



WIND RIVER BEAR INSTITUTE

501c3 nonprofit

NILS J. PEDERSEN – Director

Phone: 907-347-7485

Email: nils@beardogs.org

Website: www.BearDogs.org

Date: May 25, 2026

To: Girdwood Bear Aware

From: Wind River Bear Institute

Proposal: Bear Safety Education Programming for Girdwood

Overview

Wind River Bear Institute (WRBI) proposes providing two educational programs in partnership with Girdwood Bear Aware to strengthen community understanding of bear behavior, improve public safety, and reduce human-bear conflict in Girdwood. These programs are designed to provide practical skills and memorable educational experiences for both children and adults living and recreating in bear country.

Program 1: Inert Bear Spray Training with Robotic Bear Platform

WRBI will deliver hands-on inert bear spray training using our remote-controlled, bear-on-wheels training platform, designed to simulate approaching bear encounters in a safe and controlled setting.

Participants will practice:

- Proper storage, carry, and deployment of bear spray
- Drawing and aiming under realistic conditions
- Understanding optimal uses of bear spray and limitations
- Interpreting common bear behaviors and correct human response

Many people carry bear spray but have never practiced using it. This program converts equipment into practiced skill and increases participant confidence and preparedness in bear country.

Target Audience: Adults, recreationists, hunters, and youth (recommended ages 12+)

Estimated Session Length: 60 – 90 minutes

Estimated Participants: Up to 15 participants per session

Program 2: “Think Like a Bear!” – Interactive Bear Safety Demonstration for Kids & Adults

WRBI will perform our interactive “Think Like a Bear!” skit designed for children and adults living and recreating in bear country. The skit uses a costumed “bear” character together with our friendly & engaging Wildlife K-9 teaching assistants to demonstrate:

- How bears learn behaviors through food rewards
- How people unintentionally teach bears conflict behaviors
- Practical ways to secure attractants around homes and camps
- Common bear behaviors and what to do during encounters
- Respectful coexistence with wildlife

The skit uses familiar concepts like dog training and food rewards to help kids and adults understand how human actions influence bear behavior in fun, entertaining, and memorable ways.

Target Audience: Children and adults

Estimated Session Length: 45 minutes

Estimated Participants: Flexible depending on venue size

Anticipated Outcomes

These programs are intended to:

- Increase community confidence and preparedness in bear country
- Improve understanding of bear behavior
- Reduce human behaviors that lead to conflict with bears
- Encourage stewardship and coexistence practices
- Support Girdwood Bear Aware efforts to reduce human-bear conflicts within the community

WRBI looks forward to continuing its collaborative work with Girdwood Bear Aware to help build a safer and more bear-aware community.

Bear Safety Education Programming Budget

<u>Program Activity</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Amount</u>
Inert Bear Spray Training	Instructor time, robotic bear platform use, & supplies	\$750
“Think Like a Bear!” Interactive Skit	Instructor time, Wildlife K-9, & supplies	\$200

Total Request: \$950

Wind River Bear Institute Overview and Background

The Wind River Bear Institute (WRBI) was founded in 1996 by bear biologist, Carrie L. Hunt, to provide innovative, non-lethal solutions to human-wildlife conflict problems. After testing and developing the product now known as “bear spray” (perhaps the greatest contribution to the world of non-lethal bear deterrence of our time), Hunt began experimenting with other aversive conditioning tools, including the first use of rubber bullets on grizzly bears and on-site “hard” release technique to teach wild bears to avoid human-occupied space; allowing these animals to remain on the landscape without having to be relocated or destroyed. This pursuit also led her to the Karelian Bear Dog (KBD) for preventing and responding to human-wildlife conflicts with a focus on grizzly bears.

The KBD is a hardy hunting dog from Finland that is renowned for their ability to pursue and bay large game safely and effectively. Traditional knowledge of the breed indicates that select KBDs from good hunting lines are fearless even in the pursuit of grizzly bear. Hunt recognized the utility of KBD for wildlife management and began breeding, testing, selecting, placing, and handling KBDs under the working title “Wildlife K-9” (WK9).

Taking on the role of conservationist, the highly adaptable WK9 has proven to be a perfect partner for wildlife managers and as “Wildlife Ambassadors” – bridging the gap between people and wildlife during education & outreach events. Hunt developed the concept of Bear Shepherding©: teaching people how to prevent negative encounters with bears while simultaneously using principles of operant conditioning to teach wild bears behaviorally based life lessons that create boundary awareness and avoidance of human-occupied space.

