



Dog Policy Update
Frequently Asked Questions- Volunteers
June 2019

Why did the dog policy change in 2019?

Visitors asked — and we listened! Feedback from park users indicated an increasing desire for more canine-friendly opportunities. The Board of Commissioners approved the updated policy on Thursday, June 20, 2019.

Aren't dogs on turf trails going to be a detriment to natural areas and wildlife habitats?

Nope, a dog on leash on a trail has minimal impact on natural resources, similar to that of a person walking or running.

Why a six-foot, non-retractable leash?

Even if walking on the edge of the trail, a six-foot leash helps ensure that dogs do not impact the natural resources we are working to protect. A shorter leash is also safer, as it reduces the chances that a dog will get tangled with other trail users or around bushes, trees or signs.

Non-retractable leashes are less likely to break should the dog pull too hard and more likely to prevent dogs from crossing to the other side of the trail which creates a tripping hazard for other trail users on foot or bicycle.

- A leash protects natural resources. When dogs go off trail, they can disrupt sensitive wildlife and habitats, some that have taken years and significant resources to reintroduce and restore.
- A leash protects other park users. While they are likely friendly, some people are afraid, allergic, or just not comfortable around dogs. Horses can be spooked, as they view dogs as predators, and other dogs who are leashed can feel threatened by an unleashed dog approaching them.
- A leash protects the dog. Off-leash dogs are more likely to get into dangerous plants or get injured by other animals.

Dogs are allowed at campgrounds but not on beaches or play areas. What do guests do with their dog when they want to go to one of these areas while camping?

If no one is able to watch the dog at the campsite, dogs on leashes are allowed in picnic areas around beaches and play areas. The dog must be attended to at all times, and leashes cannot be attached to trees, signs, picnic tables or other fixed structures.

Are dogs on leashes allowed on nature center trails?

Yes, because nature center trails are turf trails, dogs on leashes are allowed now. Please be mindful that there are frequently field trips and other programs at nature centers that involve groups, especially groups of children. Because of this, we encourage using nature center trails during non-peak times before 9 AM or in the evenings.

Are dogs on leashes allowed on horse trails?

Yes, because horse trails are turf trails, dogs on leashes are allowed now.

It is extremely important to keep dogs under control and on a six-foot, non-retractable leash at all times while on horse trails.

Read this [blog post](#) for more information about sharing the trail with horseback riders.

Why do horseback riders need a pass and people walking their dogs do not?

A dog on leash has minimal impact on a turf trail, similar to that of a person walking or running. Horses have a greater impact on turf trails (especially in muddy conditions) and more maintenance is required to maintain the trail.

Why aren't dogs allowed at Gale Woods Farm, Kingswood Park or Noerenberg Gardens?

Gale Woods Farm - Domestic dogs cause undue stress to the sheep, cattle, pigs, chickens and other animals that live at on the Farm. These animals cannot distinguish between a domestic dog and an actual threat like a coyote.

Kingswood Park - Due to the easement arrangements with the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, dogs are not allowed at Kingswood Park.

Noerenberg Gardens - The terms of the land donation to Three Rivers prohibit pets within the gardens in order to maintain them as one of the finest formal gardens in Minnesota.

Where can people go if they do not want to be around dogs?

We recognize that some people do not want to be around dogs.

Gale Woods Farm, Kingswood Park and Noerenberg Gardens are parks where dogs are not allowed. Dogs are not allowed in buildings, on beaches or at play areas. Additionally, cross-country ski and singletrack trails, golf and disc golf courses, and winter downhill areas are recreational opportunities where dogs are not allowed.

While dogs are allowed in more areas now, visiting during times when there are fewer people reduces the chances of crossing paths with a dog. Non-peak times are mornings before 9 AM and on weekdays.