

## **Dog Task Force Committee Meeting Notes November 10, 2003**

### **Public Comment**

Ron Berg - Emailed comments, he is a dog walker on the Rainforest Trail. Important to keep dogs under control and have use of public lands. He prefers having some meetings not during the lunch hour.

Myra Howe - She is a small dog owner. It is her experience that large dogs aren't on leashes and she asks for consideration for small dogs.

Andy Grossman - He is interested in how this process is going to be carried out. There is a lot of controversy with if regs are fair and consistent. Maybe we need to start over with existing regulations. There is a lot of piece meal stuff out there, then there is an umbrella ordinance. If there is a specific problem related to an animal we need to address the problem animals. Situation is not enforceable and he doesn't see ordinances enforced.

Perry Shipman - he suggests:

1. dog etiquette - rules for good citizenship
2. problem with clean up - a vast amount do clean up but there are some that don't. Need a law to address bad owners.
3. Brotherhood Bridge Trail - He found this troubling because trails are signed with current rules. He feels they are losing any place to take their dogs off leash.

Kathy Brown - Dogs need to be off a lease for exercise. She would like to see a place where this would be possible.

### **End of Public Comment**

There was much discussion about sensitive habitat and who to involve in the decision. How decisions are made on sensitive habitat changes from agency to agency and does it come down to education?

James King - He is pleased that so many different agencies are communicating together. It brings value to this process. He believes we should get a community wide perspective. Example: lease free, best area, sensitive areas. As far as education - how can we work together as a group? We need to come up with a recommendation on how to incorporate what this group has come up with. And lastly, define problem with clear statement: Here is what we have heard or perceived charges. Here is why we are recommending what we are.

Cindi Lagoudakis - Dogs are required to be on leashes on National Forest trails. It wouldn't be considered using Federal land for a leash free area. There is no local regulation that restrict people having dogs on trails.

Mike Eberhardt - If we are going to address problem we need to attempt to solve the problem.

Chava Lee - Sensitive habitat issue is a no brainer. Paperwork just needs to be signed and call it done. Gastineau Humane Society is in charge of enforcement of all CBJ area including the ice field and have 3 officers to enforce all these areas. The education program that was implemented a few years ago seems to be helping. Good trail etiquette is important as is the big dog/small dog issue. People can learn a lot by education.

Cindi Lagoudakis - She agrees with Chava. Education is the main issue. Understanding why imposing regulations and restrictions is important. Just creating a leash free area doesn't get the compliance we want.

Mike Eberhardt - He also agrees with education. Are we at a stage where we want to make this areawide and create a no dog area. One of the issues is to see whether we need to decrease use. He sees as issues - complaints and clean up.

Cindi Lagoudakis - Don't mix habitat and dog free areas. How can you prove it?

Mike Eberhardt - If we can prove habitat issues - social impacts, have leash free/ we are open to allow people to see wildlife habitat. Not scientific, it's more the feel of area.

Karla Hart - Habitat research is hard to find, she has some literature, which looks at dogs in Colorado and mule deer. Most dogs will chase, dogs and distance/speed does relate to impacts to habitat.

Cindi Lagoudakis - This comes back to enforcement and dog free zone and an on or off leash.

Chava Lee - What is the problem statement?

James King - He sees this as lack of education, lack of enforcement, dog owners that don't know the rules and regulations and the adverse effects on wildlife on other users.

Sue - The discussion at previous meeting we mentioned looking at the problem, the initial effects and the response to the safety to other users. Uncomfortable uses with other dogs. Need a clear understanding of problem with collection of data. The main problem seems to be a couple of trails and we should focus on them. We need more information of the problem.

James King - He would like to see something done similar to the Trails Working Group Survey. They received good information and got strong backing to make decision. He would like to go to the public with a survey to identify the issues.

Mike Eberhardt - If we want to go beyond and get a lot of the public input we should do a mailout and get a wider broader perspective. This could take a long time. Is there a mandate by the public?

Sue - This may also better define where to focus education.

Chava Lee - This is an excellent suggestion. Possibly we could have a walking trail without dogs. Majority of people are good citizens on trails. After work, during lunch and weekends are more difficult to monitor. Calls are going up over the last two years. Calls about poop everywhere. People are concerned about dogs, and people are disgusted that people don't clean up after their dogs.

Karla Hart - Possibly do a volunteer survey with 700 random calls? She will do a draft survey. She requests comments be emailed to her before the next meeting.

### **Public Comments:**

Perry Shipman -

He felt like time ran out for public comment.

Perception that dogs are bad, destructive behavior, is it always the dog? Kids step in front of dogs.

What is percentage of households in Juneau that have dogs?

Like to be a part of the process.

Need to educate, why am I being asked to do something?

Andy Grossman - Agrees with comments from Perry. Bikes on trails greater fear from dogs on Perseverance. Enforcement is another issue. Can you expect more from dogs. If you can't enforce then educate. He is willing to do the right thing if they know. This is a health hazard.

George Utermohle - Ordinances to get revised need to be clear, and standard clear. Concerned with closed in house review of current process.

Chava Lee - She said the regs are getting done, then they will go to JPD and then out to the public for review.

Myra Howe - She suggested that the committee consider volunteers for enforcement to give citizen arrests. She has seen this done in other places.

Doug Jones - The issue is not dogs, its people educating people, they are the issue. He cautions about a public opinion survey. Need to get someone who is not bias. He recommends Terry Quinn from UAS as a person that has helped/completed surveys.

Next meeting to be December 1<sup>st</sup>, 12:15pm - 1:30pm at the Downtown Library large conference room.

Cindi Lagoudakis from the Forest Serviced requested the following be added to these notes for clarification:

*It is important to note that if wildlife concerns are the reason for initiating the task force, then we are using the wrong tool for the job. Each agency would and should be able to make restrictions on dogs if wildlife issues are the concern. All agencies noted that with a few exceptions, this hadn't been raised as a specific issue by either Forest Service biologists or State biologists. I maintain that we are trying to solve what is primarily a social problem, and we should identify it as such. The complaints that arise from having dogs on trails and wild lands are mainly dog-dog or dog-human conflicts. I feel strongly that we have not allowed the Humane Society to complete it's process of revising and implementing regulations, and that without good enforcement this process isn't going to achieve the desired results. I don't think this discussion can go forward in a meaningful way if we don't address enforcement issues in some fashion. Finally, though I understand what is trying to be resolved here, it's unfortunate that this process got labeled the "Dog Task Force". I think it inflames an already hot issue, and would have preferred to see it fall under the review of the Interagency Trails Working Group as one issue.*