**Using a bear resistant food storage container**

***Source: http://faculty.deanza.edu/donahuemary/Usingacampsitefoodstoragelocker***

Note that they call these bear 'resistant' containers. It is especially not 'bear proof' if it is not closed and latched or latched improperly, or if you are not near it/your food and watchful when you have things out of it.

Everything you eat, including in seemingly strong packaging, such as canned tuna, must be in the container.

All toiletries (lotion, lip products, sunscreen, soap (body and dish soap), insect repellant, deodorant, feminine products, and medications) must be stored in the containers or a hard-sided vehicle/trailer.

These rules apply 24 hours a day, (except when you are actually using/cooking items) not just overnight.

Bears are very smart animals. The 'bear proof' garbage bins have been redesigned many times by the park service. Bears have been used in circuses around the world because of their brains and gymnastic abilities. In backpacking areas some have been known to keep up the circus tradition by climbing on limbs above a suspended food bag and leaping to snag it with their claws on the way to the ground. Rock climbers report that bears pulled up food bags they hung over sheer rock cliffs. Bears don't mind water and have swum out to a raft people thought they could hide food on.

A bear may enter your campsite day or night, even in the presence of many people, large dog(s), a big campfire or lots of lights. Running your vehicle engine or generator, playing loud music, trying various 'repellents' (mothballs, an open bleach container, dog or cat in-the-garden repellent, etc.) will not work.

Each campground in the Big South Fork NRRA has metal food storage lockers (food storage boxes) scattered throughout the campsites. The size of the food storage locker (29" deep x 38" wide x 43" tall) helps you plan what you can bring. Due to the fact that there are at least two sites sharing a storage box it is a good idea to plan in advance to use the space available more effectively. The latching system is opened by putting your fingers into a space on the front and pushing up on the latch. There is a child safety release handle on the inside of the enclosure. Keep in mind that the boxes are dark metal and can build up heat inside.

The storage boxes are metal and are noisy when opened or shut. Unless you are careful you can wake up your neighbors who want to sleep earlier or later than you.

Big South Fork NRRA warns: "Improper food storage may result in impoundment of your food, a fine of up to $5,000, and/or revocation of your camping permit."

A typical mistakepeople make with the food storage boxes is overstuffing the box and not being able to really shut it tight. A bear might not get the door open, but a raccoon can reach in through the crack, snag food bags with his paws and make a mess all over the campsite overnight.

Assuming that because people are in the site the doors don't have to be latched all the time is a big mistake. Bears (and lots of raccoons and skunks) enter campsites during meals to try to get food off picnic tables, from vehicles with doors open or from food storage boxes that weren't latched. Especially after dark, don't turn your back on food.

Big South Fork NRRA’s rules say to dispose of all trash in the garbage cans, not to store it in the bear-proof campsite food storage box. And it probably won't fit in the box anyway. So, make regular trips to the bear-proof garbage cans. Big South Fork NRRA also has bear-proof recycling bins located at the Blue Heron and Bandy Creek Campgrounds.