

## Defenders of Wildlife



### Electric Fence Incentive Program (Alaska)

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Defenders of Wildlife is dedicated to promoting coexistence between bears and humans across the nation through conflict prevention and reduction. The best way to prevent conflicts and improve coexistence is by protecting human provided attractants like garbage, chickens, gardens, beehives, and more with effective tools like electric fencing.

Defenders' Electric Fencing Incentive Program aims to support individuals and communities through financial and technical assistance on fencing projects. The Electric Fence Incentive Program in Alaska currently operates on the Kenai Peninsula and in Southeast Alaska. These regions have been identified as priority areas due to frequent human–bear conflicts and the presence of vulnerable bear populations. Our program promotes proactive conflict prevention by equipping participants with detailed information regarding the construction and maintenance of electric fences throughout our program areas.

Proactive coexistence strategies like the Electric Fence Incentive Program are critical to preventing conflict-related bear mortality and promoting social tolerance for bears, two factors that help support the long-term conservation goal of having healthy and persistent populations of bears in Alaska.

In addition to individuals and communities, Defenders collaborates with nonprofit organizations, Tribes, small businesses, local governments, and state and federal agencies to complete electric fence projects and provide other coexistence tools.

#### **Education and Outreach**

Each year, Defenders of Wildlife organizes and participates in outreach events aimed at promoting the Electric Fence Incentive Program and increasing bear safety and awareness among recreators and homeowners.

Defenders is also a member of the Anchorage Bear Committee and education subcommittee and the Seward Cares For Its Bears working group, two coalitions dedicated to improving human-bear coexistence in Anchorage and Seward, respectively. Both groups organize educational community events and presentations throughout spring and summer.

## **Program History**

In 2010, Defenders' electric fencing program began in the lower 48 states to aid in long-term grizzly bear recovery by proactively preventing conflicts between bears and humans.

Although Alaskan bear populations are not part of a recovery effort, human-bear coexistence is necessary to protect the future status of brown and black bears and prevent endangerment. In 2019, the Electric Fence Incentive Program became available to Alaskans on the Kenai Peninsula and expanded to Southeast Alaska in 2022. Similar to the program in the lower 48, we reimburse 50% of the total cost of the electric fence project, up to \$500. Since the start of our program, over 84 electric fence projects have been verified and compensated by Defenders of Wildlife in Alaska.

A new partnership with the Central Council of Tlingit and Haida Indian Tribes of Alaska through the Southeast Alaska Sustainability Strategy provided increased funding for bear coexistence projects in Southeast Alaska. The long-term goal for the program is to continue expanding to other regions in Alaska and increase electric fence usage where bears and humans live in close proximity.

## **Results**

Our first program survey obtained information from 26 electric fence projects that were completed in Alaska from the beginning of 2020 through the end of 2022, with the assistance of Defenders' program. Our second survey, conducted in 2025, built upon this foundation and surveyed participants associated with another 27 projects that were completed between 2023 and 2024. The reimbursements totaled over \$6,000 to the participants involved. To date, Defenders has provided over \$23,000 in funding to Alaska program participants.

### **Average Fence Cost\* (2023- 2024)**

- \$478.26 per project

### **Average Fence Cost\* (2020-2024)**

- \$625.93 per project

\*pre reimbursement

### **Average Defenders Reimbursement Cost (2023 – 2024)**

- \$238.05 per project

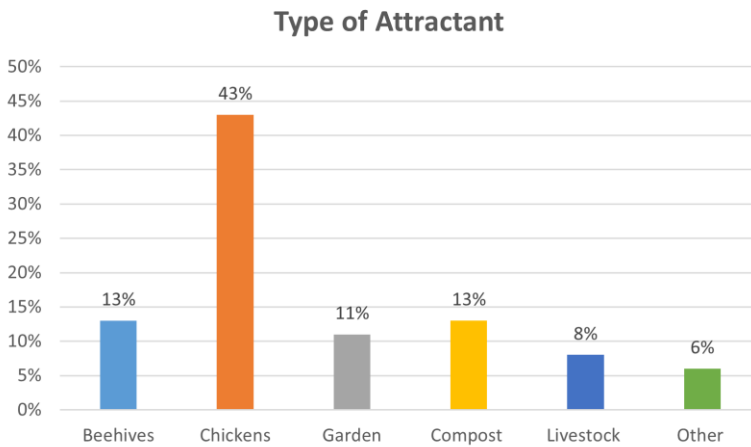
### Average Defenders Reimbursement (2020-2024)

- \$275.15 per project

### Attractants Secured

- Within our data set, protecting chickens was the top reason why participants installed an electric fence, followed by beehives and compost (Fig.1).

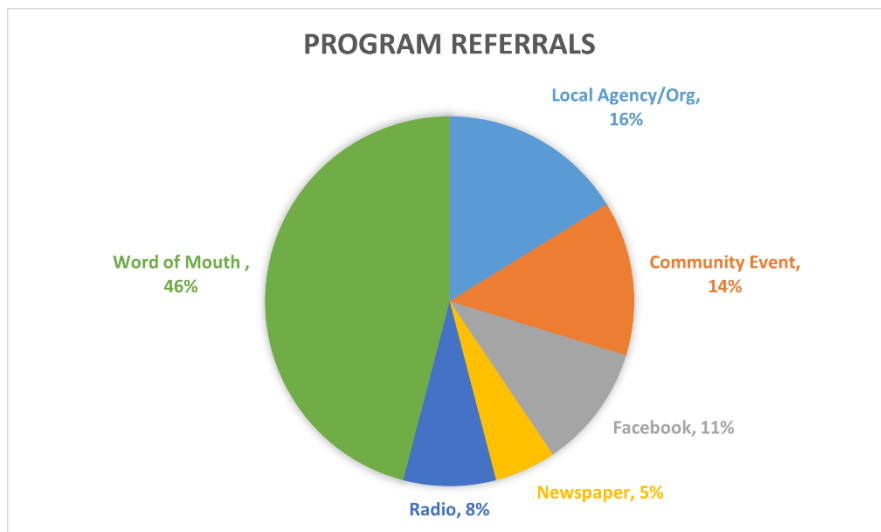
Fig. 1



### Program Awareness

- Word of mouth was the primary source of referral to the program, followed by Alaska Department of Fish and Game and community outreach events (Fig. 2).

**Fig. 2**



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