

Nevada bear hunt also an economic issue

By Ed Pearce, KOL0-TV

INCLINE VILLAGE – Residents and visitors to Lake Tahoe share the basin with the area's wildlife including what may be a majority of Nevada's entire population of 400 to 500 black bears.

Beginning Aug. 20 it will be legal to hunt them here.

That's welcome news to the small number of hunters who pressed wildlife officials for years for the opportunity, but it's hard to find anyone cheering in Incline Village on the lake's north shore.

"We have human-bear problems every year here in Incline Village," says Bill Hoffman, the Executive Director of the local visitors bureau. "But we have a lot of bear lovers in this community who don't want to see these bears hurt or messed with in any way."

While much of the opposition comes from such sentiment or safety concerns, there are also worries the hunt is simply bad for business.

"People come to see our bears if they can, if they get lucky," says Hoffman. "It's something that's part of what we sell."

And selling to the tourist is what Incline and most of the lake is all about.

Tourism drives the Tahoe economy and outdoor recreation drives much of the tourism industry, but hunting has never been part of that equation.

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