

ODFGA Meeting October 23 2024 – Minutes

1. In-person meeting called to order at 7:00 PM with 16 attendees.
2. Matt Zazula opened the meeting with the winter coat drive, the lady running it explained the program and thanked the club for the collaboration. Club members helped carry the donations into her car.
3. Matt introduced our guest speaker Todd, a retired fish and wildlife officer who investigated dozens of wildlife incidents. Todd's presentation was super interesting and here are some of the topics covered:
 - a. We are in a hotspot area for grizzly bear attacks, the area going from Longview, through Sundre, to Nordegg seems to be where a lot of the incidents have happened over the years.
 - b. Bear spray vs firearms: bear spray is a great tool, it must be carried at all times, even if you are also carrying a firearm, and it must always be in an accessible location. If well used it is very effective. Firearms can be also effective but bear spray is more likely to be operated successfully in a bear encounter than a firearm is.
 - c. Don't ever run away from a bear, stand your ground.
 - d. If a black bear attacks, always fight back
 - e. Grizzlies that are defending territory or cubs, play dead as much as possible.

- f. Habituated and food conditioned bears have to be dealt with for safety reasons. They are usually euthanized. Therefore, be bear smart and never leave food items accessible to bears.
 - g. Cougars usually get very habituated to one food source in particular, porcupine, mule deer are common prey. If a cougar gets habituated to eating pets or farm animals this predator is usually removed from the landscape as it will prey on these animals very frequently.
 - h. In most investigations DNA testing is used to identify the species and gender of the animals involved, as well as identifying individual animals.
 - i. Alberta has one of the best, if not the best, DNA laboratories that deal with wildlife samples in North America.
4. Adjourn at 9:00 pm