

**DRAFT Report of the Trails Subcommittee
03/01/04**

Statement of the Trails Subcommittee

Increased use of trails, parks, and other public lands is impacting the experience of many users. Contact between dogs and other users is increasing, and rules, regulations, and enforcement policies are not clearly understood by the public. The special needs of dog users also are not being addressed.

The purpose of this subcommittee is to address the issue of dog usage on trails, open spaces, parks, and other public areas, and to provide recommendations on usage to the Dog Task Force.

The Trails subcommittee (originally called the Dog Parks and Off-Leash Areas Subcommittee) was tasked with:

1. Finding out about what other communities do regarding this
2. exploring areas in Juneau that may be suitable
3. developing proposed guidelines for how to manage, fund (if required)
4. Identifying what further information might be needed to make an informed decision or recommendation
5. Drafting recommendations for full committee to consider
6. Drafting measurements for success for review in fall 2004

The subcommittee met five times (possibly six?), for two hours per session, and we were unable to complete some of our tasks, specifically a detailed examination of what other communities do regarding off-leash areas. I personally have collected a large amount of literature on the subject of dog parks, but have found little addressing off leash areas that are not designated formally as “dog parks”.

We were able to identify many areas important to users with dogs, and come up with some tentative recommendations for these areas. We tried, whenever possible, to identify which agency (or agencies) have authority over each area, what other recreational uses there are in the area, and if there was any seasonality of use, including:

- seasonal problems for users with dogs (ie dead fish in summer months, bears);
- conflicts with other users.

Our recommendations were to:

- leave the area “as is” (generally meaning dogs allowed, but on leash only)
- recommend as a leash-free area
- recommend as a dog-free area
- recommend as a combination of the above

In some areas, the subcommittee felt we needed input from the wildlife committee. In other cases we could not come to agreement, and in those cases I have attempted to present all views that were expressed.

Our recommendations:

SHEEP CREEK:

Authority: state (beach) and state parks (trail)

Beach:

Other users: fishing, picnicking, boat launch, gravel collection, hatchery, salmon bake

Seasonality: primarily used in summer; dead fish in July/Aug.

Recommendation: Further study for off leash area

Trail:

Other users: birders; rough trail (hikers)

Seasonality: birding in April/May

Recommendation: leave as is

DREDGE POND:

Authority: Private property; possible CBJ purchase?

Other users: hunters, heliport, bird watching and wildlife viewing, important to waterfowl in migration time

Seasonality: migration time

Recommendation: further study for off leash area

Other: Need parking and fencing, and need to acquire the property

DZ TRAIL SYSTEM AND POLICE STATION:

Other users: schools

Seasonality: use by classes during school year

Recommendation: W. of Switzer Creek to DZ: possibly “dog-free” area (seasonally?);

Switzer Creek/ Richard Marriot trail: leave as is.

Other: Need to talk with Discovery Foundation for clarification; Need more information

OUTER POINT:

Authority: CBJ

Other users: runners, picnics, campers, use by schools during Sea Week

Recommendation #1: off leash, with need for education because of heavy use

RAINFOREST TRAIL:

Authority: CBJ

Other users: commercial, runners, bikers (limited)

Seasonality: tourism (April 1 – October 1)

Recommendation #1: leave as is (on leash) during tourism time; w/possible hourly definitions (ie between the hours of...); from Oct. 1 – April 1, off leash.

- There was a 2nd recommendation on the combination of Outer Point/Rainforest Trail: Whichever trail is designated for commercial use should be designated as dog free, year ‘round.

FISH CREEK:

Authority: CBJ

Other users: hunters, birders, fishing, horseback

Seasonality: bird’s migration time

Recommendation: leave as is w/ possible seasonal or special restrictions after hearing from Wildlife committee

SANDY BEACH: Beach area, ball fields, trail, and picnic areas

Authority: CBJ?

Beach Area:

Other users: picnics, swimming

Recommendation: Possible off leash area, excluding the picnic and playground areas

Field #2:

Recommendation: possible off leash area between October and March; especially for training

Trail:

Other users: commercial use, runners, biking, access to S. Douglas properties, Society for Creative A. use; heavily used area.

Recommendation: leave as is.

Picnic area:

Recommendation: leave as is (on leash only)

- Need for good signage designating where off leash area is

COPE PARK:

Authority: CBJ

Other users: school groups, tennis, picnics, soccer and baseball; access to Flume Trail; play area.

Recommendation: Need LOTS of education in this area. Good area for a trail study w/ increased signage and variable use. More information needed, and this area is under planning study by CBJ now.

Other: possible dog agility course being planned? Training area?

DOWNTOWN:

Authority: CBJ

Other users: tourists, businesses

Recommendation: There was considerable confusion as to what constitutes the “core” area... for the purposes here, we chose to define that “on public property within the area of Mt. Roberts street to the wooden trestle on Basin Road, and west to Ross way” be on leash, unless otherwise posted. Others felt that the area should extend from Taku Fisheries to Basin Rd. and to Norway Point... and others felt it should be limited to the core business area, only up as far as 4th or 5th Street...

The Cemetery is off limits to dogs.

