

[REDACTED]
Sent: Sunday, January 20, 2019 3:26 PM

To: PARKS_ParksAndRecreation <ParksAndRecreation@smcgov.org>

Subject: Dog Work Group Input

Please forward the following to whichever person or group is appropriate:

I have walked the Pillar Point Bluff Trails for years, but seldom go there now because of my negative experience with dogs and their human walkers. I doubt things will improve for me, but depending on whatever new rules are chosen (and how they are enforced), it could get much worse.

Factors the (San Mateo) Dog Work Group should consider:

1. For-pay dog walkers frequently use these trails with many more than 3 dogs at a time. I have had to pass some packs that were mostly off-leash.
2. Every dog owner believes their dog is fine with no problems. Under actual conditions (passing other dogs and people), it is hard to know, especially a priori.
3. There are frequent spots on the trails that are narrow which complicates passing dogs and their walkers.
4. Do the rangers have a sense of how many dogs are now walked off leash? My unscientific observation is that about half are, especially on weekends.

I choose to not identify myself because of passions involved with this issue.

Thanks

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Friday, January 25, 2019 2:59 PM
To: PARKS_DogManagementCommittee <DogManagementCommittee@smcgov.org>
Subject: Re: Interested in discussing off-leash dog plans

Hi,

Just wondering if anyone is managing this mailbox. I'd really like to talk with someone about this.

Thx,

[REDACTED]

On Tue, Dec 18, 2018 at 5:36 PM [REDACTED] wrote:
Hi,

I listened to the video taping of the SMC Dog Management Committee presentation to the Board of Supervisors this fall and I would like to talk with someone working on the plan going forward. I'm a resident of Redwood City, and this matter is really important to me.

I have a dog who needs off-leash access. We find the options for off-leash in our county quite limited. We love Stulsaft Park but feel like it's getting busy there. I have met people who come from as far away as Foster City as well as Palo Alto to bring their dogs to Stulsaft. This park has many great features including lots of shade in the summer and it's fully fenced in. I hope we don't ever lose this park for off-leash dog users. My feeling is we need more open space to relieve pressure on Stulsaft, and Pulgas Ridge is not a good alternative due to the massive amounts of poison oak as well as ticks (and the off-leash area is exposed so it's very hot in the summer).

From the BOS meetings, I understand a subcommittee will be working with the Dog Management Committee over the next year to look at additional off-leash areas, among other things. There may be some pilot projects. It's my understanding that Dave Pine with BOS is expecting a proposal in 12 months from the subcommittee on how to handle what I think he called, "the hard issue of where dogs can be off-leash" - hopefully my notes are correct on this quote.

Please let me know if it would be possible to set up a quick meeting or have a phone call with someone on the Dog Management Committee so that I can better understand their plans going forward. I am pretty swamped right now but could set something up for after the first of the year.

Thank you very much for your help with this important issue in our county.

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED] cell
[REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Sunday, February 03, 2019 5:37 PM
To: PARKS_DogManagementCommittee <DogManagementCommittee@smcgov.org>
Cc: Lori Mrizek <lmrizek@smcgov.org>
Subject: Dog Park Meeting feedback

To SMC Parks Dog Committee, % Peggy Jensen (Acting Parks Director),

Thank you very much for working on this important issue. I am unable to attend the upcoming meeting, but I would appreciate having my feedback included if possible.

I work as a mounted volunteer trail patroller for MROSD and SMC (VHP). I agree that there are a number of parks that allow horses to ride the trails, but not many parks have "GREAT" trails for horses or reasonable parking for trailers.

I am very interested in having dogs gain access to SMC trails... I love walking my dog, who is a trail certified canine patroller for MROSD. I have a vested interest in having dogs use the trails and am hoping I will have some great local trails opened to dogs in my community. I would especially like trails to which I can easily drive that are beautiful and shaded in summer, good walking terrain, and quality maintenance. The most precious SMC equestrian parks to me — Huddart, Wunderlich and Edgewood — have the amenities I seek, but part of their phenomenal attraction is that they are limited to horses and hikers. (Hikers I talk to share this same opinion.)

I want to make sure that horses/equestrians keep the few great trail parks they have available, and that the trails are not made less enjoyable, accessible or unsafe by the addition of dogs. (When I use the word "dogs" here as if I fear them in the parks, I really mean "ignorant and/or unintentional bad behavior by owners of dogs.") If the addition of dogs to a park is made, it would have to be designed very carefully and perhaps on a trial basis.

If dogs are given the privilege of walking the equestrian parks, this should be done with limited access to trails and/or making the trail use rules solidly favor horses (as is supposed to happen anyway) and enforcing these rules. Single track trails are very difficult for horses to share, and parking at the parks must continue to accommodate horse trailers to make them truly accessible to equestrians. It would be great if any decisions to give dogs privileges in equestrian parks included a trial time for adjustments as well as the right to revoke privileges if it does not turn out to be a positive situation for equestrians. (As well as the possibility to revoke privileges in the future if the situation becomes negative for equestrians.)

