



Being Bear in Glacier National Park Heather Mountain Lodge

Imagine hiking through the quiet of an alpine morning. The only sounds are those of the mountains: the creek chasing itself down the center of an expansive valley bounded in stone peaks, birds calling back and forth to each other, the breeze swaying through the tops of pines. Your small group and your guide are the only people you've seen out here in Glacier National Park today. You feel both a sense of release and grounding at being out here in such expansive nature.

And then your guide, internationally renowned bear expert Reno Sommerhalder, holds up a hand to stop your group, an excited smile creasing his face. He gathers you close, and points down to a track just off the trail, almost lost among the riot of summer wildflowers. A bear print. A grizzly bear, Sommerhalder explains. Maybe, if you're very lucky, you might even see that very bear wandering the slopes above in this vast landscape that's remained largely unchanged for centuries. And suddenly, through the hushed awe that's settled on your group, you feel something more: a greater sense of wild. A *connection* to this wilderness. You feel more alive.

That's just a glimpse into what lies in store for our guests at our inaugural Being Bear program [[LINK to details page](#)] at Heather Mountain Lodge this summer. This is not a typical bear-viewing tourism trip. Kept to two guided groups of only eight guests each, this small-group experience is an immersive two-night, two-day adventure into the ecology, wildness, and nature of the grizzlies that make their home in the mountains of Glacier National Park. On guided hikes through this spectacular country, guests will learn about the lives of grizzlies (what they eat, where they move, why they rub trees, where they sleep, why sometimes mothers are protective of their cubs, and more), how to interpret bear sign, and the experience very real possibility of watching a bear. Being Bear participants will also enjoy a gourmet "Eat Like a Bear" dinner from our new live fire grill [[LINK to blog post](#)] featuring fish, berries, and other local edibles.

And—the highlight—guests will get to soak up knowledge and perspective from Sommerhalder himself.

A published author, documentarian, ACMG wilderness guide, and long-time bear expert, Sommerhalder has dedicated his life's work to educating people on the true nature the *ursus horribilis* that Hollywood has portrayed as menacing and aggressive. With thousands of bear encounters among his experience, Sommerhalder teaches that grizzlies are, in fact, tolerant and peaceful when we behave properly around them, and a source of wonder. And they're an integral part of the intact ecosystems rapidly disappearing from our planet.



“Grizzlies are a temperature gauge for environmental cohesion and intactness, which we as a species require to be healthy—physically and spiritually as much as any other reason,” he says. Which is why it’s also imperative, he says, that we act to preserve our remaining wild places.

After traveling the world to learn, document, and teach, Sommerhalder—a Banff local—is excited to partner with Heather Mountain Lodge to bring his work home. “Climate change is a big concern for me, and it has been for years,” he says. “I’ve been contributing personally to it for years with my flights. I’m looking forward to pursuing my passion locally, and helping people understand bears in this beautiful area.”

Join us this August to experience the wild from Heather Mountain Lodge. Find details here [\[LINK\]](#).