



To: 2014 The North Face Banff Rundle's Revenge Participants

Re: Bear spray requirement for participation in the 2014 The North Face Banff Rundle's Revenge at the Canmore Nordic Centre Provincial Park

April 23, 2014

Dear Event Participant,

For many years, the Canmore Nordic Centre Provincial Park (CNCPP) has worked closely with event organizers to promote Wildsmart strategies and best practices aimed at reducing negative human-wildlife interactions during events. One of the most effective strategies at avoiding a negative encounter is carrying bear spray while on trails. Although this accepted practice has become common place among recreationalists here in the Bow Valley, there has been some reluctance among race participants to carry bear spray while out on course. This is despite the fact that every year, there are multiple encounters with bears and other wildlife in event settings at the CNCPP.

We want all race event participants to be as safe as possible and yet recognize that unless mandated, carrying a can of bear spray can bring with it a slight weight penalty to those voluntarily choosing safety over competitive advantage. With this in mind, last year, the CNCPP worked closely with organizers of the 24 Hours of Adrenalin mountain biking event requiring all participants to carry bear spray while on course. Checks by Conservation Officers confirmed a near 100% compliance amongst the 1,600+ event participants. As a result of this success, the CNCPP has decided to apply this same requirement to all other events with a similar wildlife encounter risk profile (including The North Face Banff Rundle's Revenge) in 2014 and beyond.

As a participant in The North Face Banff Rundle's Revenge you will be required to carry bear spray while out on course. You will be asked to show your can of bear spray to a designated individual when entering the race transition area and will not be permitted to start without it. If you are found to be on course without bear spray, you may be disqualified from the event.

This requirement is being introduced at the CNCPP to enhance the safety of visitors, protect its wildlife population and ensure the continued viability of the Canmore Nordic Centre as a premier event hosting facility. Implementation of the bear spray requirement for events is a significant step and not one that has been taken lightly. We welcome your comments and ask that you adhere to this requirement for your personal safety.

Sincerely,

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APPENDIX A: CNCPP Events Bear Spray Policy Questions and Answers

1. Question: Why mandate bear spray when the chance of encountering a bear during a race event on trail is very low?

Answer: There have been a number of close encounters with bears and cougars over the past number of years in the Bow Valley – some have resulted in serious injury and there have been two deaths. Every year, there are dozens of public bear sightings and multiple occasions where CNCPP race participants have encounters with bears and other wildlife. While most of these do not result in injury, the increased number of events and participants at the CNCPP increase the odds of a negative interaction. The use of bear spray has become recognized as the most effective way of safely deterring an approaching grizzly or black bear at close range

2. Question: Aren't people safe when they travel in groups of four or more? Why mandate this for events when there are hundreds of racers out on trail?

Answer: There have been no documented cases of bears attacking groups of six or more hikers clustered in close proximity (within talking distance) to each other. This is why some CNCPP events where large groups of participants are traveling in close proximity with each other are exempted from this requirement. However, with the events where this requirement exists (see question 8), there are situations where racers become spread out and isolated from others. Also, with higher speed comes the increased probability of a surprise encounter with a bear.

3. Question: Why not leave it up to individual event organizers or participants to make such decisions?

Answer: The CNCPP has undertaken numerous initiatives to reduce the risk of a negative wildlife encounter and educate event participants on the safety benefits of carrying bear spray while out on course. These have included: placement of warning signage, pre-race announcements by Conservation Officers, trail sweeps and bear hazing by specially trained Karelian Bear Dogs, bear spray demonstrations, participant orientation and engagement with Wildsmart volunteers, information booths, information inserts in race packages, garbage management, the removal of vegetative attractants from along CNCPP trails and bear safety videos on day lodge monitors. While evidence suggests that awareness of safe travel habits has increased, this awareness has not translated into substantial behaviour change among race participants. The potential for a dangerous on-trail encounter has not diminished and only personal preparedness will help in such situations. The CNCPP takes the safety of all visitors very seriously and is mandating this requirement to ensure that more people involved in events are prepared in case of a negative wildlife encounter.

4. Question: Why require this of event staff, volunteers and participants and not public recreationalists?

Answer: The CNCPP recommends all Park visitors carry bear spray with them while on trail. However, currently the CNCPP does not have the authority to mandate this use by the general public. Studies have shown that those involved in bear attacks escaped injury up to 92% of the time with use of bear spray. The following links provide more information on this research:

- http://bearsafety.com/uploads/Wildsmart_bearspray.pdf
- <http://news.byu.edu/archive08-mar-bearspray.aspx>
- http://bearsafety.com/uploads/Herrero_Higgins_Vol_10.pdf

5. Question: Isn't the risk of a bear spray can accidentally discharging and causing injury greater than the risk of a negative bear encounter?

Answer: While there is a slight chance of accidental discharge through blunt force impact, if the trigger lock is in place and the can is properly secured to your body, pack or bike, it should not discharge except in extreme situations. When piloted during the 24hrs of Adrenalin Mountain Bike Race in 2013, there were no documented cases of accidental discharge despite over 6,000 individual laps by over 1,600 riders carrying bear spray.