Wunderlich is already incredibly busy much of the time, and the dogs that I pass in this park (though not allowed) make it very difficult due to the lack of passing room on so many of the trails. (Cyclists would be nearly impossible.) Huddart would be easy to have dogs on Richards Road where there is plenty of room on the relatively flat sections of the road, but it would be difficult to enforce keeping dog walkers from traveling up the single track trails where they would impact equestrians. Edgewood has a fairly good range of trails that could accommodate horses, walkers and dogs, though I would hope there would be signs clearly educating dog walkers of the right-of-way rules.

I know you have heard all of this before. I feel compelled to reiterate my views since preserving these precious few equestrian parks is so important to me.

Thank you for representing the horse community AND dog community!

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, February 04, 2019 9:44 AM

To: PARKS_ParksAndRecreation <ParksAndRecreation@smcgov.org>

Subject: Dog work group meeting

Hi Barbara and Dog Park Commision,

Hope all is well. We are planning on coming to today's meeting. DoodyCalls franchises have been working with local communities for many years. I think we could draw on some of that experience for our area. Locally we have as you know worked with the Police K9 units , through our grassroots efforts which turned in to the annual Pet Food Express fundraiser and Cover your K9 Foundation .

We now have our own product line of pet waste stations that RWC purchased at cost. San Mateo Parks and Rec purchase our bags. We are willing to provide stations and bags **at cost** to all San Mateo county. On top of that we have been scooping San Carlos and Foster City Dog parks on a regular bases at no charge and are willing to to so at more locations that fit into our current route that are about the same area (15 min of service).

I would also offer setting up bag dispensers in downtown locations and we will keep them stocked and the immediate area clean of waste and trash at no charge. Our condition being that the city uses and provides our bags. Since we are direct suppliers, we are able to meet or surpass other suppliers of these products and we are a local company.

Thank You
[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, February 07, 2019 5:45 PM

To: PARKS_ParksAndRecreation <ParksAndRecreation@smcgov.org>

Subject: Dogs/Horses in Parks

I am a retired veterinarian. I have been a dog owner and a horse owner, often at the same time. I see all sides. But I vehemently appose dogs in Pescadero Park. This park is heavily used by horses. It has the only Horse Camp on the Peninsula. Interaction by unruly dogs with horses often result in thrown riders, (which can result in serious injury and possibly death), and bolting or fallen horses (trails are narrow, frightened horses may fall into steep ravines, with or without their riders).

Of course the dogs should be on a leash and likely they will be initially. But I guarantee that this will not always be the case. In addition, dog owners frequently use long retractable leads so that their dogs are free to roam around them. And they will continue to do go even it leash length is limited by Parks. These leads are 'tells' to veterinarians, indicating that the owner has no control. Retractable leads greatly increase the danger of entanglement. Every horse owner who uses Pescadero Park has seen both dogs (with and without leash) and bikes on single track trails in the park. And they will continue to do so regardless of rules. If you officially open the Park to dogs, a large number of new users will arrive, and they will initially observe the rules. Soon after, some of them will feel the rules don't apply to them. After all, Fido has never caused any trouble, Fido likes to explore, the leash catches on the brush or wraps around your legs, It's such a hassle.... The danger to equestrians gets bigger.

Memorial Park abuts Pescadero Park. There is camping and hiking there. Plenty of opportunity for dog owners to enjoy the area without endangering equestrians.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, February 07, 2019 6:38 PM

To: PARKS_ParksAndRecreation <ParksAndRecreation@smcgov.org>

Subject: Dogs

To Whom It May Concern

Thank you for allowing us input regarding our parks. I would like Jack Brooks and McDonald parks to uphold the no dig rule. We have been explaining to the public that dogs in the park disrupt the wildlife. I believe this to still be the case. I don't want to deal with the problems dogs can be to equestrians by irresponsible owners. For safety reasons as well I would not want dogs in these 2 parks in particular. There are plenty of parks they can go to.

Thank you for your consideration

[REDACTED]
Envoyé de mon iPhone

[REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, February 07, 2019 7:12 PM

To: PARKS_ParksAndRecreation <ParksAndRecreation@smcgov.org>

Subject: Dogs in Parks

Attn: SMC Parks Dog Committee

I live in the county of Half Moon Bay, and own horses and dogs. They are my livelihood and have always been a priority in my life. I spend most of my days with them and do various activities that include them. I ride in several of the county parks and also in the Mid Peninsula OS district preserves. I am currently on the Volunteer Horse Patrol for SM County, and in the past have served as a volunteer equestrian rider for Mid Peninsula OS and also Ano Nuevo State Park. I have had much experience with trying to help with the rules of each park and informing visitors of them as I encounter people on the trails.

I love walking my dogs and also enjoy trail riding. But sometimes the two together can be a problem. Considering Memorial and Pescadero Parks, I have always enjoyed not having to worry about dogs (or bikers) coming around the corners of some of those single track trails. There are many equestrians who patronize these trails and stay overnight with their horses at Jack Brook. There are varying degrees of horsemanship and many riders (and horses) I've seen on the trails are novice riders. We don't need to add another "variable" to these heavily used equestrian trails that could result in an accident. I believe the dogs and their owners have many other places to go in SM County. I would love to take my dogs every time I walk and hike but I respect the reasons why some places need to band them.

