



## The Bear Facts – Hot Springs Village

### Description

Click [here](#) to see the Bears of Arkansas presentation by Myron Means and sponsored by the Lifelong Learning Institute of Hot Springs Village and Todd Noles.

Larry Wilson, Chairman of the Board of Directors of Hot Springs Village [Lifelong Learning Institute](#) (LLI), in conjunction with [Todd Noles](#), HSVPOA Manager of Common Property, Forest, and Wildlife, is sponsoring a presentation on “Bears of Arkansas.”

This free and exciting LLI event is scheduled for November 2, 2020, at 1:00 p.m. This event is being held at the Ponce de Leon Center in the Ouachita Building at the Casa de la Carta Room (card room). The Ouachita Building is located across from the Woodlands Auditorium. (Ponce de Leon Center is comprised of two buildings, the Ouachita Building and the Woodlands Auditorium which are connected by a port cochere.)

Due to COVID restrictions, seating is limited to the first 50. Advance registration is required. Please register [here](#). Masks must be worn at all times.

### Respected authority on Arkansas bears – Myron Means

The presenter of “Arkansas Bears” is Myron Means, the Large Carnivore Program Coordinator (Biologist for the Arkansas Game and Fish Commission). Biologist Means is a respected authority on bears in Arkansas and has been working for the AR Game and Fish Commission for over two decades. Means began working with Arkansas bears while attending school at Arkansas Tech and U of A at Fayetteville. This is a wonderful opportunity to hear him speak.

Formerly, Mean’s title was Lead Bear Biologist. There have been enough legitimate mountain lion sightings in Arkansas to necessitate the change in title to Large Carnivore Program Coordinator.

### When a bear becomes a nuisance

There have been many bear sightings in the village. Manager Noles has estimated the village to have

four bear inhabitants. Two of these are adults, and two are juveniles. Typically bear sightings in Arkansas increase in July. “Food is what they’re after at this time of year,” said Means. (quote from [The Mena Star](#))

Bears are known to have a keen sense of smell and may stand on their hind legs with their noses in the air to catch a scent. It has been reported that the bears in Hot Springs Village are eating out of bird feeders and also from garbage cans.

At least one bear has been sighted entering garages and has become a nuisance. It is not only damaging bird feeders but also has damaged a freezer in a garage.

**John And Mary Szczepaniak’s garage (story behind this at the bottom of this article)\***

“Nuisance bears” are defined as **bears** who lose their fear of people. Most often these are young subadult males who have just left their mothers and are learning how to obtain food. Also, mothers with young cubs can become a nuisance.

A hungry bear may also be attracted to dog food stored in the garage, garbage cans, and grills with remnants of food stuck. Storing your dog food in your garage and leaving the door open seems to the bear, an open invitation to explore and partake, as do bird feeders and dirty grills left in your yard.

According to the [Humane Society of the United States](#), “bears are normally wary of people, but if a bear finds food without getting frightened away, he may come back for more. Each time this happens, he can become less fearful—and this habituation can lead to problems.” This is what is happening in Hot Springs Village.



**Bear in Hot Springs Village (photo courtesy of David Cohen)**

The Arkansas Game and Fish Commission has received many reports of bear sightings in the village. They have the final say on what happens when a bear becomes a nuisance.

Means has the bear facts and will be happy to answer your questions following his presentation.

Noles will also be on hand to answer any questions villagers may have regarding village wildlife, the Urban Deer Hunt, or any other questions in his field of expertise.

Please be mindful and don't feed the bears, either intentionally or unintentionally.

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Click [here](#) to visit the Lifelong Learning Institute's website. If you have any questions about LLI or details of this presentation, Larry Wilson can be contacted by email at [lliofhsvinc@gmail.com](mailto:lliofhsvinc@gmail.com).

### **Hot Springs Village bear visits the Szczepaniaks**

A bear visited John and Mary Szczepaniak's garage two times. The video posted above is from the second visit. The story below is about the first incident. In Mary's own words:

"The first time, I went out to put something in the fridge & found one of the freezer drawers open and the ice cream missing. I had made it for John's birthday. I had told him that I had a plan for what was left after the cake was gone, so I thought he had taken it when I saw it gone. I hollered at him, but he wasn't there. So, I went down to the shop and confronted him. He was clueless. So, we went up to the garage, and I showed him how I found the drawer. I told him he should check the garage to see if anything else was missing. He found the garbage strewn about the garage and out onto the driveway & between our house and our next-door neighbors. Also, my [ice cream] bowl was in their yard. The bear wasn't able to eat the ice cream because I left the paddle in the bowl.

"We concluded that a raccoon could not have carried that bowl. It's too heavy. And people don't come up here, so it was unlikely that it was a human. We decided it must be a bear. I thought it was funny, so I called my next-door neighbor. She asked if my story was about a bear. Her other next-door neighbor had called and said they had seen a bear between their house and their other next-door neighbor. So, that confirmed that it was a bear. After that, John activated the camera for that area for 24 hrs."

The Szczepaniaks no longer leave their garage door open.

By [Cheryl Dowden](#), October 14, 2020

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