



# STAFF REPORT

## Agenda Item: 5

**Report To:** Open Space Advisory Committee  
and Parks and Recreation Commission

**Meeting Date:** December 1, 2020

**Staff Contact:** John Costello, Park Ranger  
Tyler Kerver, Park Ranger

**Agenda Title:** For Discussion Only: Presentation and discussion regarding dog use in Parks and Open Space.

**Staff Summary:** Staff will provide a summary of information regarding dogs in Carson City parks and open space (i.e. on-leash vs off-leash; dogs allowed vs dogs not allowed), the applicable Carson City Municipal Code (CCMC) provisions for the Carson City Parks, Recreation & Open Space Department, as well as rules and regulations from other cooperating agencies.

**Agenda Action:** Other/ Presentation

**Time Requested:** 30 minutes

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### **Proposed Motion**

N/A

### **Board's Strategic Goal**

Quality of Life

### **Previous Action**

N/A

### **Background/Issues & Analysis**

The purpose of this presentation is to provide an overview of relevant City ordinances related to dogs in parks and open space, which fall directly under the purview of the Parks, Recreation and Open Space Department and other ordinances relevant to duties and responsibilities of dog owners in general. Information will include CCMC sections, rules and regulations in neighboring jurisdictions, and data of dog related incidents within Carson City parks and open space.

United States Forest Service (USFS) and Bureau of Land Management (BLM) regulations related to dogs:

#### **USFS:**

USFS advises that dogs must be “under control” at all times and recommends that people have their dogs on leash at all times. It is required that dogs are on leash at all times in developed areas. Developed areas include but are not limited to roads, parking areas, camp and picnic sites, restrooms, play areas, forest buildings, interpretive areas, fish cleaning stations, boat docks, boat ramps and piers, marinas, and trailheads.

USFS in the Carson Ranger District has a directive that requires dogs to be under physical restraint of a leash that is no longer than 6 feet in length on specific trails for a distance of 1 mile along each trail from the designated trailhead.

Listed below are federal codes related to dogs enforced by USFS:

Title 36: Parks, Forests, and Public Property

§261.8 *Fish and wildlife.*

The following are prohibited to the extent Federal or State law is violated:

(d) Possessing a dog not on a leash or otherwise confined.

§261.16 *Developed recreation sites.*

The following are prohibited:

(j) Bringing in or possessing an animal, other than a service animal, unless it is crated, caged, or upon a leash not longer than six feet, or otherwise under physical restrictive control.

(k) Bringing in or possessing in a swimming area an animal, other than a service animal.

(l) Bringing in or possessing a saddle, pack, or draft animal except as authorized by posted instructions.

**BLM:**

BLM does not have leash requirements. Similar to the USFS, BLM advises to check with the local office in which you are recreating for leash policy. BLM encourages hikers with dogs to yield to all other trail users and keep dogs under control.

Regulations overview throughout the region:

**Douglas County:**

The county has different regulations for different locations. In campgrounds, dogs must be leashed at all time. Douglas recently opened a new fenced-in dog park called Johnson Lane Park in July 2020. Douglas has recently discussed identifying and developing additional designated areas for dog owners and their pets, whether on or off leash.

**Incline Village:**

As of August 1st, 2020, Incline Village has issued a mandatory “no dogs” policy on all of their beach properties, with the exception of Ski Beach (October-April). All other outdoor recreation locations are designated for specific sports. They do have a couple of open spaces areas within their jurisdiction at Village Green and Aspen Grove where dogs are allowed on or off leash.

**Washoe County:**

All Washoe County regional parks, trails and open space areas are dog-friendly, with few exceptions. Pets are not permitted at Bowers Mansion Regional Park, with the exception of service animals, in order to protect the historic significance and character of the grounds surrounding the mansion. The Wilbur D. May Arboretum, located within Rancho San Rafael Regional Park, prohibits pets, again with the exception of service animals, in order to protect the ecosystem within the Arboretum. Dogs are permitted part of the year on a leash at Silver Lake and Swan Lake Nature Study Area, as they have sensitive bird areas and to protect from conflicts with dogs and birds. Dogs may be prohibited during nesting season.

Pets must be kept on leash at all time in most Washoe County parks. There are two areas within Washoe County parks that allow off-leash use: The Multi-Use Pasture located within Rancho San Rafael Regional Park and the Link Piazza Dog Park, located within Hidden Valley Regional Park.