Please consider not allowing dogs in Memorial and Pescadero Parks. Thank you.

[REDACTED]
ph: [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]
Sent: Friday, February 08, 2019 8:46 AM

To: PARKS_ParksAndRecreation <ParksAndRecreation@smcgov.org>

Cc: faye@tails2u.com

Subject: SMC Parks Dog Committee

I have done mounted patrol for Mid-Pen Open Space 13 years and San Mateo Parks for 6 years. Mid-Pen has trails for dogs on lesh, these trails are where one can see whos out there and whats coming. This helps those who still take their dogs off lesh to see horses coming and lesh up their dogs. I ride Memorial Pescadero often and my concern would be that people can't see us coming on horses and we can't see them because of the wooded and brush terrain. Most trails are single paths there isn't room for both. Summer is extremely busy there with Jack Brooks campers. I know from experience it would be to dangerous to allow dogs in Pescadero Park. People will always have them off lesh.

I have ran into people at Wunderlick coming up the hill towards skyline with dogs off lesh surprised our horses and we came close to going over the cliff and the dog owner ran away.

I think it would be OK to have dogs at Parks with open terrain so everyone can see one another.

Thank you

Sincerely,
[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, February 13, 2019 4:00 PM

To: PARKS_ParksAndRecreation <ParksAndRecreation@smcgov.org>

Subject: Dog friendly park

I am definitely interested in having Coyote Point as a dog friendly park. I have been going over there over 30 years, but because I have a dog, I do not walk there anymore. I do not have children, I pay my taxes and am always walking, even more now that I am retired. I stay away because my dog is not allowed in the park.

She is very well behaved.

Thank you for listening!!

[REDACTED]
Sent from [REDACTED]'s iPad Air 2

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, February 20, 2019 8:25 AM
To: PARKS_ParksAndRecreation <ParksAndRecreation@smcgov.org>
Subject: SMC Parks Dog Committee

To whom it may concern;

I am writing to address the issue of dogs in county parks and the rules that apply to them there.

I am a runner and an equestrian and have more than 20 years trail experience with trail running, riding long distance horseback rides and volunteering with the San Mateo County Sheriff's Mounted Search and Rescue Unit as well as the San Mateo County Volunteer Horse Patrol. Unfortunately, I have had more than my share of negative run ins with ill mannered dogs and irresponsible dog owners both on the ground and on horseback. As a runner, I have been jumped on with muddy paws, tripped over dogs running into me, nearly tripped over 12 foot leashes strung all the way across the trail and nipped in the ankle. Multiple dogs have posed a pack hazard and even if they are all on leashes, I always wonder if the owner really has the strength to hold all of them back should they decide to charge.

As for a specific example of my one of my horseback experiences, I was once riding patrol in Sheriff uniform when a large German Shepard on a leash running next to his owner's bicycle saw us and charged. He pulled his owner off his bike and the owner dropped the leash. The dog charged my horse, hackles raised, barking and snarling, and all that separated us was a 3 foot high, wooden rail fence that the dog tried to push his way through, but his shoulders got stuck between the rails. This was just enough of an obstacle and delay to allow the owner to get off the ground, grab the leash and drag the dog away. The owner apologized, but I have no doubt that dog would have done some serious damage to my horse (and me when I came off) if he had gotten through the fence.

I have had several other similar encounters with dogs while mounted and can only say that I am grateful I have a brave horse that will stand her ground and head off an attacking dog. I have had some owners rush to collect their dogs, apologizing the whole time and I've had other owners deliberately take their time, seeming to take sadistic pleasure in watching the show as I do my best to stay on a spinning, kicking horse as she tries to keep their dog at bay. I've had dogs react to a horse with everything from quiet growling to a full on charge and attack and I can't tell you how often I've heard the owner say afterwards, "He's never done that before!" Sometimes those behaviors are corrected by the owner, but most often the owner seems to think it's cute that their dog is protecting them and no correction is made so the dog never learns that growling, barking or attacking an equestrian is wrong. I'm tired of being the guinea pig to test dogs that have never seen a horse before and being at the mercy of an owner that doesn't properly correct them or have control over them.

Don't get me wrong, I love dogs and have two of my own, however my dogs have been properly sensitized to horses, are always walked on a leash and know how to heel properly (they do not pull me down the trail). Whenever I encounter an equestrian with my dogs, I know my dogs will behave themselves and sit quietly and pose zero risk to the rider. Unfortunately, I cannot say that other dog owners have trained their dogs as well and in fact, it seems that dogs these days have had less and less training.

For the safety of other park goers (and their animals), I respectfully request that the County maintain strict dog rules limiting the areas dogs are allowed and within those areas they are

allowed, to limit the number of dogs walked by a single person and keep all dogs on a short leash at all times. These rules must also be strictly enforced otherwise they mean nothing and won't do anything to limit the risk to the runner/equestrian or the liability for the County.

Thank you,



From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, February 19, 2019 3:15 PM
To: PARKS_ParksAndRecreation <ParksAndRecreation@smcgov.org>
Subject: Dog waste stations: replacing plastic with biodegradable bags and more

Hello,

I live in Pacifica and have become most concerned with the plastic pollution of dog waste bags in and around the area.

