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Official Bear Policy

Black bears are part of the forest environment of Stokes State Forest. The people that come to visit the forest should think of themselves as guests of the forest wildlife. Encounters with bears usually pose little threat to people. Problems can, however, arise if bears lose their fear of humans. This can happen if the bear's interaction with humans is a positive one that results in some kind of reward for the bear. Please take these precautions to insure that the bears in Stokes State Forest stay wild and do not become a problem for the human visitors to the forest.

- ✓ Do not attract bears by making food available to them. Feeding bears is a dangerous activity. Bears that are fed by humans lose their fear of humans and eventually become problem bears that have to be removed from their forest home.
- ✓ Students are **prohibited** from having food in their possession outside of the dining hall. Food in the cabins will not only attract bears, but will also attract raccoons and rodents.
- ✓ No one should consume food out on the trail. Any kind of food or gum will attract bears.
- ✓ If you encounter a bear while you are in the forest, it will probably retreat -- its primary interest is food, not you! If you do see a bear, please observe the following rules:
 - ! Do not approach the bear to take pictures, to get a better look, or for any other reason.
 - ! Make a lot of noise by clapping your hands together, singing and or shouting loudly, blowing a whistle, etc. The bear will likely go away unless you do something to attract it.
 - ! If the bear does not leave, don't panic. Just gather your group together and leave the area in an orderly fashion.

Bears Are Interesting But Potentially Dangerous Wild Animals.
Treat Them With Respect.

Don't Carry Food, Candy, or Gum While You Are Outside.