**Reno:**

Reno has three dog parks where the dogs can be off leash if they follow a specific set of rules: Whitaker Park, Virginia Lake Dog Park, and the Biggest Little Dog Park. The rules are as follows:

- Owners must remain within the fenced area in view of their dog and maintain verbal control over their dog at all times
- Owners are responsible for picking up dog waste and disposing of it properly.
- Dogs must be removed from the park at the first sign of aggression.
- Female dogs in heat are prohibited from entering the park.
- Dog owners must have a leash at all times.
- Dogs must be on the leash when entering and before exiting the gated area.
- Keep small children and infants under close supervision.
- Owners must prevent their dogs from digging holes.
- All dogs must have a current license.

Dog bites may be reported to Washoe County Animal Services. Pet owners who fail to comply with these rules may be cited in accordance with Washoe County Code Chapter 55.

Reno advises about non designated dog areas: “Dogs shall be leashed, and owners are responsible for picking up and properly disposing of dog waste while in Reno’s public spaces. The dog’s owner is responsible for having a suitable means to pick up dog waste.” Dogs are prohibited, except service animals at Oxbow Nature Study Area per Reno Municipal Code 8.23.110.

### **Sparks:**

Sparks has specific regulations for different areas within their jurisdiction. Sparks has areas designated for off leash, otherwise dogs are required to be on a leash and it is expected that owners will be picking up after their pets.

### **Carson City:**

#### Department data regarding dog related incidents at city parks/open space:

Request Tracker (RT) data regarding dog contacts (i.e. dog at park, dog off-leash, etc.) between March 25, 2019 and November 10, 2020.

Mills: 161

Fuji: 46

Ronald D. Wilson: 15

Carriage Square: 9

Long Ranch: 9

Pete Livermore Sports Complex: 8

John Mankins: 7

Centennial: 5

Schultz Ranch: 5

Disc Golf Course: 5

Bailey Pond: 5

Sonoma Playground: 4

Lone Mountain Cemetery: 4

Rifle and Pistol Range: 2

Robert’s House, Mayors, Ross, Sunland, and Governors: 1(each)

The total number of dog related RT tickets between March 25, 2019 and November 10, 2020 is 290.

We have not collected any data on open space areas because there are no established rules and regulations. However, the Department has received reports of incidents involving dog users, dogs, and wildlife at various open space locations.

Carson City has an agreement with the Nevada Humane Society (NHS) to oversee animal issues on City’s behalf. NHS employs Animal Control Officers (ACO), who provide community outreach, enforcement and education. In

addition, NHS provides shelter operations, vaccines, licensing and other animal health services for Carson City residents.

The authority of the ACO comes directly from the Carson City Municipal Code Title 7-Animals. Since the ACOs are contracted by the City, and are not City employees, they do not officially have citation authority. Animal citations must be issued by the Carson City Sheriff's Office (CCSO) or the District Attorney's Office. Currently there are 3 ACOs in Carson City, 1 lead and 2 officers. ACOs work on a 4 day, 10 hour shift schedule, Sunday through Wednesday between 8 a.m. and 6 p.m., and Wednesday through Saturday between 8 a.m. and 6 p.m. An ACO is on call 7 days per week from 6 p.m. to 8 a.m. for emergencies through CCSO Dispatch. NHS utilizes many forms of education including media outreach, informational brochures, social media, in person outreach, and through incoming calls to the shelter. Carson City Parks, Recreation & Open Space Department staff have a positive working relationship with NHS and hope to continue to join ACOs in future trainings for addressing dog related contacts and safety.

Locations of existing and planned dog parks:

Existing: Fuji Park and Sonoma Park

Planned: Lompa Ranch East Development (3-acre dog park in conditions of approval)

Dog friendly parks in Carson City (see map):

In the early 2000's only a few parks (Mayor's Riverview, Carson River, Fuji) and all trails were identified as "dog friendly," meaning designated as off leash areas for dogs under "control by their owner." In 2007, an effort to expand "dog friendly" parks were made with the addition of Sonoma, Blackwells, Steinheimer, Fulstone, Monte Vista, Long Ranch and Ronald D. Wilson added. Some locations required dogs to be on a leash and some, like Fuji and Sonoma Parks had designated times where off-leash and on-leash periods were identified. By 2009, 18 parks within the City have been identified as "dog friendly parks." In addition, two formal fenced dog parks at Fuji Park and Sonoma Park are designated off leash areas. Conversely, there are 15 parks where dogs are prohibited. These designations are not specifically addressed in CCMC, but within a Department Policy that has been revised over the last decade. While this does have its advantages for some dog owners, it can create challenges for Park Rangers and the public, due to inconsistent signage, locations, and regulations.

