



News Release

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Bear Encounter in Bear Valley

(Anchorage) – On Saturday, July 18, Alaska Department of Fish & Game (ADF&G) wildlife staff responded to a reported bear encounter on a trail above the Bear Valley neighborhood, located in south Anchorage. Emergency responders from Anchorage Police Department (APD), Alaska Wildlife Troopers, and Anchorage Fire Department transported an adult hiker from the Brewsters Drive area after the person sustained injuries from a brown bear while hiking on a social trail with another individual and three dogs. ADF&G personnel interviewed witnesses and collected information.

The hikers encountered the bear on a narrow, switch-backed trail uphill from the Bear Valley neighborhood, in an area with heavy vegetation and low visibility. The bear came out of the dense alders, made brief contact with one of the hikers, and left the scene. High winds and inclement weather conditions at the time of the encounter may have increased the chance that the bear was surprised by the hikers and their dogs, even if they were making noise. A single brown bear was later spotted by APD's drone on a nearby hillside; reports of brown bears and black bears in this area, which borders Chugach State Park, are received every year. At least one moose kill has been reported nearby and there is the potential for bears to cache and defend food sources. There are multiple trails in this area crossing through private and municipal lands. ADF&G is placing signs and flagging at trailheads warning people of recent bear activity.

Initial reports that the victim's off-leash dog was attacked and killed by the bear were fortunately proven untrue when another group of hikers encountered the uninjured dog and brought it back to safety, ultimately returning it to its home.

There are many private and public trails throughout Anchorage and the surrounding area that are overgrown at this time of year with tall grass and leafed out shrubs, which can greatly increase the chances of surprise encounters with wildlife. Traveling in groups, making noise, carrying deterrent, having control of your pets and carrying communication when out hiking are all important general safety guidelines to follow when hiking in bear country. Many Anchorage neighborhoods border large green spaces like Chugach State Park and Bicentennial Park. Managing attractants responsibly and ensuring bears cannot access garbage, animal food, or livestock helps keep bears from lingering in residential areas. Always be prepared for the chance of a wildlife encounter, even on trails adjacent to neighborhoods or along roadways.

ADF&G and other public safety agencies are monitoring reports of bear activity in the area. If you have a brown bear encounter or sighting, please call the Anchorage ADF&G office directly at 907-267-2257, Alaska Wildlife Troopers at 907-352-5401, or report online at: <https://www.adfg.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=reportwildlifeencounter.main>. For emergencies, call 9-1-1.

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