to the present economic condition.

The only other means of disposal is by killing. When this method is used care should be taken that no killings are made where they can be seen by visitors. So far we have been successful in doing this.

The second method, that of driving and excluding bears from populated areas is one that will be expensive and will require a number of years. Several means for doing this have been suggested, such as fences, heavy patrols, the use of dogs, the use of chemicals, bear proof feed boxes, distributed through the camp ground, regulations calling for a small fine for anyone convicted of feeding bears, removal of garbage twice daily, and propaganda warning tourists against the bears. The plan being to remove all reasons for bears frequenting populated areas, to keep them out and to make existence there so miserable for them that they will not want to enter these areas.

Of the above suggestions all are worthy of consideration with the possible exception of chemicals and dogs. In the past two years experiments have been conducted by using dogs and by using chemicals. We found that the disturbance created by dogs in a camp ground caused nearly as many complaints as did destructive bears. So I would recommend that we use dogs only as a means of protecting isolated construction camps. However at these points where dogs can be used we should do so, thereby eliminating the necessity for disposing of bears that cause trouble in those areas.

The results obtained by using chemicals last summer were not satisfactory. For these experiments the following chemicals were used, ammonia, cresolis, cresote, lysol, carbon disulphide, kerosene and chlorinated lime. The liquid chemicals were used by spraying with a pyrene gun and the chlorinated lime by sprinkling in the garbage cans and pits. Of these, only two were effective. They were kerosene and chlorinated lime, and they were effective to a limited extent only. When kerosene or lime were applied to the garbage in the dump ground cans, they had the effect of making anything edible distasteful for the bears. One objection to this sort of treatment is that after the garbage has been so treated it is unfit for use at the bear feeding platform. Also with kerosene there is a fire hazard. Spraying the bears I think is impractical because if a chemical strong enough to temporarily hurt the bear is used it is likely to cause some permanent injury, such as blinding. Therefore I believe that chemicals can be used possibly

to a limited extent but that their use is not to be recommended. For reference about these experiments there is a detailed report in General Correspondence on Bears dated August 31, 1932.

The construction of fences, and other bear proof structures can be carried on as money becomes available and in those places where such improvements are most needed. However this will take so long that for the next three or four years we should not expect any relief by this sort of an arrangement.

In the meantime we will have to patrol, as heavily as possible, camp grounds and areas that are bothered by bears. This method, however, can not be used indefinitely because it requires so many men to make an effective patrol that the expense incurred makes it prohibitive.

I don't think that we could enforce a regulation requiring a small fine for feeding bears. We have so many seemingly trivial regulations now that are difficult to enforce, such as for picking flowers, defacing formations, etc., that it would be unwise to add another for feeding bears.

If money is available for making two collections of garbage daily in the auto camps, this could probably be done. But I don't think too much stress should be placed on this plan. The time used for these collections would prove to be more effective if spent in actually driving the bears from the camp grounds.

Propaganda stressing the danger in feeding bears should be continued. This is probably the reason that personal injuries dropped from 78 in 1931 to 34 in 1932.

Trapping and hauling bears to other localities has proven to be a waste of time. With a few exceptions the bears either returned or continued their depredations in the districts to which they were taken.

The third method, that of an additional food supply would be expensive if the bears were fed all they would eat. Probably the best and cheapest additional food supply would be oats soaked with water. This was tried at Canyon last summer and found to be satisfactory.

When we have decided on the number of bears desirable for exhibition purposes at the feeding grounds we might, if necessary, furnish additional feed. But for the present I think that this will not be necessary.

I feel sure that no one method will solve our bear problem. It will require a combination of all three methods. There is a certain part of the bear population that has been accustomed, since cubhood, to frequent auto camps, lodge cabins and kitchen doors during the tourist season. We will have to gradually eliminate

this class of bear by disposal, forcing them to change their habit and by permitting some of the younger bears to become dependent on these areas as a place for obtaining food. At the same time, we can teach the bears that the feeding grounds are the only places where they can get garbage and other artificial foods.

We should continue gathering all data possible in the form of reports on damages, injuries, disposals and the results of different experiments as they are tried.

The following outline is suggested for bear control work during the 1953 tourist season:

**I. Disposal**

- A. By shipment when possible
- B. By killing when necessary.
  - 1. Crippled, maimed and decrepit bears.
  - 2. Diseased and parasitic bears.
  - 3. Destructive bears

**II. Driving and excluding bears from populated areas.**

- A. Fences, compounds, bear proof food boxes, and other permanent improvements
  - 1. To be constructed when money is available and where necessary.
- B. Chemicals.
  - 1. To be used only to a limited extent.
- C. Dogs.
  - 1. To be used only at isolated construction camps.
- D. Heavy Patrols.
  - 1. To be used as a substitute for something better.
- E. Propaganda warning visitors about the bears.
  - 1. To be continued.
  - 2. Strict enforcement of the "No Feeding" rule by all employees.

**III. A food supply in addition to the normal amount of garbage.**

- A. To be furnished when it is deemed necessary to maintain an adequate number of bears at a feeding grounds for display purposes.

**IV. Continue gathering all records and statistics possible pertaining to bear damages, injuries, etc.**

V. Bear Feeding Grounds

- A. Maintain only two bear feeding grounds; namely, Canyon and Old Faithful.
- B. Dispose of all garbage by burning, with the exception of that used at the two feed grounds.

Respectfully submitted,

Francis D. LaNoue