

WHO IS CHUCK BARTLEBAUGH

Founder of the Be Bear Aware Campaign

Chuck Bartlebaugh is the founder and director of the Be Bear Aware Campaign, formerly known as the Center for Wildlife Information. For 40+ years Chuck has been a dedicated force in educating the public on bear avoidance safety techniques and wildlife stewardship.

In Chuck's early days he was a semi-professional race car driver and an avid outdoorsman who loved to photograph wildlife, especially bears, in their natural landscapes. This included the Arctic for Polar Bears, remote areas of Alaska for Brown Bears and Grizzly bears in the lower 48 states and western Canada, and Black Bears throughout North America.

It was during his trips to national parks, forests, and wildlife refuges that he noticed visitors did not know how to enjoy wildlife, especially bears, safely and responsibly. The more he watched the more he saw people attempt to approach and interact with wildlife or get too close for the sake of a photograph. He also noticed people feeding bears. This led Chuck to research and document human-wildlife conflicts and their causes.

In the late 1980s Chuck coordinated an intensive study of visitors to Yellowstone National Park in partnership with Eastern Michigan University professor Gail Compton and his students. It was published in the Yellowstone Science Publication, Winter 1994 edition. Chuck took the study further to include monitoring television shows, advertisements, books, and magazines and found they were a major source of misinformation and often promoted getting up close and personal with wildlife. It was clear that the public needed to receive clear, concise, and consistent wildlife stewardship and bear avoidance safety information on how to enjoy wildlife safely and responsibly without stressing or harassing them.



Chuck established the National Be Bear Aware Campaign in 1991. He worked closely with the Interagency Grizzly Bear Committee, bear biologists, interpretive specialists, campground hosts, and wildlife and land management agency personnel to determine the issues they faced and what was needed to correct them.

In 1998 the Yellowstone Subcommittee of the Interagency Grizzly Bear Committee asked Chuck to prepare a review report on the questions surrounding bear spray. This resulted in the development of training protocol for hunters, hikers, agency personnel, and the general public on bear avoidance techniques and how and when to use bear spray. He also assisted the Environmental Protection Agency to develop their first bear spray educational brochure.





Chuck and the Be Bear Aware Campaign has been recognized by past Presidents, Arizona Department of Game and Fish, New Mexico Department of Game and Fish, the Interagency Grizzly Bear Committee, and received the Northern Regional Forester Award. The Bear Avoidance and Wildlife Stewardship Training Program he developed has been acknowledged in the Congressional Record and is in use by youth groups and school teachers nationwide, state and federal wildlife agencies, and outdoor recreationists including hunting and fishing guides.

[About Chuck Bartlebaugh](#)

Over the past 40 years Chuck has travelled throughout all of North America to areas where bears gather and people viewed them. The knowledge he gained by working with bear management specialists and observing public interactions with wildlife has been incorporated into the Be Bear Aware Campaign and reviewed by bear specialists for all kinds of bears found in North America.

[An Interview with Chuck Bartlebaugh](#)

[Acknowledgement from President George Bush](#)

[Congressional Record Acknowledgement](#)

[General Schwarzkopf Letter of Support](#)

In 1991 the Center for Wildlife Information (now known as the Be Bear Aware Campaign) reached out to General Norman H. Schwarzkopf for his support to help educate recreationists and assist the recovery of the grizzly bear. He went on to be our spokesperson for many years until he passed away in 2012.

[Yellowstone Association Journal 1988](#)

Chuck conducted an observational study of tourists interacting with wildlife in Yellowstone National Park. It was acknowledged in an article within the Yellowstone Association Journal.

[From the Desert Southwest to the Arctic slide show](#)

A beautiful display of nature and wildlife Chuck photographed across United States and Canada.

Chuck has also been acknowledged by the Chief of the Forest Service, the Director of the National Park Service, and the Director of the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service along with many state agencies.