After doing a lot of research, I have some ideas about ways to stem the tide and would very much like to speak with the Working Dog Group about alternatives.

I have volunteered to set up a "Poo Patrol" for Earth Day as part of the Pacifica Beach Coalition's efforts, but that is a short-term solution. Long-term, it would be great to become pro-active in finding better ways to deal with this growing problem.

Please let me know your thoughts and if I can come to one of the planning meetings (I hope dogs are invited, too).

Thank you,

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Sunday, February 24, 2019 7:05 PM
To: PARKS_ParksAndRecreation <ParksAndRecreation@smcgov.org>
Subject: new dog trails in the parks

I'm excited to hear that you are considering new on-leash trails for hiking with my dog. I live in Pacifica and have had to fight for years to keep access to the few trails that we have for our dogs. You asked for me to vote, so from your list I would choose:
PESCADERO CREEK PARK
simply because it offers the most trail miles. I also know that there are few, if any, places to hike with a dog near Pescadero.
Thanks for doing this.

[REDACTED]
Pacifica

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, February 25, 2019 8:41 PM
To: PARKS_ParksAndRecreation <ParksAndRecreation@smcgov.org>
Subject: Dogs in Parks opinion

To the San Mateo County Parks and Recreation Department,

I wish to comment on the question of opening up SMC parkland for dogs. I am a resident of San Mateo County, a dog lover and former dog owner, and a person who likes walking in the parklands.

It is good for there to be places for dog owners to take their dogs to walk or play that are enjoyable for the owner too. What I see as the challenge for the civic services is where to find these places that are pleasant but do not impact the intended purpose of that parkland. In general, the wilder the habitat of the parkland, the less suitable it is for dogs, but that does not bar dog walking in all parks.

The dogs don't especially care, of course. My sister lives near a golf course that allows a certain area of the open lawns to be used as an unfenced dog park at certain hours during the week. The dogs and owners love it. This is land that has been disturbed and landscaped. No native plants or endangered animals are at risk. An occasional gopher, rabbit, or bird may show up for extra excitement, but the wildness of this site is not being diminished by the presence of dogs. Of course the owners must be responsible for waste and the behavior of their dogs, but this should be true anywhere they take their dog/s.

Most city and suburban parks should be appropriate for dogs, but not all. There should be some places where young children, some elderly folks, people with fears about dogs, or just those who would like a less domesticated experience should be allowed to enjoy a park, or a part of a park, without having to watch out for dogs.

Many wilder parks, especially ones with unusual habitat or that were established to protect particular plants or animals should be reserved for that purpose. Most parks created from old ranch lands or very large estates would fall into this category. Much of those lands were left undisturbed for many decades, or even centuries, and often contain small populations of rare or vanishing plants or animals. Just the scent of a dog's presence can be disruptive to the patterns of wildlife. And no matter how wonderful or well-behaved your dog may be usually, dogs cannot reasonably be expected to resist the temptation to chase certain animals. And no matter how wonderful or well-behaved *your* dog may be, not everyone else's dog is. In general, the presence of dogs destroys the wildness of an area, and the more dogs there, the more that is true.

My idea of gaining more dog parks would be to look for land that has already been made unnatural—abandoned from another use, maybe barren but not toxic or ugly, though in some cases even an empty lot or old parking area would do. That land could be set aside for dog parks and re-landscaped, preferably with the participation of dog owners themselves, to make open fields or some woodsy areas for walks and runs. This would be nice for the dogs, their owners, and an improvement for the cities where the parks are located.

I understand that 5 SM County parks are being considered for greater access to dog owners—Flood, Junipero Sierra, Memorial, Pescadero, and Sam MacDonald. Of these, I think that Flood and possibly even Memorial, both very heavily used and therefore their wildness already impacted, would be more suitable for allowing dogs on a leash in at least some part of each park. However, these are both distinctly family parks, so it might be done on a trial basis (1-2 years), and if feces or badly controlled dogs prove to be a problem, the parks are closed to dogs in favor of new dog parkland being created.

There are many places where dogs can walk or run, some not official city, state, or county parkland, but some is. At my last count I found 19 parks or special areas listed online that are in the county where dogs are allowed already, many with off-leash runs. I wonder how much of the push for more places is actually need and how much is lack of advertising of the places that already exist.

Respectfully submitted,

██████████

2/25/19

(Also attached as Word doc)

-----Original Message-----

From: [REDACTED]

Sent: Tuesday, February 26, 2019 2:26 PM

To: PARKS_ParksAndRecreation <ParksAndRecreation@smcgov.org>

Subject: Dog walking

When I stand, avec dog, on the Pillar Point bluffs, I see very little but open space in any direction. A monkey could figure out that there is plenty of room for dogs and people to co-exist on the coast, but for some reason this seems to be a monumental challenge for the Parks Dept. During the week, very few people walk on the bluffs, other than those walking their dogs, and there are not many of those. You never see horses up there, but you do see a lot of rangers, in their trucks, golf carts, and on their bikes, holding clip boards and walkie talkies, and making sure that the scourge of dog crime does not get out of hand. Pillar Point should remain open to off leash dog walking. If you feel like you must restrict something, because that's what the Parks Dept apparently lives to do, you could have dog hours, early and late on weekends. Otherwise, there is no good reason for you to be up there, wasting your time and our tax dollars. Are you are doing is creating tension where it otherwise does not exist. Thanks.

[REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED]

Sent: Tuesday, February 26, 2019 2:33 PM

To: PARKS_ParksAndRecreation <ParksAndRecreation@smcgov.org>

Subject: Discriminating against Dog Owners.

Hi. I live in Montara and want to comment on what is going on with off-leash dog walking at the Pillar Point Bluffs and other spaces.

I moved from San Francisco to Montara in 2002 (bought a home here) so I could be close to the mountains and beaches, and recreate with my dog off-leash, the way he needs to exercise, in order to be of sound mind and body. He is a service dog, and I need to make sure he is well exercised (off leash) so he can perform his duties.

Taking away the off leash access at the Bluffs, where we have walked for the 17 years I've lived here, is a huge hit to our quality of life. My dog is a friendly golden retriever. Why are we being discriminated against?

Please keep the parks open to the majority of us who use them to exercise with our dogs. For many of us, this is the only reason we live on the coast and our greatest source of daily joy. Taking that away from us is cruel and unusual punishment. If you have to restrict dog walking hours to before 10 am or after 5 pm, I am fine with that. But I always move him away from horses, bikes, or people who don't like dogs. I always pick up after him. And all he does is smile and wag his tail at passersby. Please don't take away our joy.

Thank you,

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Montara CA 94037

[REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED] >
Sent: Tuesday, February 26, 2019 3:03 PM
To: PARKS_ParksAndRecreation <ParksAndRecreation@smcgov.org>
Subject: On-Leash Pilot Sites Input

SMC Dog Management Group,

Thank you for allowing public input into your dog management plans, even though most people have no idea that this process is taking place. My priority is to advocate for more dog access to our public county park lands please. I understand that dogs do not necessarily mix well with some users of park lands, notably horses, therefore, I would like to suggest that in exchange for keeping historic equestrian use parks dog free, other parks in our county be opened to dog access.

My understanding is that currently dogs only have access to ~ 5% of all county park lands, this needs to be expanded not only for the dogs, but for their owners like me that will not access parks where dogs are prohibited. I recommend Pescadero Creek and Coyote Point be opened to dogs.

I also look forward to discussing some off-leash areas for our dogs which is sorely needed in San Mateo County. Our county is one of the best in the State and should not lag behind other Bay Area counties with respect to shared access among constituents.

Thank you,

[REDACTED]

Moss Beach, California 94038

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, February 27, 2019 11:38 AM
To: PARKS_ParksAndRecreation <ParksAndRecreation@smcgov.org>
Subject: Dogs in County Parks On-Leash and off-leash

In Half Moon Bay Area and for all county parks I do not understand the desire to limit dog walking. They are part of the family, equal to children for most dog owners, whatever concern you may have for a dog owner would be equal to a child. Most dog walkers are very reliable, they clean up, they control their dogs, don't want harm to nature, not sure about all parents :) I have seen baby diapers, plastic toys, garbage left by many parents on the beach, I have seen kids running into the water and in dangerous areas without parents paying attention. Most dogs play among themselves or want to run after a ball or just walk with their owners who mostly cleanup.

I have always had a dog, Being a female I feel much safer walking at night or by myself in areas without many people with my dog. Without my dog I would not hike alone in Tahoe or many other areas where they are not allowed.

DOG-LESS parks are PEOPLE-LESS parks.

County/City Taxes are paid by many dog owners but do we get the same access - no! If you want more money open you park access to dogs.

Most of these dog laws are antiquated, leash and off-leash. People are getting more educated about dog safety so many dog park walkers are cautious about their pets. One or 2 examples of a dog behaving badly, is moronic when you look at the damage people do and how seldom dog damage occurs. Look at the facts, dog walkers vs people in general.

I feel well behaved dogs, like well behaved children/people should be allowed in all parks or public areas.

Think about how many people love walking with their dogs. Those people and dogs are the happy, healthy ones! Don't be the old law grinch, times are changing, people are changing, more freedom for all is a good thing.

Sincerely,

[REDACTED]
Half Moon Bay, CA

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, February 28, 2019 1:13 PM
To: PARKS_ParksAndRecreation <ParksAndRecreation@smcgov.org>
Cc: [REDACTED]
Subject: San Mateo County Parks Dog Access

Dear San Mateo County Parks and Recreation Acting Director, Staff and Dog Access Working Group:

I am a life-long dog owner, equestrian and outdoor activity enthusiast. I came late to this process (dog access), having only heard of the activities to expand dog access in San Mateo County in early January. Since then, I've been to two Dog Access Working Group meetings and I've spoken up at both meetings.