Over the past 30+ years of working with Federal, State, and Provincial agencies, as well as private landowners and industry throughout western North America and Japan, WRBI’s Bear Shepherding methods and protocols have resulted in hundreds of actions on bears annually by WRBI and our WK9 Handlers with no resulting injuries to bears, WK9s, or humans.

Our Mission: Advance the use of wildlife K-9 dogs to reduce human-wildlife conflict, improve public safety, promote wildlife conservation, conduct research, and provide bear safety training and education to make the world safer for wildlife and people.

Who We Are: Wildlife Biologist, Human-Bear Conflict Specialist – Wildlife K-9 Trainers & Handlers providing innovative solutions to human-wildlife conflict problems.

Wildlife K-9s: Karelian Bear Dogs (or similar dog) bred, evaluated, selected, trained & handled by Wildlife Professionals for human-wildlife conflict management and public education.

Our Services:

- Bear Protection Service:
Biologist/WK9 Teams patrolling for bears and pushing them away from human-use areas, tracking bear activity, managing attractants, providing bear safety education, consulting, personnel training, on-site assistance & response.

- Bear Management Consulting:
Bear Hazard Assessments, Human-Bear Conflict Reduction Programs, Bear Management Plans.

- Personnel Training:
Bear safety training, safe & effective use of bear deterrents, hazing & aversive conditioning techniques, WK9 Training & Handling, Bear Spray Training.

- Bear Den Detection:
Biologist/WK9 Teams paired with FLIR-equipped unmanned aircraft systems to find bear dens for research & avoidance (Pedersen et al. 2019).

- Dog Training:
Evaluations, basic to advanced Partnership Training, WK9 Training & Handler Certification.

- KBD Puppies:
#1 source of bear working KBDs in North America & Japan! All our puppies are tested, evaluated & placed for working aptitude & personality match with owners.

- Bear Safety Education & Outreach:
Friendly & engaging WK9 “Wildlife Ambassadors” bridge the gap between people and wildlife, teaching people how to make the world safer for bears & humans!

Wind River Bear Institute – Wind River Karelian Bear Dog Partners

Nils J. Pedersen



Executive Director of Wind River Bear Institute, 501c3 nonprofit Wildlife Biologist. Based in Fairbanks, Alaska (USA).

Qualifications: M.Sc. Wildlife Biology and Conservation (2019), Wildlife K-9 Training & Handler Certification, Chemical Immobilization of Wildlife, Licensed Operator of Unmanned Aircraft Systems, Firearms.

Specializations: Bear den detection (FLIR & WK9), Bear Shepherding©, Bear Hazard Assessments and Conflict Reduction Plans, Bear Deterrents: Containers, E-fences, Noise Makers & Projectiles, Bear Spray Training.

Carrie L. Hunt



Founder of Wind River Bear Institute, Owner and Director of Wind River Karelian Bear Dog Partners LLC., Wildlife Biologist. Based in Florence, Montana (USA).

Qualifications: M.Sc. Wildlife Biology (1984). Bear Shepherding© and Wildlife K-9 Training and Handler Certification. Recipient of The Wildlife Society: Special Recognition Service Award - 2019.

Specializations: Development of Bear Spray, first testing of rubber bullets on grizzly bears, creator of KBD Wildlife K-9 – Training & Handler Certification, Bear Shepherding©, & Bear Conflict Indexes. Bear Hazard Assessments & Conflict Reduction Plans.



Thank you for your consideration and we look forward to hearing from you

Community Concerns for follow-up

DOT Items:

DOT Alyeska Highway Pedestrian Safety Corridor (Bike Path) concerns:

Refresh of painted stencils: GVSA manager has approval from DOT for approval for GVSA to re-paint stencils. Bollards: GVSA will continue to use bollards seasonally to restrict vehicles from path. Bollards are removed in winter to allow for snow clearing.

GVSA does not have authority or funding mechanism to work on DOT ROW without permission by DOT. Directive to lower the speed limit to 40MPH zone and extend the 30MPH zone, pending information on timeline and infrastructure countermeasures by DOT to support these changes.

Community interest in traffic calming in the 45MPH zone: request to lower speed limit to 30MPH and to add flashing radar "You are Speeding" signage. GBOS resolution of Support was recommended by PSAC in November 2024; resolution 2025-03 was signed and sent to SOA in Jan 2025.

