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## Local News



Posted: Sunday, 05 August 2007 5:27PM

## NJ Regulators Still Split Over Bear Policy

**TRENTON, N.J. (AP)** -- State regulators continue to disagree about whether New Jersey should allow a black bear hunt, with the state Fish and Game Council now proposing hunts in 2008 and 2009 if bear-human encounters don't lessen.

State Environmental Commissioner Lisa P. Jackson has been calling for more time to try out non-lethal bear control methods, including legislation to require use of bear-proof trash containers and public education programs.

But in its own proposed policy, posted Friday on the state [Division of Fish and Wildlife's](#) Web site, the state Fish and Game Council calls for hunts if bear-human encounters aren't down by a third in each of the next two years.

"Council is not willing to subject the citizens of New Jersey to this level of risk to public safety and property damage for more than a year," the council said in its proposed policy, which was sent to Jackson.

The state [Department of Environmental Protection](#) is holding a meeting on Wednesday to get input from the public on bear management policy.

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Regulators will have to hammer out their differences after the meeting, DEP spokeswoman Elaine Makatura told The Associated Press on Sunday.

The state is under court order to have a new bear management policy in place by Friday.

Jackson blocked a scheduled bear hunt last year by invalidating the existing bear management policy.

Black bears used to be all but extinct in New Jersey but their numbers have greatly rebounded. Although the animals are concentrated in the northwestern part of the state, they have been spotted in all 21 counties.

New Jersey had bear hunts in 2003 and 2005, the first time the Garden State had hunts since the early 1970s.

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