



About Us

The North American Bear Center is the only black bear and wildlife educational facility of its kind. Dedicated to replacing old myths with facts, it lets people learn from the bears themselves about bear behavior, ecology, and their relations with humans.

Great things await you inside! The most common expression we hear from first-time visitors as they step inside the door of the Bear Center is "WOW!"

All bear mounts, which include polar, black, and brown/grizzly, are posed naturally to enhance the mood. A huge life-sized replica of an extinct short-faced bear skeleton dominates the main exhibit area. A wall of windows overlooks the bear enclosure with its pond and waterfalls. Subtle background sounds of bears foraging, cubs nursing, and birds singing fill the air—all natural sounds that come from 60+ exhibits featuring TVs playing high-definition video footage of wild black bears, brown/grizzly, and polar bears as they go about their daily activities in the forests, coastal regions and tundra. Our Northwoods Ecology Hall (opened spring 2015) features the many animals that black bears encounter in northwoods habitats and includes the history and values of those habitats. New exhibits include a 660-gallon aquarium, terrariums with local reptiles and amphibians, a majestic bull moose mount, woodland caribou mount, and a 40-foot wildlife exhibit showcasing over 35 mammals and birds in seasonal habitat settings. Our touchscreen monitors make it easy for you to learn about all of these animals.

The associated Hope Learning Center classroom gives us the ability to share all this information with busloads of students and other large groups. Contact us at

(218) 365-7879 for more information about custom group programs and special group rates. The Bear Center is also home to our four ambassador black bears living in a 2.5 acre naturally forested enclosure with a pond and waterfalls. The bears forage on a variety of wild foods in the enclosure. The bear enclosure is a model for how captive bears live as natural a life as possible. Our staff and bear educators care for and work with the bears in many ways to enrich their lives.

The bears can be viewed from the inside viewing windows or the outdoor viewing balcony-both offer an excellent view of the pond and waterfall area that the bears frequent. People watch their interactions as they play, forage, swim, scent-mark, vocalize, climb trees, hibernate, and just be bears. In the process, these ambassador bears give viewers insights into the behavior of black bears that most could not see elsewhere.

- [Ted](#) our oldest male black bear. Ted demonstrates gentleness and sociability as he is seen by visitors.
- [Lucky](#) is quite a comedian. Raised here in this setting of prime black bear habitat, Lucky lets visitors learn as he demonstrates black bear playfulness.
- [Holly](#), our oldest female, is a delight to watch as she explores her new forever-home and demonstrates many wild bear behaviors.
- [Tasha](#), arrived on June 6, 2016 from Kentucky. Tasha is a sweet bear and has adjusted well to her new home.

The Cub Room beckons kids of all ages to explore the world of black bears. Children and cubs learn by play and socialization. The Cub Room allows exploration by touch and educational displays. The man-made den allows kids to act like bears and crawl inside and explore. Videos show adults and children the relationship between a mother bear and her cubs. The Bear Center features a theater playing Dr. Rogers's research through his many documentaries including the BBC's "Bearwalker of the Northwoods." Learn about trees, plants, wild bear foods, bear and animal sign while taking a casual walk on our quarter-mile interpretive nature trails. Trails are self-guided. Shop our large selection of bear-themed merchandise and unique custom-made products. Enjoy the Northwoods Wildlife Gallery. Or shop from the comfort of your home, visit our website at www.bear.org to purchase online.

Ask about our Membership Program to support our mission and you can save 10%

in our Gift Shop. Visit our website or call the Bear Center for the current list of programs. You won't want to miss our **Free** Behind the Scene tours offered throughout the day.

Never has education been so important. Bear habitat is shrinking worldwide as people move into bear habitat and refuse to coexist with animals they fear. The future of the bears that live around these people depends upon knowledge and attitude. The mission of the North American Bear Center is to advance the long-term survival of wild bear populations through dispelling myths and misconceptions and replacing them with scientific facts about bears and their role in the ecosystem and their relations with humans.

The videos of wild bears featured at the North American Bear Center let people learn from the bears themselves. They include videos on vocalizations, body language, mating, fighting, nursing, hibernation, care of cubs, exiting from the den, foraging for different classes of food, playing, and weekly updated videos on bear activities in the woods around Ely.

Dr. Rogers's trust-based research methods combining scientific observation with modern technology reveal more about black bear life than was ever learned with traps and tranquilizers. Attitudes change as bears themselves refute our most deeply held misconceptions.

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