Unrestricted access to airport property. Public should call police to report illegal activity. No recreational access is permitted on airport land. Service Area stated that 2nd gate after the hangar condo to be added to deter parties. DOT is examining this request. Local pilot says that DOT is considering gate just after the last residence on Donner Rd, where airport property begins.

Enforcement Concerns:

Drug/Alcohol use in Girdwood Parks – Chief Achee will have patrol include walk-thru.

Alyeska Highway Speeding. Speed limit enforcement by Whittier Police requested for 45MPH zone.

Unsafe parking on roads - Call Whittier Police for parking enforcement if emergency vehicles are unable to pass. WPD has equipment and authority to enforce municipal parking laws.

Homeless Camps:

Abatement of homeless camps completed spring 2024 and illegal parking has been enforced successfully since then within the Service Area. Starting in 2026 surcharge assessed at dump funds Healthy Spaces team, which respond to public land that needs to be cleaned up. [Report Camp or Trash Concern](#)

Upcoming Events:

Girdwood Farmers Market	TBD May-Sept
Girdwood Forest Fair	July 3-5
Cirque Race	July 25
Blueberry Fest	Aug 16
Alyeska Climb-a-thon	September 12
Alyeska Oktoberfest	September 25 & 26

Al-Anon Meetings	Tuesdays	5PM	Girdwood Clinic
AA	Sundays	7PM	Community Room

From: skedzie64@gmail.com
To: [Girdwood Board of Supervisors](#)
Subject: Brewery overflow parking
Date: Monday, May 25, 2026 3:12:24 PM

[EXTERNAL EMAIL]

To whom it may concern:

My name is Sean Kedzie. I am the Building Plant Operator at Girdwood elementary school. I am writing to express my concern over the parking situation with the brewery. Every weekend and some week days there are dozens of vehicles that park across the Alyeska Highway from the brewery on Donner and Davos Roads. Their parking often obstructs the roads to the point that in an emergency fire/rescue vehicles would absolutely not be able to get through. This is creating an unsafe situation. On top of that people often leave bags of trash and their dogs run loose off leash defecating all over the neighborhood without cleaning up after. The brewery has a sign in their entrance stating "No RVs or Trailers". They tell people to park across the street. This has created an unsafe burden for the neighborhood. I would appreciate this being addressed by the Board and for suggestions on a solution to this issue.

Thank you,

Sean Kedzie
387 Davos Rd. Girdwood, AK
(262)379-9301

From: [Josh Hegna](#)
To: [Kelley, Kyle T.](#)
Cc: rorry@girdwoodbrewing.com; [Brett Marengo](#); [Tyler, Margaret S.](#); coastpizzagirdwood@gmail.com
Subject: Re: Brewery overflow parking
Date: Thursday, May 28, 2026 11:30:17 AM

[EXTERNAL EMAIL]

Hi Kyle (feel free to share with others),

I spoke with the twins, and the concern about emergency access and fire lanes is honestly the first we've heard of it. In nearly 10 years of operating Girdwood Brewing Company, we have never received complaints or been contacted by public safety officials regarding blocked fire lanes associated with our business.

It's also worth noting that we went through an exceptionally rigorous parking review and permitting process with the Municipality of Anchorage when the brewery expanded in 2020. We have gone above and beyond with our parking lot.

We have also made a consistent effort to encourage alternative transportation. We sponsor and promote Glacier Valley Transit, have a shuttle stop at the brewery, provide bicycle parking, and encourage guests to walk, bike, or use transit whenever possible.

For larger events, groups such as Salmon Berry Tours have historically worked with the church for overflow parking arrangements. They have also opened their lot for paid parking on busy days.

We also actively encourage responsible parking behavior through our messaging. We regularly ask guests not to block driveways, fire hydrants, emergency access routes, or Alyeska Highway. We want visitors to respect the community and be considerate of residents.

That said, there are practical limits to what any business can control once visitors arrive in town. On busy weekends, such as Memorial Day, Girdwood can see a significant influx of visitors, including large RVs and motorhomes that create parking challenges throughout the community.

Operating a hospitality business in Girdwood is becoming increasingly challenging, our numbers have dropped every year since 2021. Local businesses continue to face economic pressure and some have closed their doors recently. Our community and its leaders should be looking for solutions to encourage more commerce.

We recognize parking is a broader community issue and one that reflects the growing popularity of Girdwood as a destination. We're committed to being good partners and would welcome collaborative solutions. At the end of the day, vibrant local businesses are a big part of what makes a ski town feel like a community rather than just a resort!

