



## Bear-bait violators get tagged

By Vanessa Miller  
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Animal-rights activists are taking to the streets in an attempt to save bears by keeping them out of Boulder neighborhoods.

Volunteers from Sinapu, Sierra Club and In Defense of Animals are trolling area neighborhoods and leaving notices on trash containers that are in violation of city code. Boulder law prohibits residents from rolling bins streetside the night before garbage-collection day.

The warnings, although not citations with legal consequences, label trash bins that break the law and point enforcement officers toward violations.

"We're hoping that if we can educate people, then they will take responsibility and work to not attract bears to residences and businesses," said Billie Gutsell, a bear-aware program assistant with Sinapu. "If we can do this, then we can save bears."

Wildlife officers killed a "nuisance" bear earlier this year after it continued to come into town. Authorities said once a bear learns to find food in neighborhoods, the habit is hard to break.

A group of about 20 volunteers have posted about 300 signs over the past few weeks on poorly kept trash bins as well as dog bowls, trees and other objects. The notices read: "Trash container, pet food, bird feeder or tree fruit left out in a manner that allows bears to feed."

They recommend putting out garbage the morning of pickup; asking trash collectors about bear-proof containers; bringing in bird feeders at night; picking up dropped seeds and hulls; and harvesting fruit trees as they ripen, while picking up fallen fruit.

Boulder's code requires trash and recycling to be put out the same day as collection. Fines range from \$100 to \$1,000. Colorado law also bans people from attracting bears with food or garbage.

Volunteers have focused their efforts so far on Boulder neighborhoods west of Broadway, especially those near open space. The "taggers" will be back in spring to continue labeling trash and pet food in violation of code.



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