

## SMC Parks Dog Pilot Project Work Group

### Work Group Goals:

- Recommend to the Parks Department 1-2 park sites where on-leash dog access can be piloted and evaluated, based on the work of the Dog Management Committee, and
- Provide a recommendation to the Board of Supervisors about a possible off-leash pilot location

### Meeting Notes

May 6, 2019

400 County Center, Supervisors' Chambers, Redwood City

**Work Group Members Present:** Bonilla, Brophy, Cervantes, Corwin, DelCarlo, Erridge, Hearn, Johnson, Merrilees, O'Brien, Sullivan

**Staff:** Jensen, Schoof, Dallman, Arechiga

**Facilitator:** Brown

### Goals for this meeting:

- Consider locations selected for On-Leash Pilots
- Confirm next steps with On-Leash Pilot sites
- Receive information about Board Action regarding fines for non-compliance
- Confirm criteria to be used to evaluate success of on-leash pilots

The meeting was called to order at 2:00 pm. Pat Brown, facilitator, introduced herself and asked work group members and staff to introduce themselves. She then described how this group is different than the Dog Management Committee. The Work Group is:

- working on implementation rather than policy development
- composed of community representatives and Parks Department staff
- charged by the Board of Supervisors with implementation and evaluation of pilot sites to test the feasibility of dog access to SMC Parks, specifically to identify 1-2 on-leash pilot sites and 1 off-leash pilot site

Pat reminded the group of their decision to use consensus decision-making within the Work Group using the fist-five method. She also referenced the process map timeline which outlines the process for this work group, and reviewed the meeting agenda.

Pat also presented and obtained the Work Group's approval of the following group agreements:

- Members prepare for meetings by reading meeting packet
- Speak respectfully during meetings
- Listen for understanding
- Allow the facilitator to guide the process

## **Review notes from the April 1<sup>st</sup> Work Group Meeting**

There were no comments regarding the April meeting notes.

### **Public Comment**

There were 4 community members present.

Pat explained that at this point in the agenda members of the public were invited to address the work group and they were asked to keep their comments brief and relevant. She also mentioned there are written comment forms if attendees prefer to submit their input to the workgroup in writing.

Comments addressed the following points:

- Request for a user survey as part of the evaluation criteria to determine success of the program
- Request for more dog access in bayside parks, including off-leash access
- Concerns raised regarding welfare of wildlife at CuriOdyssey, and the need for fencing and signage to minimize impact of dogs on wildlife kept at CuriOdyssey

### **Review of Written Input Received**

Peggy Jensen, Interim Parks Director, confirmed 4 additional written public comments were provided to the workgroup, 2 comments were submitted at the April meeting and 2 were emailed.

### **Follow up from April meeting – information requests**

As requested by the work group at the last meeting, Carla Schoof provided a list of the 31 miles of trails that do not allow equestrian access in San Mateo County Parks. She also mentioned that Moss Beach, Flood, Friendship, Tunitas Creek Beach, Sanchez Adobe, and Woodside Store parks do not have equestrian designated trails.

- Coyote Point: Bay, Bluff, Marina, Promenade, Shoreline
- Edgewood: Baywood, Sylvan
- Fitzgerald Marine Reserve: Cypress
- Huddart: Bay Tree, Chickadee, Redwood Nature Trail
- Junipero Serra: Buckeye, DeAnza, Live Oak, Meadow Vista, Oak Cove, Quail Loop
- Memorial: Creek, Homestead, Mt. Ellen Nature, Pomponio, Sequoia, Tan Oak, Wurr
- Quarry: Unnamed social trails
- Sam McDonald: Big Tree, Forest Loop, Heritage Grove
- San Bruno Mountain: Bog, Dairy Ravine, Day Camp, Eucalyptus Loop
- San Pedro Valley: Brooks Creek, Old Trout Farm, Plaskon Nature

Ramona Arechiga addressed the work group's request for more information about the potential for conflict between dogs and the marsh wildlife and plants at Coyote Point. She mentioned that while there is potential for a number of species of concern in this area, staff does not have occurrence data nor breeding data for species in this area except for the occasional sighting of the California Ridgeways Rail.