PSAC Members,

For consideration of your June meeting, Item 7, Jake Brakes/Alyeska Highway speeding:

I reside and work from 150 Hightower Road. Though I am meetings nearly all day, my window faces Glacier Creek, and I can hear most traffic as it crosses Glacier Creek bridge and approaches the intersection of Alyeska Highway, Hightower Road and Egloff.

Recently, I witnessed multiple trucks engage their Jack Brakes to slow down when approaching this intersection. I was unable to identify the trucks' ownership/affiliation from my viewpoint. First, per AMC 9.36.370 jack brakes are not permitted within the Municipality (see below for citation). Second, if a truck is engaging Jack Brakes in a 30 mph zone, **they are speeding** as they approach the core of our town's non-motorized transit.

9.36.370 Use of compression brakes prohibited. A. No person shall use compression brakes while operating a motor vehicle within the municipality, except in an emergency. B. For the purpose of this section, the term "compression brake" means a hydraulic engine attachment that converts a diesel engine into an air compressor and, when engaged, operates to slow the vehicle

Girdwood has many active construction sites operated by vendors who may not be familiar with Girdwood's governance and affiliation with the Municipality. I recommend a three part education and enforcement:

- A. PSAC compose and distribute a letter to those vendors who have active construction permits (available as public information from the Permit Center)
- B. Stage Whittier Police at the Alyeska/Hightower intersection to proactively enforce at key times these vendors enter and exit the valley: 8 AM, 11 AM, 3 PM and 5 PM.
- C. Refresh the very faded orange flags at along Alyeska Highway's Speed Signage

Notably, where as I appreciate the enforcement among the 45 mph area with a flashing sign similar to what Hope uses, we still have issues up valley where there are many open construction permits and activities.

Christina Hendrickson
PO Box 8
Girdwood, AK 99587

Whittier Police Department
Monthly Activity Report – March 2026

Calls by Service Area

Service Area	Calls
Whittier	78
Girdwood Service Area	194
Other	3
Total	282

Narrative Summary

In March 2026, WPD handled 282 calls for service. Excluding Security Checks, Whittier accounted for 28 and Girdwood 59 calls. Serious incidents stood out, including Theft/Burglary (4), Suicidal / Mental Health (4), MVA/Accident (1), Alarm (1). Jurisdictional mix: Whittier 27.7%, Girdwood 68.8%, Other 1.1%.

Bullet-Point Summary

- Whittier: 78 calls. Top types: EMS/Fire (9), Parking Problem (4), Disturbance (3).
- Girdwood: 194 calls. Top types: Traffic (20), Welfare Check (4), Reddi (4).
- Other: 3 calls. Top types: Reddi (1), Agency Assist (1), Traffic (1).

Call Types by Jurisdiction

Call Type	Whittier	Girdwood	Other	Total
Security Check	50	135	0	185
Traffic	1	20	1	22
EMS/Fire	9	1	0	10
Disturbance	3	4	0	7
Reddi	1	4	1	6
Agency Assist	1	2	1	4
Information	1	3	0	4
Parking Problem	4	0	0	4
Suicidal / Mental Health	0	4	0	4
Theft/Burglary	1	3	0	4
Welfare Check	0	4	0	4
Animal	1	2	0	3
Community Relations	2	0	0	2
Motorist Assist	2	0	0	2
Unspecified in CAD	0	2	0	2
911 Abandoned Call	0	1	0	1
Abandoned Vehicle	1	0	0	1
Alarm	0	1	0	1
Citizen Assist	0	1	0	1
Criminal Mischief	0	1	0	1
Found Property	0	1	0	1
Juvenile Problem	0	1	0	1
MVA/Accident	0	1	0	1
Phone Call Request	0	1	0	1
Protective Order	0	1	0	1

Sexual Abuse Of A Minor	0	1	0	1
Training	1	0	0	1

Citation Information

Category	Whittier	Girdwood Service Area	Other	Total
Parking	3	0	0	3
Speeding	0	7	0	7
Total	3	7	0	10

Training:

Officer Tim Sampson, Lt. Jerry Herrod and Chief Andre Achee attended the Law Enforcement Management Institute (LEMI) sponsored by Alaska Police Standards Council and Alaska Public Risk Alliance in Anchorage, Alaska. Officers received 32 hours of training in various areas of police liabilities.

We have continual training scheduled for our police personnel throughout the year, including first line supervisor training, advance supervision training, and Field Training Officers Certifications.

