



**THE HUMANE SOCIETY  
OF THE UNITED STATES**

12/15/23

Dear Oregon Conservation and Recreation Fund Committee Members:

It is with great pleasure that we write this final grant report for our project titled, “Inspiring Personal Stewardship: Educating Wild and Scenic Rogue River Recreators about Bears.” Despite many challenges, the project has been a success and has sparked momentum to help protect bears and hikers alike in the Rogue River corridor. We are so grateful for the funding that made this project possible and would be happy to provide any further details if requested.

**Summary of events:** Building on momentum from the partners’ planning meeting in March of 2022, the HSUS, Kalmiopsis Audubon and Rogue Riverkeeper (herein referred to as “we”) worked with Orange Torpedo (also known as Whitewater Cowboys), the local business/outfitter, to make the canisters available for rent starting in May of 2022 (see [Whitewater Cowboys website](#) where the canisters are available to rent). The canister collection bin was not placed until a year later, due mostly to delays in material availability. We are pleased to report that since May of 2022, at least 30 canisters have been rented with a range of 3-7 days of use.

Data from the management agencies thus far suggests that 2023 was a slow year for human-bear conflict activity, with only one bear showing an interest in food at Half Moon Bar, a conflict for which non-lethal mitigation techniques were successfully employed (e.g., increased signage).

**Progress made:** We made great strides in advertising that the canisters are available for rent, including a [press release](#), [Facebook posts](#), [announcements in local newspapers](#), [agency updates](#) and a [live segment](#) on the local NPR affiliate show, “The Jefferson Exchange.” Next year we hope to invite local writer [Zach Urness](#) of the Statesman Journal to do a story about the canister program and how to prevent conflicts with bears. The Humane Society of the United States presented a poster on the project at the International Wildlife Coexistence Network conference in Pray, Montana in October 2022. The momentum and activities of our pilot project inspired partners, including the USFS, to also promote bear aware behaviors with their [press releases](#) and FB posts. On May 4, 2023, a free public presentation on hiking the Rogue River Trail and the canister rental program was held at the Medford REI store to advertise the canister rental program and was attended by ten people.

**Successes:** One big success of this project was that each time we or partners advertised or promoted our bear canister project, it elevated public knowledge of the importance of using bear aware practices in the outdoors. Another ancillary success of this project is the network of partners that has been established to address conflicts with bears in the Rogue River corridor as well as other possible management issues. Each organization or agency now benefits from having connections with all others involved.

**Challenges:** We encountered several hurdles with this project including road and trail closures, wildfires and supply chain issues that led to unexpected delays. We were unable to implement the post-trip survey that we’d initially envisioned due to logistical challenges, but we pivoted and were able to make the bear report forms that go with the canisters blue to distinguish them from other bear report forms, which enabled the agency to distinguish reports from canister users.

**Next steps:** We intend to continue efforts to advertise that the canisters are available for rent, and to keep working collaboratively with our project partners to prevent human-bear conflicts along the Rogue River.

Again, we are truly grateful for the funding we received from OCRF to help get this project started and would be happy to provide reports in future years if requested.

Sincerely,

Susan Getty