

## **BEAR SITUATION**

1) Wildlife is being blamed and killed for human error, behavior and activity. Continual Wildlife abuse, trapping, hunting and misunderstanding can escalate negative encounters with visitors. Many visitors are not even aware Tahoe is home to numerous species, who now require protection as human development redefines their habitat.

2) In addition...some visitors have noticed bear feeding in the fall. As they flock to see bears, without proper guidance they can disturb the feeding bear families adding to more negative encounters.

## **OPPORTUNITY**

1) The 2010 Lake Tahoe Prosperity Plan highlighted the need for Sustainable Tourism activities that would preserve natural assets while attracting new visitors and building long term prosperity. Wildlife viewing falls into this category.

2) Travelers already pay \$MILLIONS for the opportunity to see a Bear in the wild. Places like British Columbia, Alaska and Wyoming generate revenues over \$70M annually.

3) Since bears are most active in fall, a formalized Wildlife Viewing Program, guided by bear docents would attract visitors in an off-season without having to discount lodging.

### **Watershed-Wide Wildlife Viewing**

1) Define and label Bear safe-zones along all creek corridors throughout the watershed including easement. These Bear Safe zones allow wildlife to navigate safely from mountains to Lake. Additional culverts at active corridor sites may be required to limit dangerous street crossings. Wild-food planting excursions might also be reviewed as a volunteer/visitor opportunity to restore native bear habitat in areas away from human development

2) Once corridors are established, guided viewing stations can be created in appropriate areas along corridors with online calendar so visitors could sign up for specific tours.

1. Trained docents guide viewing and/or planting excursions.
2. Resorts provide shuttles / logistics to bring visitors to designated sites.
3. Visitors pay the hosting entity, Host pays the NGO for the guide services.
4. Proceeds then fund the ongoing support of this service.

### **BENEFIT**

- **Visitors get great memories while become bear stewards**
- **Resorts get shoulder season revenue**
- **Bears get less harassment, safe passage in their homeland and more of their native food**

Sustainable Tahoe in collaboration with Tahoe Bear League, Incline Bear Smart and Truckee Roundhouse have been creating and promoting artistic Wildlife Habitat and Corridor Signs for Bear Boxes to alert visitors that they are in wildlife habitat or a corridor. Gratitude Ornaments highlighting a deeper understanding of the Bears relationship to Tahoe and the original Washoe People are also serving to alert visitors while generating revenue to fund these efforts.