

Briefing for Cookab Hashemi, Chief of Staff for  
Congresswoman Jackie Speier (CA-14)

August 21, 2014

Subject: The City of Boulder Colorado's Voice and Sight Program (Green Tag) and its potential application for the GGNRA Dog Management Plan

**1) What is the Boulder, Colorado Voice and Site Tag (Green Tag) program? How successful is this program?**

This voice and sight tag program ("Green Tag") was designed by the City of Boulder in 2006 to help dog owners better understand voice and sight control standards on Boulder Open Space and Mountain Parks lands. Education about these standards has promoted user understanding that has helped reduce conflicts that can occur between visitors with dogs, non-dog visitors and wildlife.

**This is how the Green Tag program works:**

Currently, for a dog owner who intends to walk their dogs under voice and sight control on city recreational land, they need to complete the following steps:

- Watch an educational video about effective voice and sight control.
- Register with Open Space and Mountain Parks and agree to the terms of the program.
- Purchase tags and display these tags on dogs under voice and sight control.
- Comply with dog licensing requirements.

Enforcement of the program is currently based on a "three strikes" rule.

Beginning in January 2015, Boulder will require each dog owner to attend a free class in-person, and register their dog. Under these new rules, violators will appear before a municipal judge who may impose a range of penalties including additional dog training, and temporary suspension or revocation of voice and sight privileges for repeat or egregious offenders. Approximately 30,000 users currently are registered under this program.

## **Advantages of a voice and sight tag program are many:**

Allows enforcement to target problem users that are the real cause of issues, fixing so-called “problem areas.”

A tag program is more fair, equitable, and effective because responsible dog users are not punished and deprived of recreational resources as a result of a few problem users. This enforcement scheme preserves recreational lands for their intended uses for the responsible public at large.

Moreover, a tag program can provide a crosscutting solution to address all impacts of concern, including potential user conflict, wildlife concerns, water quality, safety concerns, and any other areas needing enforcement. The administrative program of enforcement will be targeted, effective, and efficient because only those users creating issues will be subject to enforcement. Enforcement and monitoring data will also be of higher quality and more reliable because users will be readily identifiable via the green tag registration.

## **How successful is this program?**

According to a Boulder representative, the Green Tag program obtained rates of bag carry compliance over 90% and in the initial year of implementation user conflict dropped by roughly 40%. This is contrary to what the NPS says in their SDEIS. They relied upon outdated information.

Compliance rates for leash carry regulations were at almost 100% and there have been almost no incidents of wildlife harassment. Voice and sight control compliance is in the high 80% to low 90% range.

## **GGNRA Dog Management Plan**

The information provided here did not receive anything more than superficial analysis in the 2013 DSEIS. Relevant reports on the Boulder experience, including additional modifications to the program that will be implemented in 2015 are cited here.<sup>1</sup> The NPS only looked at 2011 data.

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<sup>1</sup> See City of Boulder, CO, 2014 Voice and Sight Tag Program, for additional information, available at <https://bouldercolorado.gov/osmp/tag-program>.

# VOICE AND SIGHT TAG PROGRAM

## Quick facts on changes to Boulder's unique off-leash opportunity

The Boulder City Council recently approved a series of new updates to the city's Voice and Sight Tag Program. Started in 2006, the program allows dogs to be in designated areas that allow off-leash control if they display special participation tags and they are under "voice and sight control" of their guardians at all times.

The new program requirements, which will go into effect on Jan. 1, 2015, are designed to ensure that trails remain a special destination for Boulder visitors and their dogs. This also will help Open Space and Mountain Parks (OSMP) protect wildlife and natural resources, and help increase dog safety. For more information go to [voiceandsight.org](http://voiceandsight.org).



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### To participate in the Voice and Sight Tag Program in 2015, you need to:

- Attend a class about the City of Boulder's expectations for voice and sight control. To register, please visit <http://bit.ly/1vttp5t> and select "Dog: Voice & Sight" from the category list on the left.
- Provide proof of current rabies vaccination. Boulder residents will need to meet this requirement by obtaining a City of Boulder dog license.
- Pay the registration fees:
  - City of Boulder residents: \$13.
  - Boulder County residents not in the City of Boulder: \$33.
  - Non-Boulder county residents: \$75.
  - The registration fee includes one guardian and one dog. The fee for each additional guardian in a household is \$5, and the fee for each additional dog in a household is \$10.
- Annual renewal fees for the three groups of participants, respectively, will be \$5, \$20, \$30 per household.
- Fines for violations of voice and sight control have increased. The courts may also impose a range of penalties for violations, including additional dog training, and temporary suspension or revocation of voice and sight control privileges for egregious violations or repeat offenders.

