

**SANTA BARBARA COUNTY
BOARD AGENDA LETTER**



Clerk of the Board of Supervisors
105 E. Anapamu Street, Suite 407
Santa Barbara, CA 93101
(805) 568-2240

Agenda Number:
Prepared on: 7/25/03
Department Name: Parks
Department No.: 052
Agenda Date: August 19, 2003
Placement: Departmental
Estimate Time: 1 hour
Continued Item: NO
If Yes, date from:

TO: Board of Supervisors

FROM: Terri Maus-Nisich, Director
Parks Department

STAFF CONTACT: Rick Wheeler
Deputy Director, (681-5653)

SUBJECT: Temporarily amend Section 26-49 of the Santa Barbara County Code, to authorize the County Parks Director to establish a one year pilot off-leash dog hours program at various Parks and Open Spaces in First, Second, and Third Supervisorial Districts to begin at the initiation of the actual pilot program.

Recommendation(s):

That the Board of Supervisors:

- A. Consider the introduction (First Reading) of an Ordinance amending Section 26-49 of the Santa Barbara County Code on a temporary basis for one year in order to allow County Parks to proceed with a twelve-month pilot program establishing off-leash hours for dog owners in various park and open spaces on the south coast, expiring on December 31, 2004 unless extended by act of the Board;
- B. Approve establishing specified pilot off-leash hours at Oceanview Park Meadow, Toro Canyon Park Meadow, Tucker's Grove at Kiwanis Meadows, Tabano Hollow (Lawn Area Only), Patterson open space and Isla Vista Park/Sea Lookout;
- C. Approve the Notice of Exemption pursuant to the County's California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) guidelines.

Alignment with Board Strategic Plan:

The recommendations are primarily aligned with actions required by law, Goal #1 "An Efficient Government Able to Respond Effectively to the Needs of the Community", and Goal #2 "A Safe and Healthy Community in Which to Live, Work, and Visit".

Executive Summary and Discussion:

In the fall of 2002, based on constituent requests and staff recommendations, the Santa Barbara County Park Commission (Commission) discussed and unanimously supported the idea of exploring an off-leash hour pilot program at various south coast county parks and developed open spaces.

On September 26, 2002 and again on July 24, 2003, the Santa Barbara County Park Commission reviewed and approved the amended, ordinance language and recommended that your Board approve it for inclusion in Chapter 26-49, Dogs Required on Leash, for the purpose of conducting a pilot program.

The recommended pilot sites, hours of operation, implementation plan, and posted rules and regulations are described below:

Suggested Pilot Sites and Off-leash Hours

First District:

- Oceanview Park Meadow: Mon-Sun/ 8:00 AM to 10:00 AM, & 5:00 PM to close (Pacific Daylight Time); 4:00 PM to close (Pacific Time)
- Toro Canyon Park Meadow: Mon-Sun/ 8:00 AM to 10:00 AM, & 5:00 PM to close (Pacific Daylight Time); 4:00 PM to close (Pacific Time)

Second District:

- Tucker's Grove at Kiwanis Meadows: Mon-Sun/ 8:00 AM to 10:00 AM, & 5:00 PM to close (Pacific Daylight Time); 4:00 PM to close (Pacific Time) (except when the group area is reserved).
- Tabano Hollow (Lawn Area Only): Mon-Sun/ 5:00 PM to close (Pacific Daylight Time); 4:00 PM to close (Pacific Time)
- Patterson open space (Lawn Area Only): Mon-Fri/ 5:00 PM to close (Pacific Daylight Time); 4:00 PM to close (Pacific Time)

Third District:

- Isla Vista Park/Sea Lookout: Mon-Fri/ 8:00 A.M to 10:00 AM, & 5:00 PM to close (Pacific Daylight Time); 4:00 PM to close (Pacific Time)

Manning Park Annex was on the original list of approved sites. However, at the Santa Barbara County Park Commission's July 24, 2003 meeting, following public comment and discussion, the Commission unanimously voted to exclude Manning Annex from the list of potential pilot sites. The Commission also requested that the evening hours be altered during the Pacific Time change.