Dogs and open space- environmentally, culturally, and historically sensitive areas:

With more than 6,000-acres of open space, some areas such as the Carson River corridor, Silver Saddle Ranch, Buzzy's Ranch, and Carson River Canyon are areas that may need additional guidance and regulation regarding dogs, due to sensitive lands and wildlife. With an increase in trailheads and many new miles of trails throughout open space, additional guidance may be needed to reduce user conflicts and provide consistent direction for outdoor recreation activities. Currently, dogs are allowed off leash on all trails, open space and natural areas.

Department programming/events with dogs:

In partnership with the Carson Animal Services Initiative (CASI), the Recreation Division hosts the Pooch Plunge at the Aquatic Facility. This event is held in the outdoor pool the last day of the summer season, with all proceeds benefiting CASI. Park Rangers and AmeriCorps VISTA volunteers hold interpretive programs, such as Trails for Tails, specifically for dog owners. However, dogs are welcome, on a leash, at most City interpretive programs in parks or open space. Rangers have outreach materials readily available for dog owners during contacts made in the field.

**Applicable Statute, Code, Policy, Rule or Regulation**

CCMC provisions related to dogs:<sup>1</sup>

13.02.090 - *Dogs in park.*

13.02.120 - *Animals.*

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<sup>1</sup>The CCMC sections in their entirety are attached to this report for reference.

13.02.140 - *Flora and fauna.*

7.13.080 - *Responsibilities of owner: Duty to restrain; duty to provide food and water; duty to dispose of animal's solid waste; prohibition against causing offensive conditions; duty to arrange for medical care and report results that are positive for the rabies virus.*

# DOG USE IN PARKS AND OPEN SPACE

PRESENTED BY PARK RANGERS JOHN  
COSTELLO AND TYLER KERVER





# ADJACENT AGENCY'S LAWS

## United States Forest Service

### Title 36: Parks, Forests, and Public Property

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- The following are prohibited to the extent Federal or State law is violated:
  - (d) Possessing a dog not on a leash or otherwise confined.

### §261.16 *Developed recreation sites.*

- The following are prohibited:
  - (j) Bringing in or possessing an animal, other than a service animal, unless it is crated, caged, or upon a leash not longer than six feet, or otherwise under physical restrictive control.
  - (k) Bringing in or possessing in a swimming area an animal, other than a service animal.
  - (l) Bringing in or possessing a saddle, pack, or draft animal except as authorized by posted instructions.

## Bureau of Land Management

- BLM does not have leash requirements. Similar to the USFS, BLM advises to check with the local office in which you are recreating for leash policy. BLM encourages hikers with dogs to yield to all other trail users and keep dogs under control.

## DOUGLAS COUNTY

- The county has different regulations for different locations.
- In campgrounds, dogs must be leashed at all time.
- Douglas recently opened a new fenced-in dog park called Johnson Lane Park in July 2020.
- Douglas has recently discussed identifying and developing additional designated areas for dog owners and their pets, whether on or off leash





# WASHOE COUNTY

- Pets must be kept on leash at all time in most Washoe County parks
- There are two areas within Washoe County parks that allow off-leash use: The Multi-Use Pasture located within Rancho San Rafael Regional Park and the Link Piazza Dog Park
- Pets are not permitted at Bowers Mansion Regional Park
- The Wilbur D. May Arboretum, located within Rancho San Rafael Regional Park, prohibits pets
- Dogs are permitted part of the year on a leash at Silver Lake and Swan Lake Nature Study Area





# SPARKS

- Sparks has specific regulations for different areas within their jurisdiction. Sparks has areas designated for off leash, otherwise dogs are on leash and it is expected that owners will be picking up dog feces.





# RENO

- Owners must remain within the fenced area in view of their dog and maintain verbal control over their dog at all times
- Owners are responsible for picking up dog waste and disposing of it properly.
- Dogs must be removed from the park at the first sign of aggression.
- Female dogs in heat are prohibited from entering the park.
- Dog owners must have a leash at all times.
- Dogs must be on the leash when entering and before exiting the gated area.
- Keep small children and infants under close supervision.
- Owners must prevent their dogs from digging holes.
- All dogs must have a current license.





## INCLINE

- As of August 1st, 2020, Incline Village has issued a mandatory “no dogs” policy on all of their beach properties, with the exception of Ski Beach (October-April).
- All other outdoor recreation locations are designated for specific sports.
- Village Green and Aspen Grove Open Space allowed on or off leash.