### IMPORTANT NOTICES

If you only walk your dog on a leash, you are not required to register in the program or attend the class.

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Current Voice and Sight Tag Program participants must comply with the new program requirements by Jan. 1, 2015, to continue to have voice and sight control privileges.

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If you've registered for a Voice and Sight Tag in 2014 or before, it will expire at the end of the 2014 calendar year.

**WANT MORE INFORMATION?  
VISIT VOICEANDSIGHT.ORG**

## Voice and Sight Tag Program



**Learn about the 2015 Voice and Sight Tag Program and how to sign up for the free education class below.**

The Boulder City Council recently approved a series of new updates to the city's Voice and Sight Tag Program. Started in 2006, the program allows dogs to be in designated areas that allow off-leash control if they display special participation tags and they are under "voice and sight control" of their guardians at all times.

The new program requirements, which will go into effect on Jan. 1, 2015, are designed to ensure that trails remain a special destination for Boulder visitors and their dogs. This also will help Open Space and Mountain Parks (OSMP) protect wildlife and natural resources, and help increase dog safety.

**To participate in the Voice and Sight Tag Program in 2015, you need to:**

- **Attend a free, one-time class about the City of Boulder's expectations for voice and sight control. There are many class dates and times currently available. To register for a class, please visit the Parks & Recreation registration website and select "Dog: Voice & Sight" from the category list on the left.**
  - **Please do not bring dogs to the class.**
  - You will not pay program registration fees at the class. Program fees must be paid when the registration period for 2015 tags is available.
  - If you already have an existing login and PIN to register for Parks & Recreation classes, you will use them to sign up for the Voice and Sight class. Otherwise you will need to create a new Parks & Recreation account.
- Provide proof of current rabies vaccination. Boulder residents will need to meet this requirement by obtaining a City of Boulder dog license.
- Pay the registration fees:
  - City of Boulder residents: \$13.
  - Boulder County residents not in the City of Boulder: \$33.
  - Non-Boulder County residents: \$75.

- The registration fee includes one guardian and one dog. The fee for each additional guardian in a household is \$5, and the fee for each additional dog in a household is \$10.
- The additional guardian and dog registration fees will be waived for City of Boulder households who meet income criteria consistent with the City of Boulder Food Tax Rebate Program or the Parks and Recreation Reduced Rate Program.
- Annual renewal fees for the three groups of participants, respectively, will be \$5, \$20, \$30 per household.
- Fines for violations of voice and sight control have increased. The courts may also impose a range of penalties for violations, including additional dog training, and temporary suspension or revocation of voice and sight control privileges for egregious violations or repeat offenders.

### **IMPORTANT NOTICES**

- Sign up for a class today so you won't face any delays in obtaining your 2015 Voice and Sight Tags. You only need to take the class once.
- If you only walk your dog on a leash, you are not required to register in the program or attend the class.
- Current Voice and Sight Tag Program participants must comply with the new program requirements by Jan. 1, 2015 to continue to have voice and sight control privileges.
- If you've registered for a Voice and Sight Tag in 2014 or before, it will expire at the end of the 2014 calendar year.

## **2015 Voice And Sight Tag Program**

- Register for Voice and Sight Education Class
- Voice and Sight Tag Program Changes
- 2015 Voice and Sight Tag Program Brochure
- Voice and Sight Tag Program Changes Fact Sheet
- Frequently Asked Questions About Tag Program Changes
- Dog Regulations by Area
- Voice and Sight Tag Program Evaluation

## 2014 Voice and Sight Tag Program

### What Is The Voice and Sight Tag Program?

**Attention current Tag Program participants:** The Voice and Sight Tag Program will be changing in 2015 and all participants will need to comply with new requirements to continue to use voice and sight privileges. If you register for a Voice and Sight Tag in 2014, it will expire at the end of the year. Learn more about Voice and Sight Tag Program changes.

The Voice and Sight Tag program has been designed by the City of Boulder to help dog guardians better understand the voice and sight control standards. Understanding and meeting these standards will help reduce conflicts that can occur between dogs, visitors and wildlife.

