City of Boulder
Open Space and Mountain Parks
Voice and Sight Tag Program—Summary of Dog-Related Conflict Information

November 2012

Purpose:
The purpose of this document is to provide a summary of the Voice and Sight Tag Program (Tag Program) conflict monitoring results, a description of how the results were used, and other survey information on dog-related conflict. This document has been prepared in response to comments from Friends Interested in Dogs and Open Space (FIDOS), members of the Open Space Board of Trustees, and City Council.

Dog Behavior Conflict Monitoring
In 2006, OSMP sponsored an on-site survey of OSMP visitors to determine what dog-related behaviors were experienced by OSMP visitors and which were considered a source of conflict. The study was commissioned to provide OSMP with a list of conflictive dog-related behaviors and to resolve opposing community perspectives about which dog-related behaviors should be considered conflictive on OSMP. The study was completed by Colorado State University professors whose research expertise includes the study of conflict in outdoor recreation. The reports, by Vaske et al. 2007, are available on the OSMP Website: OSMP – Reports and Brochures. Staff used the results from this study to define conflictive behaviors for monitoring the effectiveness of the Tag and Trailhead Leash Programs (Attachment A).

Staff designed the Tag Program monitoring to answer the question: Was there a change in the level of dog-related conflict following implementation of the program? Staff recorded whether a visitor party and their dog(s) engaged in at least one conflictive behavior while in the observation zones along voice and sight control trails. If the dog or guardian engaged in a conflictive behavior, the field staff recorded the first occurrence of a conflictive behavior. If the same visitor party engaged in the same conflictive behavior repeatedly (e.g. dog jumped on one visitor and then jumped on another visitor), no additional data were recorded. This data collection method allowed staff to consistently measure an index of conflict and consequently answer the question about change in the level of dog-related conflict. It does not allow staff to estimate the number of times a given behavior was observed or to calculate total rates of conflict and rates for particular behaviors.

The results of Tag Program monitoring show a slight decrease in percent of visitor parties engaging in conflictive behaviors one year after the Tag Program. However three years later, conflictive behaviors returned to pre-program levels.
Dog-Related Conflict Information from Surveys
OSMP 2010-2011 Visitor Survey Report — City of Boulder
- 7% of respondents reported experiencing conflict on the day of their visit. This rate is higher than the rate of conflict reported in the 2004-2005 survey (4% on the day of their visit).
- 5% of respondents reported experiencing conflict specifically with dogs/dog guardians on the day of their visit. Respondents most commonly described issues related to excrement removal as the reason for conflict specifically with dogs/dog guardians. Other reasons for conflict were dogs making contact with visitors but not injuring them, uncontrolled dogs, lack of compliance with dog regulations, dogs attacking or injuring visitors or their dogs, dogs blocking the trail and dog approaching visitors.
- 39% of respondents reported experiencing conflict on OSMP in the past 12 months.
- 9% of respondents report avoiding or visiting a place less often; reasons tended to be site specific although issues related to dogs/dog guardians, mountain bikes, and/or crowding were commonly reported.

OSMP 2010 Resident Survey Information — National Research Center 2010
- In responding to a question regarding conflicts among various uses of OSMP, a majority of all respondents felt that dogs on leash had no effect on their experience and nearly a third (29%) responded that dogs on leash made their experience more pleasant. However, only one fifth (20%) found dogs off leash made their experience more pleasant while 44% felt off leash dogs made their experience less pleasant.
- When asked about conflicts involving dogs and the impact of the Tag Program, nearly half (45%) felt there was less conflict while slightly more than half (55%) felt there was either no change or more conflict.
- When asked about potential management actions to address visitor conflict, 74% thought requiring dogs to be on or near trails was “somewhat appropriate” or “very appropriate”.

![Figure 1: Percentage of visitor parties that participated in at least one conflictive behavior. Different colored bars indicate statistically different percentages.](Image)
ATTACHMENT A: List of Dog Related Conflictive Behaviors

Behaviors that violate Voice and Sight regulations and/or were identified by Vaske et al. 2007 as causing conflict for OSMP visitors and could be observed by staff

- Dog flushing wildlife or causing wildlife to flee
- Dog on dog chasing
- Dog chasing wildlife
- Dog chasing livestock
- Dog chasing person—whether the person did not intervene or the person tried to stop chasing or get away from the dog was noted
- Repeated barking—notes described why the dog was barking if known
- Dog jumping on a visitor
- Dog licking a visitor
- Dog pawing a visitor
- Dog making contact while sniffing a visitor
- Dog making contact with a visitor other than jumping on, pawing, licking or sniffing
- Dog making contact with and injuring a person
- Dog making contact with and injuring another dog
- Dog making contact with and injuring wildlife
- Dog making contact with and injuring livestock
- Repeatedly calling a dog
- Yelling/verbal confrontation by dog guardians or other visitors
- Kicking, hitting, or “macing” a dog by a human
- Other (Notes should describe the interaction/situation)