

**WINGFIELD RESERVE HOMEOWNERS' ASSOCIATION, INC.**  
**"BEAR-WISE" COMMUNITY POLICY**

Wingfield Reserve is a community that derives its desirability in part from its proximity to the Wekiva River Preserve and the wildlife that inhabit it. In light of this, it is likely that Florida black bears will enter the community from time to time seeking food sources, which may result in bear encounters that pose potential hazards for residents and their invitees. When bears become accustomed to entering residential areas for food, they become "habituated" to human contact, and no longer fear humans. These circumstances can give rise to attacks when humans encounter them, typically by surprising them in places where they were not expected. Bears that have become habituated to human contact cannot necessarily be relocated successfully, since they tend to seek out human food sources again in other locations. As such, these bears generally have to be euthanized. Accordingly, it is in the best interests of the community and its residents, as well as the local bear population, to implement, foster and promote a program establishing Wingfield Reserve as a "bear-wise" community, by promulgating standards, governing the conduct of residents, that are intended to minimize the circumstances giving rise to (i) bear incursions into the community, and (ii) habituation of the local bear population to human contact.

To address this problem for the benefit of all Wingfield Reserve residents, and in order to promote the health, safety and welfare of the community and its residents, Wingfield Reserve Homeowners' Association, Inc. (the "Association"), by and through its Board of Directors and pursuant to the authority granted in (i) Article V, Section 2 of the Declaration of Covenants and Restrictions (the "Declaration"), (ii) Article VI, Section 3 of the Declaration, and (iii) Article IV of the Association's Articles of Incorporation, has adopted this Policy to establish Wingfield Reserve as a "bear-wise" community.

**The following are matters of which residents should be aware, and actions that residents should take in order to be good stewards within the community and reduce bear interactions:**

- **Education** - Be aware of the possibility that bears will enter the community. Bears may be encountered by homeowners in yards, or walking around the community, especially when walking dogs. When out at night, be alert and carry a flashlight to avoid being surprised by a bear. Consider carrying an air horn and/or bear spray. Review the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission webpage called
  - "Living with Black Bears," at <https://myfwc.com/wildlifehabitats/wildlife/bear/wise/>. This webpage offers suggestions on how best to react in the event of bear contact.
  - Other resources include: The Get Bear Smart Society at <http://www.bears mart.com>
  - The Southeastern Association of Fish & Wildlife Agencies
- **Reporting Bear Activity** -
  - Florida Fish & Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) Ocala Regional Office at (352) 732-1225 - Report bear encounters or intrusive bear activity.
  - FWC at (888) 404-3922 - Report known instances of anyone feeding bears.
  - **Maintaining Signage** - The Association will maintain a permanent sign at the entrance to the community, warning incoming drivers that the community is in an area where bears may be encountered, and advising them to be alert and avoid contact.
- **Limiting Natural Food Sources** - Bears are attracted to certain fruit trees (not citrus), nut trees and berry bushes. If adding landscaping to your property, please investigate and avoid this type

of landscaping, keeping in mind that many plants produce berries or seeds that people don't eat, but bears do; so, select landscaping with care. Vegetable gardens, especially those containing potatoes and root vegetables such as carrots and beets, also attract bears; so those types of vegetables should be avoided in gardens. Fruit trees, nut trees, berry bushes and vegetable gardens should not be placed near walkways, patios, porches or entranceways. Fruits, nuts, berries and vegetables should be collected when ripe, or if fallen. Birdfeeders are discouraged, but if used, the birdseed and feeder should be brought indoors at night. If using a birdfeeder, quality birdseed without red millet seeds should be used, as most birds toss this type of seed out of the feeder, allowing it to accumulate on the ground and attract bears. The ground underneath birdfeeders should be kept free from accumulations of birdseed. The housing of domestic animals outside the home (such as in bird cages, rabbit cages, dog houses, etc.) should be avoided, but if done, then all pet enclosures should be secured to preclude access by bears.

- **Securing Garages, Patios and Porches** - Bears enter garages, patios and porches looking for garbage, pet food and other attractants. While they are there, they may open cabinets, freezers and refrigerators looking for food, or even enter the house. Garage doors should be kept closed except when entering or exiting the garage or when the garage is occupied by people. BBQ grills should not be unattended while in use (since the scent is a bear attractant) and should be thoroughly cleaned after each use. Used plates, dishes, containers and glasses should be removed from patios and porches promptly following use.
- **Securing vehicles** - Bears are known to break into vehicles, especially when they smell food in them. You should not leave pet food, groceries, garbage, coolers or food products of any type or other scented items (like chapstick) in vehicles.

**The following are requirements which will be enforced by the Association:**

- **Securing Human Food Sources** - Residents may not feed wild animals of any kind, with the exception of birds, nor engage in conduct that attracts wild animals into the community. Do not leave food waste in areas that are accessible by wild animals, or allow wild animals to access trash cans, food waste, pet food, BBQ grills, refrigerators or freezers in garages, porches or patios. If pets are fed outside the house, pet food must be brought inside a secure structure (inaccessible by bears) after the pets are fed. Composting food waste is prohibited unless it is secured to preclude access by bears. Beekeeping attracts bears, and is prohibited. Salt and mineral blocks also attract bears, and are prohibited.
- **Use of “Bear-Resistant” Trash Cans** - The Association will initially purchase and provide for each resident's use a single commercially manufactured “bear-resistant” trash can meeting the requirements of Seminole County and the applicable waste-hauler servicing the community, to be used for the disposition of household food waste. All food waste must be placed in a bear resistant trash can for pick-up by the waste-hauler. Other waste (i.e., non-food waste) may be placed in a regular trash can. The annual or periodic fee if any required by the waste-hauler to service each resident's bear-resistant trash can, shall be included in the assessments levied by the Association against the homeowners. Refuse cans containing food waste may not be put out for pick-up in advance of the morning of collection and may not remain at the street beyond the end of the day of pickup. Refuse cans used for food waste (even if empty) must be stored inside the garage, as they are a bear attractant. Bear-resistant trash cans provided by the Association are the property of the Association. Each initial resident's bear-resistant trash can have a serial number indexed to that resident's address. If such a can is lost or damaged beyond use, it must be replaced by the resident at the resident's expense. When a resident sells their home, they must provide the purchaser with the seller's bear-resistant trash can. Any incoming purchaser who does not obtain the outgoing seller's bear-resistant trash can

will be responsible for purchasing a new bear-resistant trash can meeting the requirements of Seminole County and the applicable waste-hauler.

Feeding bears (whether deliberately or inadvertently) can also be a violation of Florida law, entitling the FWC or other governmental authorities to impose fines or other penalties. This Policy does not address such matters, which are in addition to any remedies the Association may be able to assert for a violation of the requirements of this Policy.

Non-compliance with any requirement of this Policy shall be addressed by the Association in the same manner as a violation of the Declaration. This may include, without limitation, the imposition of fines in accordance with the requirements of Section 720.305, Florida Statutes, as it may be amended from time to time. The fining schedule for violations of this Policy shall be as follows:

- (i) 1st violation: Warning letter from Association;
- (ii) 2nd violation: \$250 fine;
- (iii) 3rd violation: \$500 fine;
- (iv) 4th and each subsequent violation: \$1,000 fine.

*Revised: 10-12-21 (to insert initial purchase of cans, clarify waste fees, and update URLs)*