**This program is only for dog guardians who intend to walk their dogs under voice and sight control where allowed on City of Boulder land. If you only walk your dog on a leash, you are not required to register.**

#### To participate in the program, you must:

1. Watch a video about voice and sight control.
2. Register with Open Space and Mountain Parks (OSMP) and agree to the Terms and Conditions of the program.
3. Purchase tags: \$15 city of Boulder resident household - includes one tag and \$18.75 non-resident household. Additional tags are \$5 each.
4. Display voice and sight tags on dogs under voice and sight control.
5. Purchase additional or replacement tags for \$5 online. Dog guardians must provide the primary member household information and pay by credit card. Please allow seven to ten business days for delivery. Please update household information online if it is out-of-date to ensure the tag is mailed to the appropriate address.

If you would like to receive updates about the Voice and Sight Tag Program or other OSMP dog related topics, please sign up for the 'Dogs on OSMP' email list.

#### Frequently Asked Questions about the 2014 Voice and Sight Tag Program:

##### **Can I walk my dog off-leash within the city limits of Boulder after I have purchased a tag?**

The voice and sight control tag applies only to City of Boulder lands where a leash is not required. A leash is

always required within the city limits of Boulder. Also, OSMP trails posted as requiring a leash prohibit the use of voice and sight control.

**Can I carry the tag instead of displaying it on my dog?**

No. The tag must be displayed on your dog so that it is visible. If the dog is small or the tag seems uncomfortable, guardians can try using a harness with the tag attached or affixing the tag directly under the collar. New participants who registered online must wait to receive the tag in the mail before walking their dog under voice and sight control. A receipt of registration is not sufficient. Dog guardians must display the tag on the dog at all times.

**What does the registration fee cover?**

The registration fee (\$15 for residents of Boulder, \$18.75 for non-residents) includes registration and one dog tag. Additional tags can be purchased for \$5 each.

**How do I purchase additional or replacement tags?**

Dog guardians can purchase additional or replacement tags online. Dog guardians must provide the primary member household information and pay by credit card. Please allow seven to ten business days for delivery.

**Is participating in the program a requirement or just a request?**

It is the law. Participation in the program is a requirement of voice and sight control as stated in City ordinance Boulder Revised Code (BRC) 6-1-16 and 6-13-2 through 6-13-5.

**Is the tag a "license" or unique to a specific dog?**

The tag signifies that the dog guardian has registered and is participating in the program. The tag is not specific to a dog. The City of Boulder Voice and Sight tag does not replace the need for licensing your dog in the city.

**I paid the fee and bought extra tags – where will my money go?**

The money from fees and tags will help support the Open Space and Mountain Parks Voice and Sight Tag program.

**Is there a test or certification process associated with getting the dog tags?**

No. This is not a certification program. By registering for the program and displaying the tags on your dog, you are simply stating that you have seen the video on voice and sight control and agree to walk your dog under voice and sight control terms while on OSMP lands.

**I cannot watch the video or register for the program on my computer. It's a Macintosh. What can I do?**

The Safari browser on Macs will not work on this program. You can download the Firefox browser.

### **What should I do if I find a lost dog with a Voice and Sight Control tag?**

You may call our office, and we will attempt to contact the dog's owner. However, we will not share the registrant's contact information without their permission. You may also take the dog to your local animal shelter.

### **Am I protected from getting a ticket if my dog has a Voice and Sight Control tag?**

No. A dog guardian who participates in the program and walks a dog under voice and sight control in areas where it is allowed may still be issued for any violation of the following standards:

- The dog guardian is walking more than two dogs under voice and sight control;
- The dog guardian is not carrying a leash for each dog being walked under voice and sight control;
- The dog guardian fails to display a voice and sight tag on dog;
- The dog is not within the guardian's sight and under voice control at all times;
- The dog does not come to and stay with the guardian immediately upon command;
- The dog charges, chases or otherwise displays aggression towards any person, or behaves in a way that any reasonable person may find harassing or disturbing;
- The dog charges, chases or otherwise displays aggression towards any dog;
- The dog chases, harasses or disturbs wildlife or livestock.

### **What are the penalties?**

The maximum penalty for a first violation is a fine of \$50. For a second violation within 24 months the maximum penalty is a fine of \$100. A third violation within the same 24 months will result in a fine of not less than \$200 and revocation of the privilege to use voice and sight control.

## **Dogs On OSMP**

- OSMP Dog Regulations Map
- Dog Regulations by Area
- Dogs on OSMP
- Trailhead Leash Program
- Seasonal Leash Restrictions
- 2014 Voice and Sight Dog Tag Program
- City Dog Parks

## **Voice And Sight Tag Program**