



**Why I should keep
my dog on a leash
in a State Park**



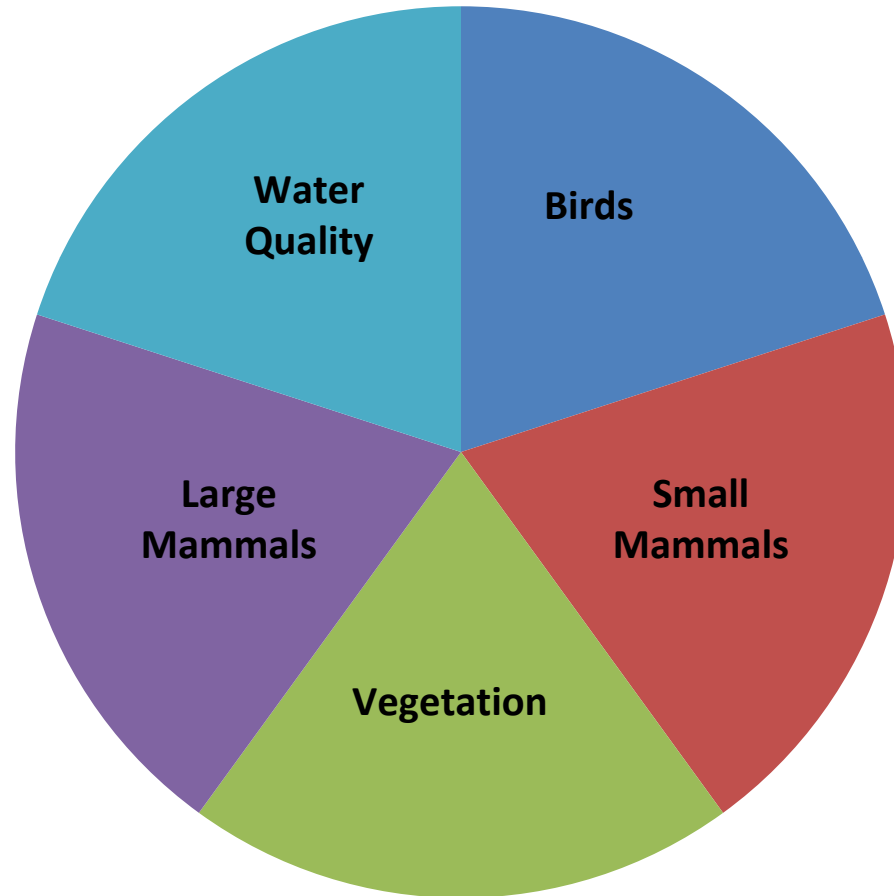
Do we really need to keep dogs on leash in the State Parks?

Yes, for 4 reasons!

- 1) Resource Impacts
- 2) Safety Issues for Children
- 3) Safety Issues for Dogs
- 4) It's the law



Natural Resource Impacts of Dogs in Parks





Dogs' Impacts on Mammals

Researchers found that marmots exposed to hikers with dogs versus hikers without dogs exhibited significantly more flight responses and took significantly more time to recover. They concluded that marmots *recognize dogs as potential threats and are impacted by the mere presence of the dog.* (Manini et al. 1993)

Dogs off leash can chase large herbivores (deer, elk, pronghorn, bighorn), and even if they don't catch them or bite them, they can still stress them by flushing them large distances. This can lead to underweight individuals, lower reproduction, death by disease, or abandonment of young.

Dogs' Impacts on Birds, Vegetation and Wetlands



- Dogs pursuing wildlife increase the likelihood of increased flight distances (Sweeny, et al. 1971).
- Many birds flush more readily in the presence of dogs than people (Yalden and Walden, 1990).
- A study in Boulder showed that along trails with dog use there were significant impacts to ground nesting birds, within 246 feet of the trail (Miller et al., 1998).

Dogs trampling off trail, particularly in the spring wet conditions, leads to:

- Loss of native vegetation,
- Weed invasion,
- Eroded bare ground.



Dogs' Impacts on Water Quality

- The large amounts of nitrogen and phosphorus in dog waste can run-off into the water.
- In smaller water bodies this can lead to algal blooms which can impact fish and create unpleasant smells.
- Dog waste can also dramatically increase the level of *E. coli* and fecal coliform found in the water supply downstream.



Safety Issues: Children, Park Visitors and Staff

- According to the Centers for Disease Control, about 4.5 million people are bitten by dogs each year, and nearly one in five of those bitten, about 885,000 require medical attention.
- Approximately 60-70% of dog bites per year involve children. That's about **3 million children** per year (Mathews and Lattal 1994).
- Fights with other dogs can be a frequent occurrence in areas with dogs off leash.
- This creates issues that takes time for staff which increases our costs and our fees.
- It presents dangers to other visitors and the dogs themselves.



Bottom Line:

We don't know how dogs have been trained and even if 99% are well behaved, 1% can present a **safety and a liability concern**.

Even if your dog is well behaved and has never been aggressive to children, you can help set an example by keeping your dog on a leash and reminding others to as well.

Safety Issues: Dog's Health

Dogs off leash get into many things that can hurt them...

- Rattlesnake bites
- Cactus, Burrs, Poison Ivy
- Ticks, Tapeworms, Fleas
- Distemper, Parvovirus, Rabies, Plague
- Scents and quills from skunks and porcupines; raccoon encounters



Dogs off leash are more likely to run off into the shrubs or forest and get lost, have encounters with wildlife, or be taken by a large predators such as coyote, mountain lions or bears.

Laws and Regulations

Colorado State Parks Regulation #100 B-16

- It shall be prohibited to allow any dog or other pet on Parks, unless the same shall be under control and on a leash.
- Further, it shall be unlawful to allow a dog or other pet within any area used as a swimming or water-ski beach.
- Any person having a dog or other pet creating a nuisance or disturbance or who fails to properly control a dog or other pet may be evicted from the park.

Division of Wildlife law CRS 33-6-128

It is unlawful for any person to knowingly or negligently allow a dog to harass wildlife, whether or not the wildlife is actually injured by such dog. Any person who violates this is guilty of a misdemeanor and, upon conviction thereof, shall be punished by a fine of two hundred dollars. A Colorado wildlife officer or other peace officer may capture or kill any dog he or she determines to be harassing wildlife.

Federal Law - Migratory Bird Treaty Act:

The Act provides that it is unlawful to pursue, hunt, take, capture or kill any migratory bird.

Keep it Wild, Keep them Safe

**State Parks are not meant to be like city parks.
Our legislation specifically says so.**



**We have wildlife that is wild...
Which means it could bite or carry diseases.**



**We have native vegetation..
that includes beautiful flowers
as well as sharp and prickly things.**



**It's our job to keep it wild, but teach visitors how to
stay safe while experiencing it.**

Help Set an Example by:

Protecting the resources, children and other visitors, *and your dog* when visiting state parks

- **Respect wildlife protection areas or seasons**
- **Keep your dog on the trail**
- **Keep them on a leash**



We know that your dog is part of your family, so we welcome dogs with responsible owners.

We appreciate your help in maintaining the right balance to protect our sensitive resources, and to protect you and your dog.