Off-leash Hour Pilot Program Implementation Plan

1. The pilot program should be implemented at multiple locations to reduce the impact of such use on any single neighborhood open space or park.
2. Neighborhood meetings shall be held at the proposed pilot locations prior to implementation to explain the program, discuss use hours, receive neighborhood input, and answer questions.
3. Each off-leash pilot site will be posted with signs detailing the hours designated for off-leash use. The reverse side of these signs will remind dog owners that “Dogs Must Be On Leash Beyond This Point – SB Co. Code 26-49”.
4. Prior to opening a pilot site, a dog watch group of volunteers will be developed to monitor each pilot area and collect statistical information (such as number of users, number of dogs, problems, comments, etc.), answer user’s questions, and refer information requests as necessary to County Parks. Parks will seek the assistance of Santa Barbara DogPAC to help mobilize this group of volunteers. Department, informational, phone numbers will be posted at each location.
5. Mutt Mitt dispensers and trashcans will be installed at pilot locations that don’t have them. Additional units will be added as needed to assist owners with cleaning up behind their pets.
6. A web page listing off-leash hours, use rules and regulations, and user etiquette information for dog owners, will be posted on County Park’s web site. This information will be provided as handouts at pilot sites, as well.
7. Park staff will meet with volunteer group(s) every 90 days, or sooner if necessary, to receive input on the program and adjust the program if necessary based on use issues, complaints, etc.
8. Staff will report bi-annually to the Park Commission on the status of the pilot program, or more frequently if necessary, and inform them of site changes, use issues, complaints, etc.
9. Staff will report on the results of the pilot program and any recommendations to the Board of Supervisors within sixty days after the one-year anniversary date of the pilot program, or sooner if necessary.
10. The Parks Director will remove a site from the pilot program if it is deemed necessary. If that should happen, appropriate public notices will be posted.
11. Rules and Regulations similar to those listed below will be posted in conspicuous locations at each pilot site.
12. Temporary fencing to provide for enhanced containment will be provided where appropriate, if required.

Rules and Regulations to be posted at each pilot site:

1. Dogs must be leashed prior to entering and upon leaving the off-leash area.
2. No dog is permitted in the off-leash area unless it is under the care, custody, and control of a person 18 years or older (the “caretaker”). Leaving dogs unattended is prohibited.
3. All dogs must be under the voice control of their caretakers at all times.
4. Caretakers must clean up after their pets.
5. Dogs with a known history of dangerous behavior are prohibited.
6. Dogs must be licensed and vaccinated. Dogs must be wearing a collar with identification at all times.
7. Puppies under four months of age are prohibited.
8. Dogs in heat are prohibited.
9. Animals must be spayed or neutered.
10. Caretakers should carry a leash for each dog at all times.
11. No more than three (3) dogs per person (caretaker) per visit are allowed.
12. Young children must be closely supervised at all times.
13. Use of an off-leash area by a dog and its caretaker constitutes the caretaker’s agreement to comply with the rules contained in Chapter 26, Sec. 49 of the Santa Barbara County Code, as well as rules and regulations posted by the County Parks Department with respect to the use of designated off-leash areas.
14. The use of an off-leash area by a dog and its caretaker constitutes the caretaker’s agreement to protect, indemnify, defend, and hold harmless the County from any claim, injury, or damage arising from or in connection with such use.

California Environmental Quality Act

The implementation of the pilot program is exempt under Section 15306 of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), which allows for the data collection, experimental management, and resource evaluation of activities, which do not result in a serious or major disturbance to environmental resources. The pilot site locations chosen for implementation do not contain sensitive environmental resources nor does the implementation of the program at these sites cause additional disturbances to the site. Each of the proposed pilot sites currently allow dogs on-leash during normal park hours.

Future Action

Park Department staff as well as volunteers will closely monitor the pilot program and gather data on overall usage per site, comments: Pro & Con, and additional information to refine the program.

If the pilot program proves successful, staff will return to the Board and request a permanent amendment to Santa Barbara County Ordinance **Chapter 26, Article III, Animal Regulations, Sec. 26-49, Dogs Required on Leash** to permit such off-leash use where it has been found to be appropriate by the Director of Parks.

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Mandates and Service Levels:

No change in programs or service levels. There will be an added level of staff review and supervision required to monitor and report on the pilot program.

Fiscal and Facilities Impacts:

This action will have some minimal costs for the purchase of notification signs. Public recreational opportunities will be enhanced.

Special Instructions:

Clerk of the Board to post attached Notice of Exemption and provide a copy of the posted Notice to County Parks, Attn, Rick Wheeler.

Clerk of the Board to provide a copy of the minute order to County Parks, Attn: Rick Wheeler

Concurrence:

Santa Barbara County Park Commission

County Counsel

Attachments:

Notice of Exemption

Amendment to Ordinance 26-49