



### **Bitterroot National Forest**

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# **News Release**

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## **Bear Safety Event and Training Coming to the Bitterroot**

Hamilton, Montana (May 10, 2019) – The Bear Aware educational trailer is coming to Hamilton, Montana on May 23<sup>rd</sup> for an open house event. The Bitterroot National Forest Supervisor’s Office in Hamilton will be hosting the open house to provide bear awareness information to attendees. The free event will feature the Montana Bear Education Working Group’s Bear Aware trailer, bear spray demonstrations, and a bear safety training session for the public.

“We’re excited to bring the bear program to Hamilton and talk to folks in the area about how to be bear aware,” said bear education coordinator Danielle Oyler. “The Bitterroot Valley is an important place to be discussing bear safety, especially since we had a grizzly bear show up near Stevensville just last October and black bears are commonly seen here.”

The trailer includes a remote-controlled charging bear demonstration used to teach participants how to read bear behavior and deploy their bear spray. The trailer also includes an assortment of bear-resistant containers, three life-size bear mounts, skulls, and more.

Experts will be on hand from 1-6 pm to answer questions and run demonstrations. Bear aware talks will be held at the event at 1pm, 3pm, and 5pm. The 25-minute talks cover prevention of bear encounters, how to respond to bear encounters, how to carry and use bear spray, and the opportunity to practice using bear spray with the charging bear simulation.

Later in the evening, from 6:00-7:30 pm, there will be a free in-depth bear safety lecture inside the Forest Service office. This presentation will cover bear biology, behavior, attractants, camping in bear country, preventing and handling bear encounters, and more. A can of bear spray will be given out as a door prize to a lucky winner.

The Montana Bear Education Working Group is made up of Montana Fish Wildlife and Parks, U.S. Forest Service, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Wildlife Conservation Society, Wildlife Management Institute, and People & Carnivores. The Working Group supports bear outreach and education efforts across bear country in Montana.

For more information, contact Danielle Oyler, education coordinator at [Danielle.c.oyler@gmail.com](mailto:Danielle.c.oyler@gmail.com) or Sara Sylte, outreach specialist at [ssylte@fs.fed.us](mailto:ssylte@fs.fed.us) and on [www.facebook.com/mtbewg](http://www.facebook.com/mtbewg).

The Bitterroot National Forest Supervisor's Office is located at 1801 N. First Street in Hamilton, just north of Mildenberger Motors. They can be reached at 406-363-7100 or by visiting [www.fs.usda.gov/bitterroot](http://www.fs.usda.gov/bitterroot).

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