



Natural Resources Conservation Service  
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**To:** Keith Kahler

**From:** Daniel A. Nosal, NRCS Rangeland Management Specialist

**Date:** 1/13/09

Keith,

A site visit was conducted with you on January 6 to the “dog park” area of Chatfield State Park. We walked around the pond areas and near the river to observe the impacts of high traffic within the 80-acre area. The high traffic has essentially denuded several areas on the site, particularly around the water. The vegetation simply cannot recover adequately with continued foot and animal traffic. We discussed the following options.

Fencing to provide a physical barrier will be a requirement to give the vegetation a chance to recover. We discussed the possibility of fencing around all the water areas, including the river, and just providing one small area for people and/or dogs to access the water. Another option we discussed is dividing the entire acreage (through the use of fencing) into three or more areas and then rotating the use area each year. If it were in three areas this would give each area one year of use and two years of recovery before being used again. As we discussed, I’m not sure what species of plants would come back in the area that had the concentrated use for one year. Hopefully it wouldn’t just be knapweed, Canada thistle, or other noxious weeds. Another option we discussed is not only rotating between three areas, but also limiting the season of use. That is, only during the six months of the summer or winter. This seemed like a less likely option since people do use it year-round and may not be the best public relations option. Having more than three areas would be even better because then each area would have more than two years of recovery. However, then you have the problem of dividing the water areas, since water is the major attraction for the dogs.

If you have further questions on this matter you may contact me at 303-688-3042 X 106.

Sincerely,

Daniel A. Nosal  
NRCS Rangeland Management Specialist