

MEMORANDUM

TO: Open Space Board of Trustees

FROM: Michael D. Patton, Director, Open Space and Mountain Parks
Mark Gershman, Environmental Planning Supervisor
Steve Armstead, Environmental Planner

DATE: January 10, 2012

SUBJECT: Spring Brook Loop Compliance Monitoring Follow-up Actions

Board Feedback

On November 16, 2011, the Open Space Board of Trustees (OSBT) made several recommendations to staff regarding the on-trail and dog regulation compliance monitoring and management responses for Spring Brook Loop Trail. The recommendations were to:

1. Increase outreach about Spring Brook Loop regulations

- Post additional information and maps for Spring Brook Loop regulations at the Doudy Draw and Flatirons Vista trailheads.
- Send information to Voice and Sight Tag program participants providing notice of the importance of keeping dogs on leash on Spring Brook Loop to retain the opportunity to use the trail.
- Encourage efforts by Friends Interested in Dogs and Open Space (FIDOS) and other stakeholder organizations to increase *peer to peer* outreach.

2. Clarify the meaning of “on-trail” to OSMP visitors

3. Assess the feasibility of increasing dog-related fines

4. Consider more efficient and less staff intensive monitoring approaches to assess compliance levels (i.e. the use of webcams) after implementing additional outreach

Staff Actions Integrating OSBT Feedback

Staff has or will take the following actions to integrate the OSBT’s recommendations.

1. Increase Community Outreach About Spring Brook Loop regulations

Actions staff has implemented

- Staff has posted dog regulation maps for Spring Brook Loop at both Doudy Draw and Flatirons Vista trailheads. The maps were placed at either the trailhead kiosk or the trailhead dog station or both locations if room allowed.
- Staff sent an email to participants in the Voice and Sight Tag program. Input on the message was requested from stakeholder organizations. The email sent to program participants is in Attachment A.

Actions staff will pursue

- Staff will post additional informational signs about the regulations at Spring Brook Loop as space allows.
- The information signs posted at Spring Brook Loop indicating current compliance levels and the expected compliance levels will be updated and remain posted on the trail.
- Training for OSMP volunteer Trail Guides to communicate to visitors what staying “on-trail” looks like.
- Further encouragement and support for stakeholder groups to provide peer-peer outreach.
- Working with stakeholder groups interested in hosting staff presentations at member meetings.
- Explore the use of smart phone applications (apps) to share more detailed information with visitors.
- Continue to provide HCA-themed programs which include explanation of the reasoning for and meaning of “on-trail”.

2. Clarify What is Expected When Visitors are Required to Stay On-Trail

Staff has updated the information on the OSMP Website explaining the importance of staying on trail and describing situations that are considered “off trail.” Spring Brook Loop and HCAs are identified as areas where on-trail restrictions apply.

3. Assess the Feasibility of Increasing Dog-Related Fines

The OSBT and City Council have expressed interest in reviewing the fines and penalties for dog violations and other violations on OSMP property. This topic is included on the list of issues to be considered as staff reviews and proposes updates for the council identified programs and policies known as the Overarching Issues. Staff has proposed changes to fines for the first phase of review and discussion.

4. Consider Alternative Approaches to Determine Compliance Levels

Staff will investigate other methods as alternatives to observation monitoring to assess compliance with on-leash requirements for Spring Brook Loop. The feasibility, legality and public perception of the use of cameras will be considered.

Additionally, staff will assess the feasibility of including compliance monitoring for Spring Brook Loop as part of a system-wide, on-leash study. Including repeat monitoring for Spring Brook Loop as part of a broader on-leash compliance study would maximize the usefulness of repeat monitoring and provide information not currently available about on-leash compliance elsewhere on OSMP trails.

Time Frame for Re-Evaluating On-Leash Compliance

Staff suggests that compliance with on-leash requirements at Spring Brook Loop be re-evaluated after outreach efforts have sufficiently been implemented, opportunities for increasing peer to peer education have been pursued, and compliance monitoring can be integrated into a system-wide, on-leash study.

ATTACHMENT A: Email Letter to Voice and Sight Tag Participants

Dear Open Space and Mountain Parks, Voice and Sight Tag Program participant,

You are receiving this email as a participant in the City of Boulder Open Space and Mountain Parks Voice and Sight Tag (Tag) Program. We will use this email list to correspond with you about important updates or changes to the Tag Program.

In coming months, you will receive three emails. The purpose of this first email is to ensure we have a viable email address for those participating in the Tag Program and to provide information about the Eldorado Mountain/Doudy Draw (EM/DD) Trail Study Area compliance monitoring results. A second email will give you instructions on how to check and update the information we have on file for you. A third email will allow you to determine what type of information you are interested in receiving. This first email is only informational, no action is necessary.

Monitoring Results for the Spring Brook Loop Trail

The EM/DD Trail Study Area Plan directed OSMP to monitor levels of compliance with the on-trail, on-leash dog regulations on the Spring Brook Loop Trail as a condition of continued access for dogs. OSMP staff monitored visitors' compliance for the springs of 2009 and 2010. The full results of the monitoring study can be found on the OSMP Web site by clicking [here](#).

The monitoring report stated the acceptable level of compliance with the on-leash, on-trail requirements are 90% and 95% respectively. The monitoring results indicated on-trail compliance was 74% in 2009 and 84% in 2010. On-leash compliance was 59% in 2009 and 66% in 2010. Of particular concern is the observed lack of on-leash compliance. In this area, OSMP operates under a lease agreement with the Denver Water Board where the trail crosses their property. The Denver Water Board requires dogs to be leashed, no exceptions. When these results were shared with the Open Space Board of Trustees at the November meeting they recommended that staff increase outreach efforts regarding Spring Brook Loop regulations:

- Post additional information and maps for Spring Brook Loop regulations at the Doudy Draw and Flatirons Vista trailheads.
- Send information to the Tag Program participants providing notice of the importance of keeping dogs on-leash on Spring Brook Loop to retain the opportunity to use the trail with their dogs.
- Encourage efforts to increase **peer to peer** outreach.

OSMP will enable these recommendations to encourage and improve compliance. If observed compliance with dog management regulations does not improve, future dog access to this area may be removed. Our hope is that these recommendations will have the desired results and everyone will benefit from a more positive visitor experience on Open Space.

We look forward to reaching out to you within the next couple of months with the second email. In the meantime, if you have any questions, concerns or need further assistance, please feel free to call 720-564-2050.

Thank you,

The Open Space and Mountain Parks staff