

Student blames residents for death of bear cub

BY LAURA STRADIOTTO

The Sudbury Star

Stupidity kills.

That's the way Jennifer Crawford sees it. A bear cub first poked his head in a Hagar neighbourhood at the beginning of May.

While it's not unusual to see a bear in the area, Crawford grew worried when people started feeding it.

The bear became accustomed to people — even eating food out of their hands.

"It was not afraid of humans at all," said Crawford, a Laurentian University student who hopes to become a veterinarian.

"A lot of bears stay out of the way. This one would just sit and look at you."

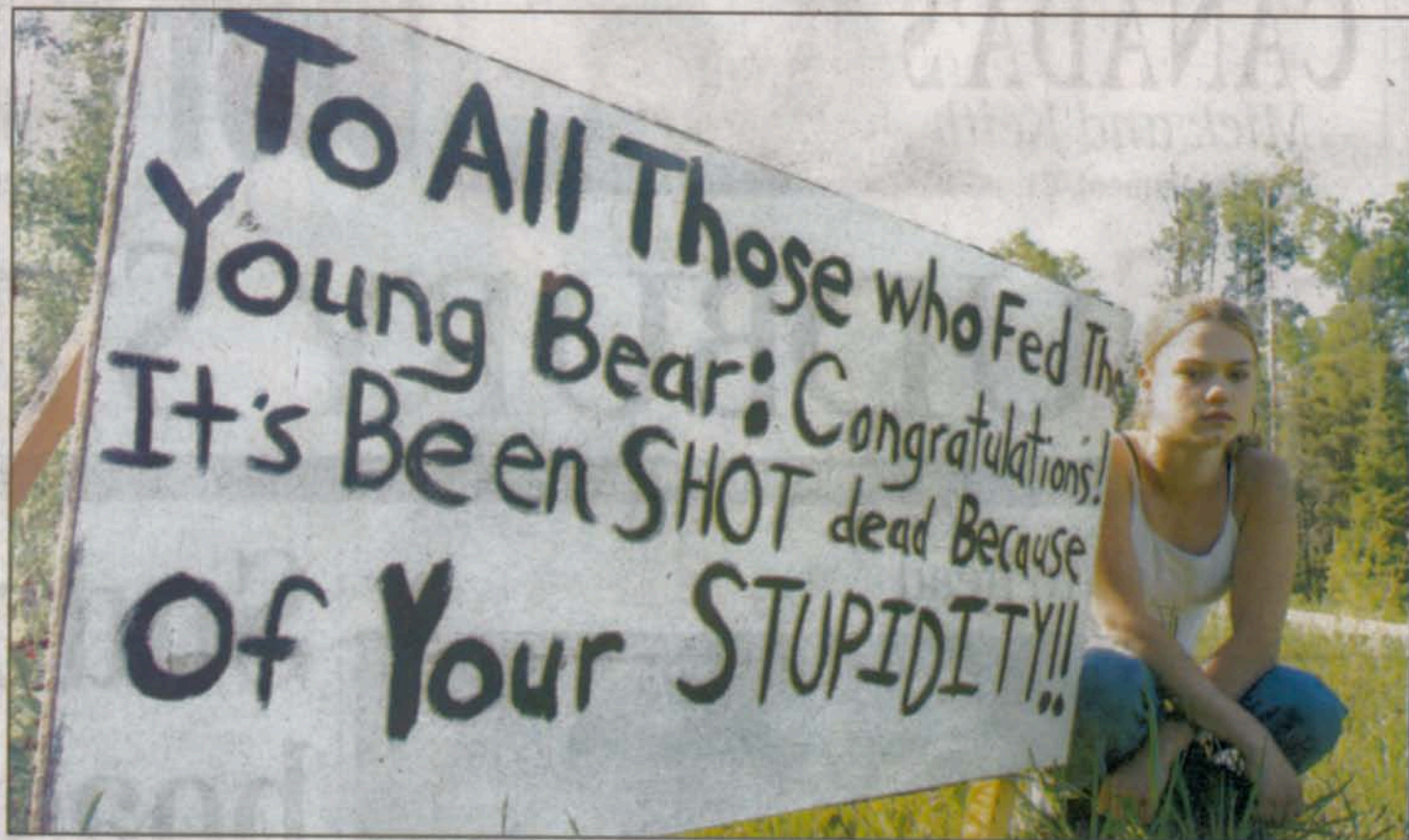


Crawford

The bear no longer frequents the neighbourhood, though. It was shot dead after it approached some campers.

Crawford has posted a hand-made sign on Highway 535 that reads: To all those who fed the young bear: congratulations, it's now been shot dead because of your stupidity.

See BEAR / A2



JOHN E. LIGHTFOOT JR./THE SUDBURY STAR

Jennifer Crawford of Hagar erected this sign about 10 minutes North of Hagar on Hwy 535, close to where a young bear was shot at a campsite. Crawford is upset local residents kept feeding the young bear. The bear was eventually killed because it frightened a group of campers when it approached them.

BEAR: people should know better

Continued from page A1

"People should know better," Crawford said about people feeding the animal.

The bear wouldn't have stuck around the area if it didn't have a constant food source, she said.

Crawford said she called the Ministry of Natural Resources to report the bear June 1. She feared the bear was getting too friendly with people and it was only a matter of time before something happened. She said it wasn't until June 6 when officials set a trap at the entrance of a nearby trailer park.

The next day, the bear

made its last contact with humans.

"One of my concerns was it would start coming into the camp for food," said Crawford.

"It did and it wasn't going into the trap. The campers tried to scare it away" by yelling.

Instead of retreating, the bear continued to advance towards a group of frightened campers.

The animal was shot dead by the campground owner.

Crawford said a concerned resident called the MNR a month prior to the incident to report the bear sighting.

Bruce Richard, information management supervisor with MNR Sudbury, didn't know about the incident and couldn't comment specifically on it.

But feeding a bear creates an unsafe environment, he said. The bear will become dependent on an unnatural food supply and as a result, will not learn to cope on its own.

Richard couldn't say why the trap was set days after a complaint was received, but suggested setting a bear trap is not as easy as setting a mouse trap.

Bear technicians have to

assess the area first, he said.

"There are a couple of things they have to take into account. They want the trap to be sort of secluded. They want the bear to go into it quietly. If they are in a high-volume area, kids often rattle the cage and upset the bear."

Bear technicians lay the trap "in the most logistical place."

"Bear technicians have a lot of experience working with bears," said Richard.

"They're starting to understand what drives them and where they're moving. They use a lot of their gut instinct and experience."