I've been doing my homework to come up to speed on dog issues from a regulatory perspective as fast as I can, as I feel that dog access is under threat here in San Mateo County (and in various nearby cities as well). I attach several PDFs containing relevant facts with respect to San Mateo County and dog access that I hope you will find useful. 40% of households in San Mateo County have one or more dogs. That statistic comes from the SMC Parks & Rec Dept. I know I found this information to be enlightening. I hope that the Parks & Rec Dept. will print this email and these PDFs and include them in the Dog Working Group package for next Monday's meeting (March 4).

In a nutshell, I found the January meeting to be a very negative experience. I learned that there are 23 parks operated by SMC and it seemed that the Parks Dept. had negative things to say about dogs in all of them. The facilitator attempted to obtain consensus from the Dog Working Group to eliminate dogs from parks discussed one by one. How backwards did that seem?! I understand that we (as a County) are looking to EXPAND dog access to County parks, that is the goal/purpose/end game in the formation of the Dog Working Group, is it not? At the end of the January meeting, I felt access to SMC parks was being curtailed not enhanced, we lost off leash access to Pillar Point Bluffs and to Quarry Park where dogs have run off leash for decades even if there was an antiquated unenforced law on the books to the contrary and we lost dog access of any kind (permanently as far as I can tell) to three (3) parks, including Wonderlich, one of the largest parks by acres in the County. Why Wonderlich? As far as I could tell, because equestrians use the park. I am an equestrian too. Dogs and horses can get along just fine. The example I used recently was Windy Hill Open Space Preserve. I've both ridden my horse and walked my dog and never had any problems at that lovely piece of property. Dogs, horses and bikes can all get along together too, in my opinion. A multi-use park should be just that, multi-use. Everybody pays taxes to support them and all should be accommodated to the best of the County's abilities.

At February's meeting, we were told that there are only 5 of the 18 parks in contention (3 parks were eliminated in January and 2 parks already permitted on leash access) for the pilot program to EXPAND dog access. So much for public input and participation. I'm not even sure the Dog Working Group had any input on the elimination of other County parks from contention.

I ask three (3) things from you now:

- (1) Start from a place where dog access to SMC parks is increased, not curtailed. That means continuing to permit dogs off leash TODAY where dogs have always had off leash access, namely Pillar Point Bluffs and Quarry Park. Do not commence enforcing leash laws at these two locations.
- (2) Hold Dog Working Group meetings at times when the working public can attend, evenings or Saturdays and post the agendas and outcomes from meetings on the website. Permit public comment on the website.

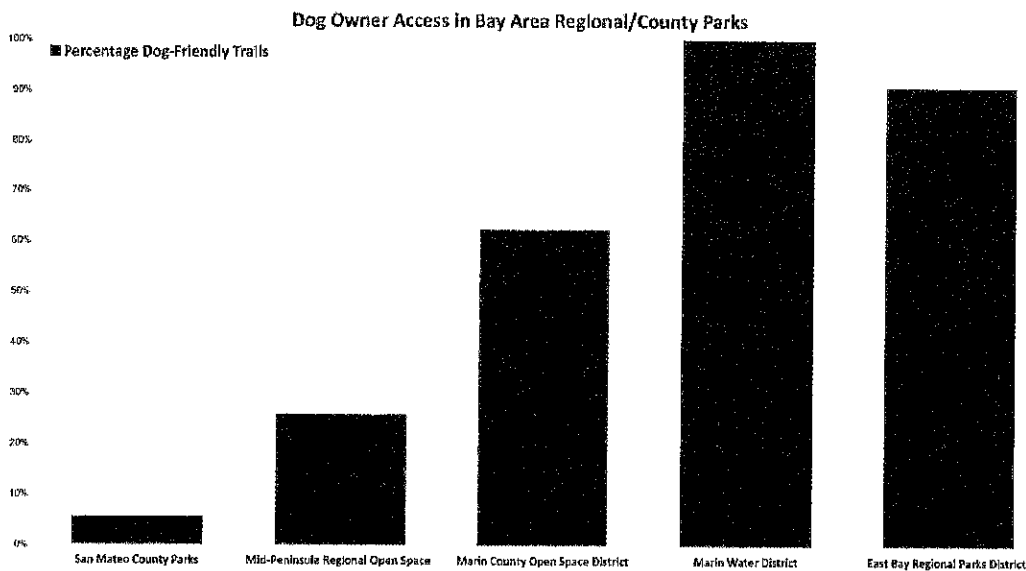
(3) Dogs should be allowed on-leash at ALL County parks unless there is a very good reason to the contrary. The best example of that is Fitzgerald Marine Reserve. We can all agree on Fitzgerald I suspect.

The SMC Parks & Rec Dept. articulated that it believes its current mandate is to expand dog access to only 1 or 2 new parks at this time for a temporary pilot program. I would disagree in favor of Item (1), above, but for argument's sake let's all agree to permit dog access to at least 2 new parks as a starting place (in no event just to 1) and accelerate access to additional new parks every couple of months until ALL permit at least off-leash access (except for Fitzgerald) as quickly as possible. The expansion process should not be limited to 1 or 2 new parks every 6 month to a year or more. Please also consider not encouraging enforcement of leash laws at Pillar Point Bluffs and Quarry Park. Leave dog access at these locations "as is" with no giant step backwards.

Thank you for your time and consideration of this email and my thoughts.

