



PORTLAND PARKS & RECREATION

Healthy Parks, Healthy Portland

Title: Dogs in Natural Area Parks		
Date Adopted: November 21, 2005	Date Revised:	Authorized By: Zari Santner, Director

POLICY:

Dogs are not permitted off-leash in natural area parks. The Bureau and its partners will develop education and enforcement plans aimed at ensuring responsible use of natural areas and minimizing the impacts of pets.

Dogs are not allowed on or off leash in newly acquired natural area parks to protect sensitive habitat until site planning occurs. As master and management planning for individual natural area park sites occurs, specific recommendations will be made regarding any restrictions on use by dogs, including the option of no dogs allowed.

PURPOSE:

Sites designated as natural area parkland are managed to protect wildlife habitat and natural features; human use is controlled to protect natural resource values. Portland's natural areas are part of a larger system of greenspaces that help preserve the biological diversity of the region and maintain habitat for a variety of wildlife species including threatened and rare species such as salmon, bald eagles, and red-legged frogs. Natural area parkland offers scenic backdrops throughout the city and provides the residents of Portland a chance to connect with nature. These areas are managed to protect the region's water and air quality, protecting streams and natural vegetation in each of the city's watersheds.

Many studies have documented the effects of domestic dogs on wildlife. As dogs are recognized as predators by wildlife, their presence may stress wildlife and reduce breeding success. Visiting dogs can transmit diseases to wild populations or pick up diseases carried by wildlife. Uncollected dog feces can result in fertilization which may favor invasive plant species. Dogs can also contribute to the spread of undesirable species through seeds in their fur.

Most natural area park sites contain developed trails that see extensive use by pedestrians with dogs. Dog owners take their dogs to natural area parks for mutual exercise, for appreciation of nature, and for personal security. Many natural area sites are connected by regional trails where pedestrians and leashed dogs can do longer-distance hiking, walking, and jogging.

As the portfolio of natural area parkland increases and individual site planning continues, the appropriate level of use by people and pets in each site must be considered. In the case of newly acquired natural areas without established trails or public use, an interim policy of dog exclusion will be enforced. The interim policy will be in force until site planning for the site is completed.

IMPLEMENTATION:

Apply an interim dog exclusion policy at the following sites. These sites have been acquired since 2000 and have no established trails or visitor services. Other properties offer trail walking opportunities to people and leashed dogs.

Campfire Property
Fanno Creek Natural Area
Gentemann Property
Johnson Lake

Lower Powell Butte Floodplain
Mason Springs
Tryon Headwaters
West Portland Park