### **Update on Ranger Contacts/Education and Data Collection**

Ellie Dallman then provided an update on the first couple months of monitoring of dog access and ranger outreach in the parks that allow on-leash dog access per the new ordinance:

- 1) Devil's Slide Trail
- 2) Pillar Point Bluff
- 3) Quarry Park
- 4) Mirada Surf
- 5) California Coastal Trail/Dardanelle Trail (Fitzgerald Marine Reserve)
- 6) Bay Trail (Coyote Point Park)

A total of 276 educational contacts have been made by park rangers January 1 through mid-March 2019:

- 98 contacts at Coyote Point Recreation Area
- 76 contacts at Pillar Point Bluff
- 41 contacts at Coyote Point Marina
- 28 contacts at Fitzgerald Marine Reserve
- 26 contacts at Quarry Park
- 6 contacts at Devil's Slide Trail
- 1 contact at Mirada Surf

The top two contact types encountered by rangers to date include dogs off-leash (172 on coastside and 22 on bayside) and dogs in undesignated areas (32 on coastside and 145 on bayside). It was mentioned that most of the undesignated area dog contacts continue to be made in parks where dogs are only allowed in a designated area of the park (Coyote Point and Fitzgerald Marine Reserve). There were 31 contacts made where dogs were off trail (18 on coastside and 13 on bayside). There were six contacts on the coastside with leashes longer than six feet, and three contacts on the bayside.

The work group was also presented with a month by month comparison of the total number of contacts:

**DRAFT: Summary of Dog Interactions By Month  
January – April 2019**

	January	February	March	April
Coyote Point Marina	14	5	9	13
Coyote Point Recreation Area	26	19	29	24
Devil's Slide Trail	3	2	1	0
Fitzgerald Marine Reserve	15	6	5	2
Mirada Surf	1	0	0	0
Pillar Point Bluff	45	21	5	5
Quarry Park	2	15	2	7
<b>TOTAL INTERACTIONS BY MONTH:</b>	<b>106</b>	<b>68</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>51</b>
<b>TOTAL 2019 INTERACTIONS:</b>	<b>276</b>			

**Update on Approach to Fines for Non-Compliance with Dog Access Ordinance**

Ellie Dallman shared that the Board recently approved updated base fines for violations of the San Mateo County Dog Recreation Ordinance. While the Parks Department is hopeful that all dog owners will follow the policies established by the Parks Commission and the Board of Supervisors, it is important that rangers are empowered with the necessary tools to preserve wildlife and habitat as well as ensure the safety and access of all other park users as outlined by the Parks' mission statement. For this reason, a tiered enforcement system with fines was established by the

Board when the ordinance was approved, to be enforced starting July 1, 2019, after the outreach and education period.

When the Parks Department began the process of establishing the administration system for the fines set by the board, the Department learned there are a number of additional processing costs on top of the base fine that was originally approved by the Board. So, in order to maintain the total violation fee cost at approximately the same level as what the Board initially approved for the base fines, the Parks Department recommended that the Board amend the ordinance to lower the base fine such that the total fine, including all fees, equals about the same amount as the original base fines that were approved. The chart below reflects the updated fines proposed by this ordinance amendment:

	<b>Base fine</b>	<b>Total with fees*</b>
1 <sup>st</sup> Violation (infraction)	\$5.00	\$110.00
2 <sup>nd</sup> Violation (infraction)	\$30.00	\$198.00
Each additional violation (infraction)	\$100.00	\$485.00

\*This includes a number of fees applied to all infractions processed by the Courts; fees are subject to change by the Courts.

#### **Follow-up on Discussion re. Coyote Point as On-leash Pilot Location**

Kevin O'Brien, Ranger III, confirmed that in response to concerns raised by CuriOdyssey about allowing on-leash dog access at Coyote Point, the Parks Department would install extensive signage, including painted signage on walkways, to discourage dogs from accessing the trails directly adjacent to CuriOdyssey. Kevin also mentioned Parks would work with CuriOdyssey to install fencing to further mitigate impacts of dogs in the area.

#### **Confirm Plans to Implement On-Leash Pilots**

The facilitator asked the group to use the Fist-Five approach to confirm if they would like to proceed with each on-leash pilot location. Through the consensus process, the two pilot sites (Coyote Point and Junipero Serra) were each confirmed by workgroup members.

#### **Evaluation Design for On-leash Pilot Sites**

Ramona Arechiga, Natural Resource Manager, reviewed the legal framework and water quality standards the Parks Department must adhere to. Ramona confirmed that data would be collected before, during and after the pilots through visual observation and cameras to measure impact on vegetation, wildlife, and water quality. Peggy Jensen confirmed that the Department would also measure visitor interactions, staff workload, costs for signage and other infrastructure, as well as park use before and during the on-leash pilots. See draft criteria handout attached at the end of the notes.

Work Group members had a lively discussion about the proposed evaluation criteria. There was concern that the measures focused on negatives and did not address the positive impact of increased dog access. There were suggestions that it may be better take more time in refining the criteria, with the knowledge that to do so would slow the implementation of the pilot process. The majority of group members urged that the pilot be implemented on schedule. An initial check on group consensus showed that two members did not support the proposed criteria enough to

accept it. Upon further discussion in the group, the two members agreed to go with the majority and changed their rating from “2”, no consensus, to “3”, the lowest level of consensus. The approved Dog Access Pilot Project Evaluation Criteria is included on the next page.