DOG WALKING ACCESS - BAY AREA COUNTIES

	San Mateo County Parks	Mid-Peninsula Regional Open Space	Marin County Open Space District	Marin Water District	East Bay Regional Parks District	Sonoma County Parks	Santa Clara County Parks
ACCESS FOR DOG OWNERS	5% Trails Access	26% Trails Access	62% Trails Access	100% Trails Access	91% Trails Access	90%+ Parks Access	79% Parks Access
Total Trails/Parks	190 miles	220 miles	249 miles	130 miles	1,250 miles	54 parks	28 parks
Dogs Permitted ON-LEASH	10.6 miles	57 miles	155.5 miles	130 miles	1,133 miles	52 parks	22 parks
Dogs Permitted OFF-LEASH	0	17.5 acres	92.5 miles	0	1,000+ miles	4 parks	3 parks



-----Original Message-----

From: [REDACTED]

Sent: Wednesday, February 27, 2019 12:20 PM

To: PARKS_ParksAndRecreation <ParksAndRecreation@smcgov.org>

Subject: On leash dog park pilot

I am a resident of the Coastside for over twenty years, a retired internist and dog owner for the past two years. My dog and I have enjoyed both on and off leash experiences in our local Coastside parks without any significant incidents and in fact my dog walking friends and I spend time each walk picking up trash and refuse as we go. I have yet to see any negative impact of dogs in our parks, only the positive impact of outdoor exercise and enjoyment of both dogs and owners,

I am writing regarding appropriate parks to pilot opening trails to on leash dog.

Apparently only about five percent of county park trails are open to on leash dogs at this time. Equestrians seem to have much greater trail access and while I appreciate the need to avoid horse vs dog conflicts I would like to point out that a far greater number of county residents have dogs and not horses. We deserve the same degree of access to our county parks that equestrians do.

Also I take exception to the idea that horses have less impact on the environment than dogs. Piles of horse shit (which never seem to be picked up) and erosion from large divots carved out of the trails by horses never seem to be addressed in any serious fashion. As a hiker and backpacker I am unfortunately all too familiar with the unpleasant left overs of equestrian traffic. I am more than willing to cede the trail to equestrians when we meet. I am not willing to cede my ability to access the same trails that they do.

In any case, I live on the Coastside where we are fortunate to have access to parks that are not as impacted by equestrians and their pets. So horse/dog interactions have not been a regular concern of mine. I do believe, however, that not all county residents are as fortunate.

I believe that parks over the hill; for example Coyote Point would be valuable for those than live in that area. I also think Memorial Park would be a good choice but in general having park access to those who live in more urban areas would be the most fair. I am not as familiar with those parks but people in those areas clearly deserve greater trail access given that they have more limited ability to take their pets outdoors. And those dogs (and their owners) are the ones missing out.

I would like to hear details on what this "pilot" project would be measuring. It's fine to say that there will be a pilot but surely there are some hard criteria being measured. Just to open up some areas of some parks and call it a "pilot" says nothing. What are the specific parameters being evaluated? Is this simply user reporting should problems arise? Or incidents documented by park rangers? Poop quantification?

Equestrians deserve to be safe on the trails. However there are some trails which should be exclusive of horses just as there are trails (most of them currently) which exclude dogs. And some of those trails should be considered for more off leash dog access as dog owners deserve the same, if not more, access to the county parks which truly belong to all of us who live and play in our county. Surrounding counties have successfully allowed dog access to their parks including off leash areas. Perhaps those counties

don't have the same pressure from the horsey crowd to keep their trails "protected" from other people's pets.

So please consider placing your "pilot" (whatever it may be) in areas of greatest need which would be the more urban areas of our county. And please look into off leash areas as the exercise potential and interactions of dogs with owners (ball chasing, running with other dogs etc) is greatly enhanced when dogs are free to run without being tethered. And choosing areas that exclude horse back riding should calm the fears of equestrians even though they already have access to county park trails that dog owners can only dream of.

Thank you,

██████████

Sent from my iPad

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, February 28, 2019 2:18 PM
To: PARKS_ParksAndRecreation <ParksAndRecreation@smcgov.org>
Subject: On-Leash Pilot Sites Input

Dear San Mateo Parks department,

My name is Nicole Skerry and I am writing this letter as a protest to your so called "Dog Pilot Program". After reading your webpage, I find your message regarding your Dog Pilot program to be extremely misleading and very deceptive! Furthermore, after attending the previous two dog management meetings, all I see is how San Mateo County Parks is discriminating against dogs and is doing all YOU can to keep dogs out of San Mateo county parks!

Therefore, I am asking San Mateo County Parks to do the right thing...to truly expand dog access in all county parks. San Mateo County Parks should be promoting and expanding the usage of county parks and trails in all of its communities for everyone and not reducing and excluding a large sector of San Mateo county...dog owners.

The reality is that other Bay Area county park systems allow dog walking in nearly all parks. This includes on multi use trails where there are horses, bikers, and people walking dogs. 40% of the households in our county have at least one dog as part of their families. Extensive medical studies have shown the benefits of dogs and the benefits of being outdoors in nature for our mental and physical wellbeing. Therefore, San Mateo County Parks should encourage all users to get out to enjoy nature as a regular ritual and routine... to walk with their dogs in their local neighborhood parks and trails. San Mateo County Parks needs to change its thinking and start meeting the needs of its communities.