BASIN ROAD:

Authority: CBJ

Other users:

Recommendations: The boundaries of the watershed area are unclear. Currently it is an on leash area. Need more information.

FLUME TRAIL:

Authority: AEL&P/CBJ

Other users: runners.

Seasonality: used heavily all year, except when avalanches are possible.

Recommendation: Leave as is, with the recommendation to the education committee to educate both dog owners and other users as to how to coexist in this area. Better signage.

MT ROBERTS:

Authority: CBJ/State

Other users: commercial, hiking, access to camping.

Seasonality: yes

Recommendation: Need more information and input from the wildlife committee.

Wildlife concerns. Problem is runners & hikers w/dogs off leash not paying attention to their dogs. Need for education. Some thought dogs should be on leash only, some wanted dogs banned, at least at the top.

If dogs are banned on top, there may be a need for a pass through area on top for overnight hikers w/dogs.

TWIN LAKES:

Authority: CBJ

Other users: picnics, shelter for rentals, swimmers, joggers, bikers, walkers, fishing, commercial fly fishing, sledding, ice skating, water use, play area, special events. Very heavy multi-use area. Accessible.

Current use by people w/dogs: Grass hill for exercising dogs; walking on sidewalk.

Many use water for swimming (dogs).

Seasonality: many uses are seasonal; more heavily used in summer. Walkers utilize heavily in winter due to accessibility.

* Currently NO DOGS in July and August. During this closure, many who customarily use Twin Lakes switch to using Salmon Creek, which puts additional pressure on this area. (Watershed area)

Recommendation: Get rid of July/August closure to dogs. Area south of the first culvert is on leash only at all times. From May 15 – Sept 15, area north of culvert is off leash 6am – 10am. From Sept. 15 – May 15, area north of culvert is off leash at all times.

Signs would be changed to reflect changing regulations. Need for education in this area due to high usage.

This is a test area and should be re-evaluated in a year's time.

Concern: that dogs may get on the roadway and cause accidents.

WETLANDS BY GOLF COURSE

Authority: State/private

Other users: hunters, horseback riders, some birders

- Important use to dog people for tracking (training)

Seasonality: Possible migration and nesting use by birds

Recommendation: Leave as is (in fact, because of very low use and the desire to maintain current use, we recommend taking this area off of our list entirely)

CAMPGROUND:

Authority: USFS (Developed facility)

Other users: Summer: campers

Winter: skiers, snowmobilers

Recommendation: leave as is, with a recognized need for education for ALL users. This could take place through joint efforts with other users.

WEST GLACIER:

Authority: USFS

Other users: Tourists, commercial groups, mountain bikers, hikers. Very heavy use area.

Seasonality: More heavily used in summer

Recommendation: Leave as is

EAST GLACIER:

Authority: USFS

Other users: same as West Glacier

Recommendation: Leave as is, but there is a need to clarify where the “off leash” boundary is.

DREDGE LAKE:

Authority: USFS

Other users: lots of wildlife; photographers, fishing, hunters

Recommendation: A dog free area:

- Southern boarder: River trail, Pit trail, and Crystal Lake trail
- Eastern boarder: Glacier Spur road
- Northern boarder: Mendenhall Lake, excluding Bus Park trail
- Western boarder: Mendenhall River

Rest of area: leave as is

AIRPORT DIKE TRAIL:

Authority: CBJ/Airport

Other users: runners, bikers, walkers, kids, photographers, wildlife viewers, tracking and hunting in adjacent wetlands accessed by trail

Seasonality: bird use varies seasonally, and during bad weather dog walkers still use the area when other use drops

Recommendations: We had difficulty agreeing on recommendations for this area. It is extremely popular with all kinds of users, and conflicts do arise especially in times of heavy use. This area and Sandy Beach are probably the most heavily used by dog walkers. There is a great need for education. We did agree that it should be OK to walk dogs on the trail. As far as wildlife concerns, there is a need to define WHAT, WHEN and WHERE are critical. It was also agreed that a porta-potty is needed.

DIMOND PARK:

Authority: CBJ

Other users: proposed school, ball fields

Recommendations: Possible area for a very small off leash area, under the bridge and the treed area between the paved trail and the river, or the old pit area N. of the pedestrian bridge; however, uses by the elementary school/Discovery Foundation may conflict.

MELVIN PARK:

Authority: CBJ

Other users: Seasonally used for sports

Recommendation: Possible use off season or during unscheduled times for a training area. This was proposed for other ballfields too, but would need education efforts about picking up dog feces and bag dispensers should be installed.

AMALGA MEADOWS:

Authority: CBJ (Meadow) State Parks/USFS

Recommendation: Encourage development of a dog-free trail (new trails) between the Saga Lodge and the Boy Scout trail, and spurs off of it, for wildlife viewing.

AUKE REC:

Authority: USFS

Recommendation: leave as is

MONTANA CREEK RD:

Authority: DOT right of way

Recommendation: leave as is

EAGLE BEACH:

Recommendation: One committee member suggested that this area should be an on leash area because of birds/bird watching. Other committee members felt that this would be divisive and difficult to enforce. We decided this area was better discussed by the larger group.