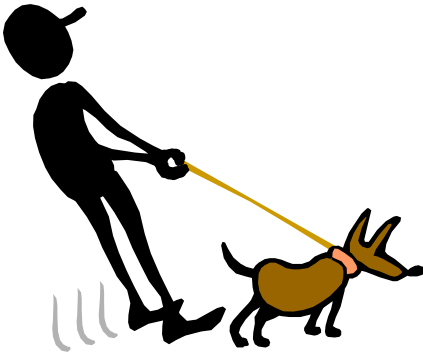


You, Your Dog, and the Natural Areas

What dog doesn't enjoy a nice romp outside? It's fun to take your dog on walks, hikes, and rides in natural areas. But there are rules: they must stay on a leash and owners must pick up their feces.



Here's why:

1. Dogs running freely may be in danger. In prairie dog towns dogs may encounter fleas that carry plague and can bring it home. Dogs may surprise a rattlesnake and suffer a usually fatal bite.
2. Dogs are perceived as predators by most wildlife. This elicits an alarm response which is damaging in the long term. Dogs cause the disruption of normal wildlife activity such as bedding, grooming, or feeding, and can further harass wildlife by chasing and killing it.
3. Dog waste is not natural. The diets of wild dogs such as foxes and coyotes consist of foods naturally found in their habitats. Dogs eat a variety of processed foods with many chemical additives. These chemicals harm the soil and plants.
4. Dogs over-occupy trail space making it uncomfortable for other users. Dogs often approach other people when they are not welcome. Some bark or growl at people.
5. Dogs are responsible for some transmission of diseases to wildlife including distemper, rabies, parvovirus, and parasites.
6. Dog waste creates an unclean trail for other users (ever step in it?).
7. Dog feces can transmit muscle cysts which can infect deer and elk.
8. Some dogs interact with other dogs on the trail in an unacceptable manner.
9. There are more than 70,000 dogs registered in Larimer County, which means many thousands enjoy the natural areas with their owners. That's a big impact on these sites.
10. It's up to us (the owners) to recreate responsibly with our canine friends.