According to your webpage..."The pilot program to expand on-leash recreational opportunities in San Mateo County Parks for dogs and their owners in currently underway."; however, what San Mateo County Parks is doing is *restricting dog access*, NOT expanding dog access! Furthermore, since Pillar Point Bluff, Quarry Park, Mirada Surf Trail have been traditionally off-leash walking areas on the coast for decades, it is inaccurate and disingenuous to say that park rangers are welcoming visitors with their dogs and talking to them about regulations. More regulations at these newly acquired sites is not an expansion of dog recreation opportunities.

Dog owners throughout San Mateo County are not being fairly represented in your dog management group. This process is not transparent and is not done in good faith! Dogs and their owners (we pay our fair share of taxes to the county) throughout San Mateo County should have parks/trails to enjoy on a regular daily basis to exercise ourselves and our dogs in our own respective communities. Why should there only be "one to two pilot sites for on-leash" dog walking in San Mateo County Parks? All of San Mateo County Parks should be open for all users! Discriminating against one group of users... dog walkers is just not right! And please don't use anecdotal narratives to justify your reasoning, because we all have anecdotal evidence to tell about just anything and everything!

Again, 1 to 2 pilot sites for on leash dog walking in San Mateo county doesn't cut it, San Mateo County Parks needs to get serious and come up with a plan to give all users fair access in our county parks.

Sincerely,
[REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, February 28, 2019 5:14 PM
To: PARKS_ParksAndRecreation <ParksAndRecreation@smcgov.org>
Subject: Dog access and San Mateo County Parks

Ladies and Gentlemen:

I am a 22-year resident of San Carlos, a molecular biologist focused on human health, an avid cyclist, and outdoors enthusiast. I enjoy the San Mateo County Parks on a weekly, if not daily, basis. I have recently been made aware of the restrictions placed on dog access at the San Mateo Parks. The goal of the parks system should be inclusion and access, not exclusion and heavy-handed enforcement. By comparison, other counties and jurisdictions default towards dog access, unless there is a credible reason for exclusion. San Mateo County should follow this same model; default towards inclusion, unless there is a credible, specific reason (i.e. a marine preserve).

Dog access promotes health and well-being for all of the residents of the county; several peer-reviewed scientific studies document improved health and well-being of dog owners, and even others who have brief encounters with dogs:

- "Caring for a dog or cat might be an effective health promotion strategy to increase physical activity and facilitate social participation among older adults."

- <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/30427858>

- "In addition to race, dog ownership was a significant contributor to total physical activity (P = .03)."

- https://journals.humankinetics.com/doi/full/10.1123/jpah.2017-0322?url_ver=Z39.88-2003&rfr_id=ori%3Arid%3Acrossref.org&rfr_dat=cr_pub%3Dpubmed&

Furthermore, dog access promotes a sense of community; I have met many wonderful people through the network of dog walkers at Stulsaft Park. Also, dog owners are wonderful stewards of their parks. Again, using Stulsaft as a model, it is common to see dog owners disposing of trash left by others, and shoring up trail damage, as well as providing trail directions and other assistance to fellow park goers.

I want to emphasize that dog access is more beneficial than a "dog park." A dog park may be suitable for small dogs, but tend to hem in larger dogs. Also, while the default should be on-leash access, I believe that there should be designated off-leash trails and beach areas. It is well documented that dogs behave better off-leash than on-leash (<https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/animal-emotions/201605/why-dogs-belong-leash-its-win-win-all>).

I strongly encourage the Parks and Recreation Department, by default, to immediately open up access to all parks, unless there is a credible, specific reason otherwise. Also, the Parks and Recreation Department should identify off-leash areas for dogs. This will improve the quality of life for all residents of San Mateo County.

Best regards,

[REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Friday, March 01, 2019 5:57 PM
To: PARKS_ParksAndRecreation <ParksAndRecreation@smcgov.org>
Subject: On-Leash Pilot Sites Input

Dear San Mateo Co Parks and Recreation

I live in Moss Beach and own 3 dogs that are well behaved and LOVE to go for walks. We walk them every day for about an hour and they run and play...and we are so happy to see them enjoying the outdoors no matter what the weather. These walks are not only good for them, but very, very good for us physically and mentally. We meet other walkers, mostly people with dogs, no matter where we walk. (Has anyone from the parks dept. done a count of people with or without dogs? We have, and most people on the trails have dogs)

I am extremely concerned about the unfriendly dog-walking rules that are coming out of the San Mateo Co Parks and "Recreation" department. It seems that a few people who don't like dogs are making the rules, even though dog owners have been writing letters, making comments, and attending meetings for years. Regulating dog walking so strictly is not considering the large portion of people with dogs who want and need "recreation" just as much, if not more, as everyone else.

Please, please don't take away the happy life we have walking our dogs...let us all share the parks to enjoy nature with our dogs, or, for the minority of walkers on the trails, without dogs.

Thank you for being fair,

[REDACTED]