



## A BEAR EXHIBIT IN TAHOE “URSUS AMONG US”

BY NICOLE CHESLOCK

**Black bears in the Lake Tahoe Basin have become somewhat of an attractive nuisance in recent years, due to their incessant search for food, which leads them to break into cars and homes** photo courtesy of the North Lake Tahoe Historical Society Museum

You never forget the first time. For me it was a completely unobstructed view of a milk chocolate colored adult bear and cub in a Jeffrey pine tree on a warm spring day in 2005 as I rode up Squaw Valley’s Red Dog chairlift. A few months later I watched from a second story window as a 250-plus pound beauty sprinted with an incredible amount of grace and power before disappearing into a dense gathering of trees as a UPS truck rounded the corner. And, just last fall, I saw a thin bear, her cub limping behind, saunter past my window to the neighbor’s wraparound porch.

Inspired by a steady stream of questions and bear sightings from visitors and residents, the Gatekeeper’s Museum in Tahoe City is offering an incredible opportunity to get up-close and personal with American black bears (*Ursus americanus*) at the first-of-its-kind exhibit, “Ursus Among Us,” opening in July 2012.

According to California Department of Fish and Game’s Mario Klip, bear sightings in the Lake Tahoe basin are increasingly frequent and population estimates range from 300 to 500 bears (on the California side alone).

“Bears are an integral part of our natural history. This exhibit will help people do the right thing if they encounter a bear,” explains Marguerite Sprague, Executive Director of the North Lake Tahoe Historical Society. She promises the exhibit will be intriguing for children, their grandparents and all ages in between.

Expect to engage many senses and learn a few facts. Alongside a taxidermal adult bear, you will be able to examine high-quality skull and claw replicas, touch an authentic bear hide and compare your hand to an adult bear paw.



**The American Black Bear has been a Tahoe resident for time immemorial. Its distant relative, the California Grizzly Bear (*Ursus californicus*), has been extinct everywhere in California except the state flag since the 1920s** photo courtesy of the North Lake Tahoe Historical Society Museum

You’ll even hear bear recordings made by Lynn Rogers, Ph.D., a bear biologist based in Ely, Minnesota. The Bear League will provide in-depth information about safeguarding your home and being bear aware.

Visitors will also have the chance to learn about Klip’s urban black bear research at “Ursus Among Us.” His study uses GPS and satellite-enabled collars to collect data about bears’ location and movement patterns and proactively managing bears with non-lethal methods. Eight bears are currently tagged and the number will likely triple within the year. You can adopt a bear for the research study through the Sonoma State Tahoe Black Bear Project. <sup>SH</sup>

✦ Map reference, page 3: G-6

*The Gatekeeper’s Museum is located at 130 West Lake Blvd., Tahoe City, 530.583.1762, [www.northtahoemuseums.org](http://www.northtahoemuseums.org), 10 am-5 pm Wednesday through Monday from Memorial Day through September.*

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