



State of New Jersey

DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

DIVISION OF FISH AND WILDLIFE

Mail Code 501-03

PO BOX 420

Trenton, NJ 08625-0420

David Chanda, Director

www.NJFishandWildlife.com

(609) 292-2965

CHRIS CHRISTIE

Governor

KIM GUADAGNO

Lt. Governor

BOB MARTIN

Commissioner

Via Email

October 24, 2014

Chief Timothy C. Storbeck
West Milford Township Police
1480 Union Valley Road
West Milford, NJ 07480

Dear Chief Storbeck:

I am responding to your October 17 e-mail requesting a final report on September 21 black bear incident that took place on Apshawa Preserve in West Milford.

The Department of Environmental Protection, Division of Fish & Wildlife's conclusion on the black bear incident is that it was a predatory attack on the victim, Mr. Darsh Patel and the bear shot by police was the bear involved in the fatal attack. We have reached this conclusion based on the following observations and post incident forensic evaluations and reports:

1. The behavior of the bear before the attack is typical of bears involved in predatory attacks on humans. Based on interviews with the two initial hikers who made contact with the bear and with the hikers in the Patel group who later encountered the bear, it is apparent that the bear was exhibiting stalking type behavior. The bear did not make any threatening gestures, but did hasten its pace as the five hikers that included the victim retreated. The investigation did not disclose any sign of intimidation or provocation of the bear by either group of hikers.
2. The bear was not concerned with food items carried by the victim, Mr. Patel. Bears, especially those conditioned to human food, may approach people to receive a food reward. The victim carried a granola bar in his backpack. It was noted that after the incident, the victim's backpack and the food within remained untouched.
3. The bear was in good physical condition and had other food items in its stomach. Fresh bear feces found at the scene were comprised of plant matter. The bear's stomach

contained a large amount of animal and plant matter in addition to the human remains and the victim's clothing.

4. Pictures taken of the bear by the hikers in the group before the incident are comparable to a bear of the correct size and pelage characteristics as the bear shot and killed by the West Milford police officers.
5. The bear shot by the police officers stayed near the victim as they approached and would not leave, despite attempts by the officers to scare it away. The bear also behaved "aggressively" towards the officers and guarded the victim, indicating it was protecting its food source.
6. The bear had no injuries or diseases, and no rabies.

Thank you for your cooperation during this difficult situation. If you need any further information, please contact my office at (609) 292-9410 or via e-mail at Dave.Chanda@dep.nj.gov

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Paulette Nelson for Dave Chanda". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Dave Chanda
Director

- c. Richard Boornazian, Assistant Commissioner, DEP – NHR
Larry Herrighty, Assistant Director – Wildlife Management - DFW
Larry Ragonese, DEP Press Office Director
Angelene Taccini, DEP Communications Director