Personnel:

We are proud to announce we have one officer to fill one of our two vacancies. This will be the first time in eight years that Whittier Police Department has hired a recruit police officer. The officer, Alex Huffman, will be attending the Law Enforcement Training Academy (UAF) in Fairbanks, Alaska for approximately 4 months. Upon completion of the academy the recruit will start their three-month formalized Field Training Program with Whittier Police.

Officer Lloyd Willis received his Alaska Police Standards Council Intermediate Police Certificate in March 2026.

Modernization Projects:

The Whittier Police Department has multiple projects in our queue to help modernize and enhance our agency to better serve our community.

The Whittier Police Department has been awarded a National Highway Transportation Safety Administration grant for Tracs software, laptops and bar code scanners to assist in traffic accident investigations and digital citation processing. We are currently working on reviewing and purchasing necessary equipment for this project.

Policy Review and Implementation of updated police policies and procedures manuals. Assessment of modernization of our police fleet to include in-car recording.

Event Update:

Whittier Police are currently preparing and planning for upcoming Slush Cup activities in Girdwood, Independence Day activities in Girdwood and Whittier to include Forest Fair.

And lastly preparation for our annual in-service training in the Fall of 2026.

WUI-CAT did not meet in May but still has the following update and attachments:

AFD Update:

No updates on chipping program at this time.

Sprinkler kits:

some components have arrived, which is huge progress. Still awaiting remainder of the kit components and need time to assemble kits.

Next planned outreach are Girdwood Forest Fair and Eagle River Bear Paw Festival. FFair organizers have been communicating with Stephanie and she was awaiting final confirmation for booth space last week.

General Updates:

- Our [2026 Wildfire Division Brochure](#) is available on our website and printed copies are available in our office
- Firewise assessments are rolling in. Please continue encouraging residents to [get on our list](#).
- On May 19, we had our first larger wildfire incident of the season near 100th Avenue and C Street. Previous week's [Wildfire Wednesday](#) included a briefing on the incident. While this event brought increased attention to wildfire risk, it also demonstrated how quickly AFD and DFFP were able to respond and work together. Throughout the incident, we maintained communication with partner agencies, including Girdwood Fire, Chugiak Fire, and JBER, while also coordinating with the Office of Emergency Management regarding potential evacuation messaging and coordination needs. Incidents such as this demonstrate the level of operational readiness and interagency coordination in place as we begin to see increased wildfire potential across the municipality.
- Smart911 stickers are available. If you know of any businesses or community partners willing to help with outreach, such as coffee shops, pizza shops, or other public-facing locations, please let us know. We have stickers available and can produce additional sheets as needed.

Further, the WiRē partnership for future community outreach and wildfire mitigation has begun. Girdwood SPU (Suppression Protection Unit) is one of the areas included in the project.

Phase 1 involves rapid curbside wildfire risk assessments, conducted by a small number of AFD's light-duty personnel. They anticipate the assessments in Girdwood to begin last week. No action is needed from GFD or public at this time.

Engagement begins in Phase 2:

Surveys will be mailed out during Phase 2 and Girdwood community is encouraged to complete the survey.

If community members inquire about the activity, staff will have informational leave-behind flyers available. Stephanie Dufek has also scheduled a FB and Instagram post for last week to notify the community that assessments are beginning and explain the purpose of the project.

Project Website:

<https://www.muni.org/Departments/Fire/Wildfire/Pages/WiRe.aspx>

Wildfire Wednesday Page:

<https://www.facebook.com/AnchorageFireDept/videos/wildfire-wednesday-episode-20-june-3-2026/1771471594198136/>

GIRDWOOD

We're Coming to You



RAPID WILDFIRE RISK ASSESSMENTS HAPPENING IN YOUR COMMUNITY

- ✓ Conducted from the road
- ✓ No property access
- ✓ No enforcement
- ✓ Used for planning and support

**Coming Soon: Your opportunity to
participate**

*Wildfire risk looks different in Girdwood.
That's why we're coming to you.*



GIRDWOOD

We're Coming to You



RAPID WILDFIRE RISK ASSESSMENTS HAPPENING IN YOUR COMMUNITY

We are performing quick observations that help us understand wildfire risk in [Girdwood](#).

- ✓ Conducted from the road
- ✓ No property access
- ✓ No enforcement
- ✓ Used for planning and support only



Wildfire risk looks different in Girdwood.
That's why we're coming to you.



TOGETHER, WE ARE BUILDING A SAFER GIRDWOOD
THROUGHOUT WILDFIRE SEASON