6. Question: Why is this being done only at the CNCPP and not elsewhere?

Answer: The CNCPP has taken a number of innovative steps (as listed in the response to Question 3) to enhance the safety of its visitors that are not currently being done elsewhere. This is one additional step forward in enhancing the personal safety of event participants. In addition, the CNCPP is uniquely situated along an important wildlife corridor in the Bow Valley and has a greater concentration of bears and cougars than most other trail-based event venues in Alberta. Finally, Banff National Park has made bear spray a mandatory requirement for hikers during certain times of the year on certain trails <http://www.pc.gc.ca/pn-mp/mtn/ours-bears/gestion-management/ours-bears/minnewanka.aspx> . It is hoped that with success here, this best practice can be implemented elsewhere.

7. Question: What rationale was used to determine which events are affected and which are not?

Answer: In collaboration with Alberta Parks Park Ecologists, the CNCPP has identified events that are subject to this mandatory requirement based on the following:

- Travel speed of participants
- Sight lines along trail (primarily affects single track)
- Potential for isolation while out on course

8. Question: What events are affected by this requirement?

Answer: The following events will be expected to adhere to this new requirement in 2014:

- Iron Maiden Mountain Bike Race
- Organ Grinder Mountain Bike Race
- 5 Peaks Trail Running Race (June)
- BC Bike Series
- The North Face Rundle's Revenge Mountain Bike and Trail Running Enduro
- Kananaskiker IV Mountain Bike Race
- 24hrs of Adrenalin Mountain Bike Race
- Grizzly Canmore Traithlon Festival (XTERRA)
- MS Bike Tour
- Enviro Multi-Sport
- 5 Peaks Trail Running Race (September)
- Mito Running On Empty Ultra-marathon
- Grizzly Ultra Mountain Bike Enduro & Relay
- Grizzly Ultra Trail Running Race
- Any other event with a similar wildlife hazard risk profile

9. Question: What events are not affected by this requirement?

Answer: The following events are not expected to adhere to this new requirement in 2014:

- Big Bear Disc Golf Tournament

- Rocky Mountain Soap Company Women's Run & Walk
- Children's Bicycle Rodeo
- Rundle Mountain Cycle Club Stage Race Participants
- Ace Race Disc Golf Event
- Take a Kid Mountain Biking Day
- South Central Zones Junior and High School X-Country Running Championships

The requirement to carry bear spray will not apply to the following:

- Staff, volunteers and participants involved in events held exclusively within the CNCPP's Stadium Area (stadiums, parking lots, biathlon range, indoor facilities)
- Participants involved in events whereby the number, concentration and/or movement pattern of participants is such that the risk of surprise encounters with bears is minimal. An event's risk level will be determined by CNCPP Administration and Conservation Officer upon review of the event's application.
- Recreational trail users who are not participating in a sanctioned event.

10. When is this requirement in effect?

Answer: The mandatory bear spray requirement is in effect May 1 to October 15, which is intended to correspond with the period of likely bear presence at the CNCPP.

11. How am I to attach bear spray cans to my body (or bikes or packs) while racing?

Answer: While some event participants may not be familiar with carrying bear spray during a race, (and a few may be initially resistant to the requirement), there are many options for wearing a bear spray canister that allows for comfort, security and accessibility.

Best options:

Carry the bear spray on the body in an easy-to-access holster, harness, waist pack or open pocket. Carry the bear spray on the waist belt or inside an exterior "easy access" pocket of a backpack. (Bear spray should not be carried inside zippered or buckled pockets).

Mountain bike option:

Attach the bear spray to the bike, (i.e. inside a bottle cage). If they choose this option, event participants should understand that if they are separated from their bike they may not be able to reach their bear spray in the event of an encounter.

12. What is the minimum size can of bear spray that is allowed? Is dog spray or mace suitable?

Answer: The minimum weight should be 224 grams with a minimum range of 2.4 metres (15ft) and with an expiry date that has not been exceeded. Dog spray and mace is not suitable due to their reduced effectiveness (in chemical composition and spray pattern, range and duration).

13. Does this requirement apply if I pre-run or pre-ride the course ahead of time?

Answer: The CNCPP recommends all Park visitors carry bear spray with them while out on trail. However, currently the CNCPP does not have the authority to mandate this use by the general public including those who pre-run or ride the course prior to the event day.

14. I've never used bear spray before, how will I know how to use it if necessary?

Answer: The following resources on proper bear spray use are available:

- Read the instructions on the can and follow the manufacturers directions.
- Go to <http://www.wildsmart.ca/>
- View this short instructional video: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VDgBY2PbnO4>
- Check out the “Bear Spray Information Board” (blue board) located near the main entrance of the day lodge lobby
- Attend the pre-race bear spray demonstration near the start line prior to the race (if offered by event organizer)

15. I don't have bear spray, what are my options?

- Rent or purchase a canister at Trailsports, (located immediately next to the CNCPP day lodge). *Note that during spring, summer and fall seasons Trailsports does not open until 9:00am. Although the store typically maintains a large stock of bear spray canisters, you are encouraged to purchase your bear spray in advance of arriving on race day*
- Many outdoor retailers carry bear spray for less than \$35 a can
- Borrow a can from a friend (make sure it has not expired)