

# YOU ARE IN BEAR COUNTRY



Grizzly bears excavating a red squirrel cache of whitebark pine cones.

For many people, the grizzly bear is a symbol of the ultimate predator — an animal that depends upon the consumption of large amounts of meat for survival. While this image is partly true, grizzly bears also feed and depend on a variety of plants, berries, and insects. Here in the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem, there is an additional source for their much-needed protein — whitebark pine seeds.

As the bears prepare for winter hibernation, the seeds of the whitebark pine become an important fall food. The seeds are very high in fat and help prepare the bear for the long winter. Bears obtain cones by raiding caches or "middens" stashed by red squirrels. In some years, grizzly bears may depend almost exclusively on whitebark pine seeds for food in the fall.

Hunters and other outdoor recreationists should be aware that bears search for squirrel middens in the fall in mid- to high-elevation coniferous forests that contain large stands of whitebark pines.



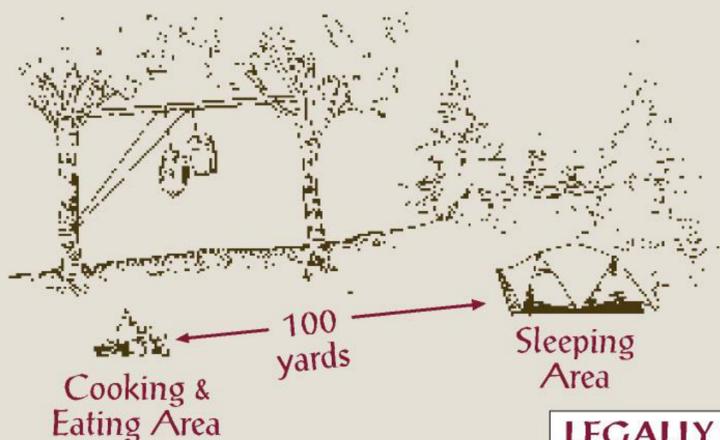
Whitebark pine branch and cone with exposed seeds.



## FOR YOUR SAFETY:

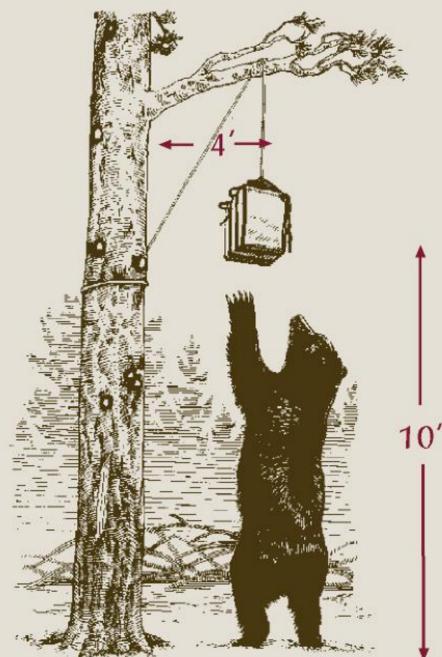
### IF YOU MEET A BEAR:

- ~ Keep your distance — stay at least 100 yards away with the more distance the better.
- ~ Stay calm! Do not run, yell, or make sudden movements.
- ~ Have bear spray available and be prepared to use it.



### BEAR-RESISTANT STORAGE:

Food and other items that might attract bears (attractants) must be stored in an approved bear-resistant food container or hung from a tree at least ten feet above ground and at least four feet from the trunk. Backpacks, coolers, wooden boxes, and tents are not bear-resistant.



### HOW TO AVOID A BEAR:

- ~ Make sure all attractants are unavailable to a bear.
- ~ Keep a clean camp — store attractants at least 100 yards away from your sleeping area.
- ~ Avoid areas of "known high bear activity."
- ~ Travel in pairs or groups — never alone.
- ~ Make noise as you travel — do not surprise a bear.
- ~ Watch for evidence of bears such as scat, tracks, and dead carcasses of other animals.
- ~ Be especially observant when accessing or crossing rivers, or in areas with thick vegetation.
- ~ And of course ... never feed or approach a bear.

**LEGALLY ENFORCEABLE UNDER 36 CFR 261.50 (a) and (b)**  
Violations punishable by a fine not more than \$5000 or imprisonment for not more than 6 months, or both

Sows with cubs and bears on carcasses are especially protective, unpredictable, and dangerous. Please be cautious.