## Dog Access Pilot Project Evaluation Criteria

Criteria	Methodology/Method for Tracking	Baseline	Frequency	Lead
<b>Environmental Impacts</b>				
Vegetation	Staff will survey trails before, during and after pilot period for presence of native and non-native vegetation in pilot parks. Visual observations will be recorded in digital collector forms.	Visual assessment pre pilot.	Before pilot, and every 2 weeks during pilot.	Natural Resources
Wildlife	Staff will monitor change in presence, behavior, location, and timing of wildlife as recorded by the wildlife cameras. Any visual observation of dogs chasing wildlife will also be recorded.	Wildlife camera data collected before initiation of the pilot.	Ongoing monitoring before pilot and during pilot.	Natural Resources
Water Quality	Number of unattended dog waste observed by staff, including measurement of number of bagged waste and unbagged waste. Will be tracked by Ranger field forms and in digital collector form.	Visual assesment, including pre-pilot data observation.	Ongoing monitoring.	Natural Resources; Ranger staff
<b>Visitor Interactions</b>				
Visitor interactions	Staff will gather information regarding visitor interactions with dogs through field forms. Courtesy notices, incident reports, citations and public written comment will also be included. At Coyote Point, additional information will be gathered through cameras and documentation from animal keepers regarding impact of dogs on museum animals.	Field forms collected during first 6 months of dog access (Jan. 2019 - Jun. 2019) for Coyote Point. Assume baseline of zero for Junipero Serra Park.	Ongoing monitoring.	Ranger Staff
<b>Parks Resources</b>				
Staff Workload	Number of staff time hours required to implement pilots, including evaluation criteria monitoring as well as interactions between rangers and dogs and dog owners. The number of ranger contacts will also inform this measurement.	Field forms collected during first 6 months of dog access (Jan. 2019 - Jun. 2019) for Coyote Point. Assume baseline of zero for Junipero Serra Park.	Total will be reported at end of pilot.	Fiscal Staff; Ranger Staff
Signage and other infrastructure	Measured by cost of improvements and infrastructure required for dog access, including signage and waste stations, incinuing initial costs and any ongoing costs such as maintenance.	Assume baseline of zero.	Total will be reported at end of pilot.	Fiscal Staff
<b>Park Use</b>				
Park visitor numbers	Measured by change in number of park visitors using existing visitor counters, comparing pre and during pilot numbers. Data will be collected by automated trail counters.	Compare count data from corresponding month for 2018.	Ongoing monitoring before pilot and during pilot.	Visitor Services

At the request of the Work Group, Peggy Jensen confirmed staff would look into options and cost to implement visitor use surveys and report back at the next meeting.

The Work Group was reminded that the evaluation data from the on-leash pilot sites will be presented to the Board of Supervisors in early 2020. After that data is presented, the Board of Supervisors will decide whether to continue dog access at the pilot sites beyond the pilot period.

#### **Confirm Timeline for On-leash Pilot Projects**

Staff confirmed that the 6 month on-leash pilot projects would begin on June 15, 2019, and that a report back on the 6 month on-leash pilot would be presented to the Board of Supervisors in early 2020.

#### **Next Steps**

- Describe process for communicating with key stakeholder
- Continue to prepare for On-Leash Pilot Implementation
- Begin discussion of Off-Leash Pilot site in June

The meeting was adjourned at 4:05 PM.

## DRAFT: Dog Access Pilot Project Evaluation Criteria

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Water Quality	Number of unattended dog waste observed by staff, including measurement of number of bagged waste and unbagged waste. Will be tracked by Ranger field forms and in digital collector form.	Assume baseline of zero.	Ongoing monitoring.	Natural Resources; Ranger staff
<b>Visitor Interactions</b>				
Visitor interactions	Staff will continue gathering information regarding visitor interactions with dogs through field forms. Courtesy notices, incident reports, citations and public written comment will also be included. At Coyote Point, additional information will be gathered through cameras and documentation from animal keepers regarding impact of dogs on museum animals.	Field forms collected during first 6 months of dog access (Jan 2019-May 2019).	Ongoing monitoring.	Ranger Staff
<b>Parks Resources</b>				
Staff Workload	Number of staff time hours required to implement pilots, including evaluation criteria monitoring as well as interactions between rangers and dogs and dog owners. The number of ranger contacts will also inform this measurement.	Assume baseline of zero.	Total will be reported at end of pilot.	Fiscal Staff
Signage and other infrastructure	Measured by cost of improvements and infrastructure required for dog access, including signage and waste stations.	Assume baseline of zero.	Total will be reported at end of pilot.	Fiscal Staff
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