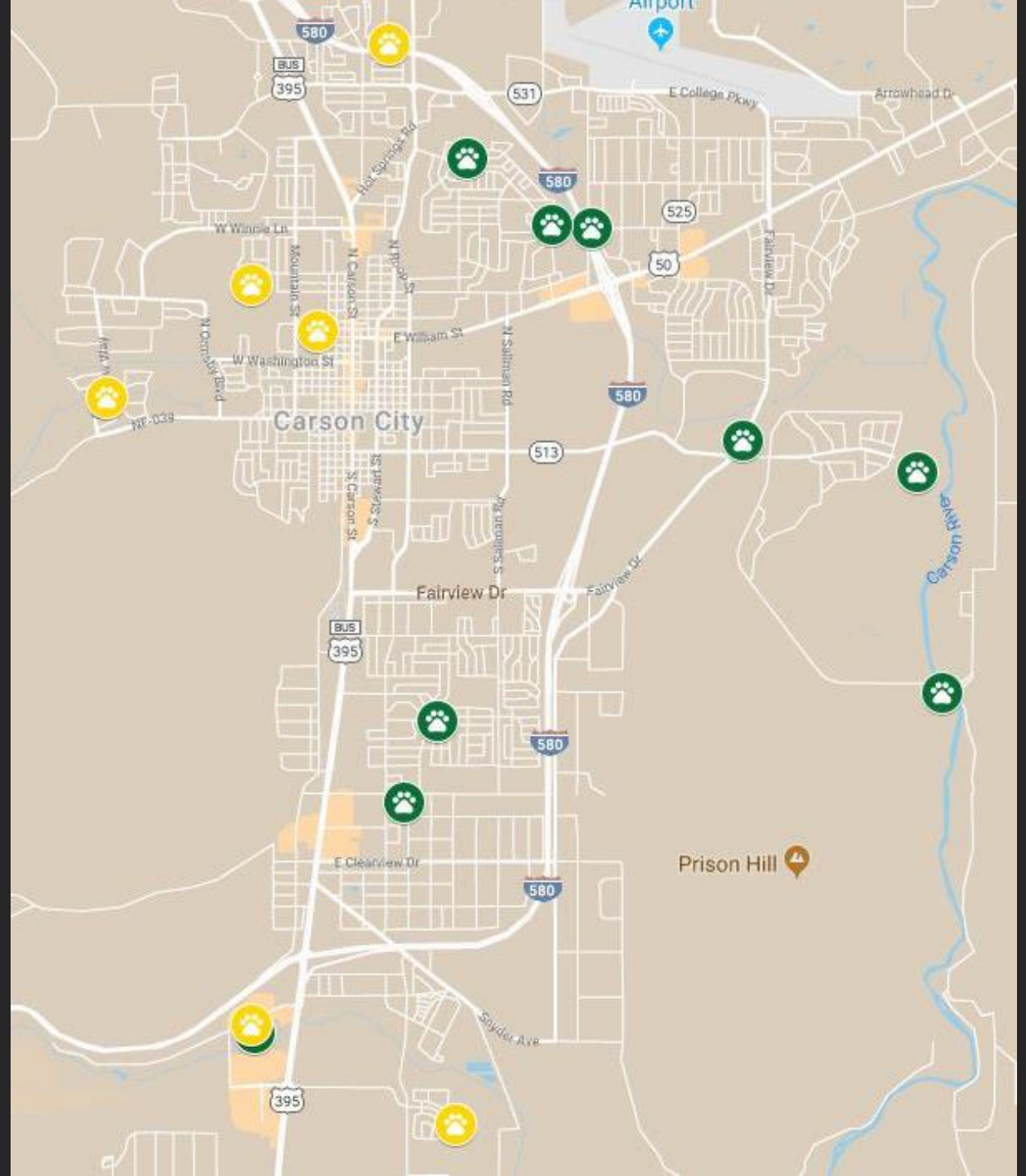


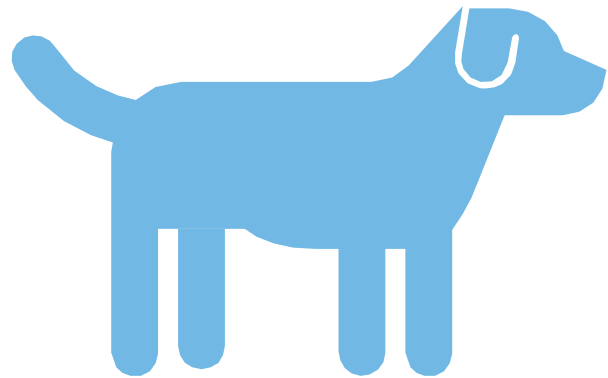


**CARSON CITY  
PET FRIENDLY  
PARKS**



# MAP OF CARSON CITY PET FRIENDLY PARKS





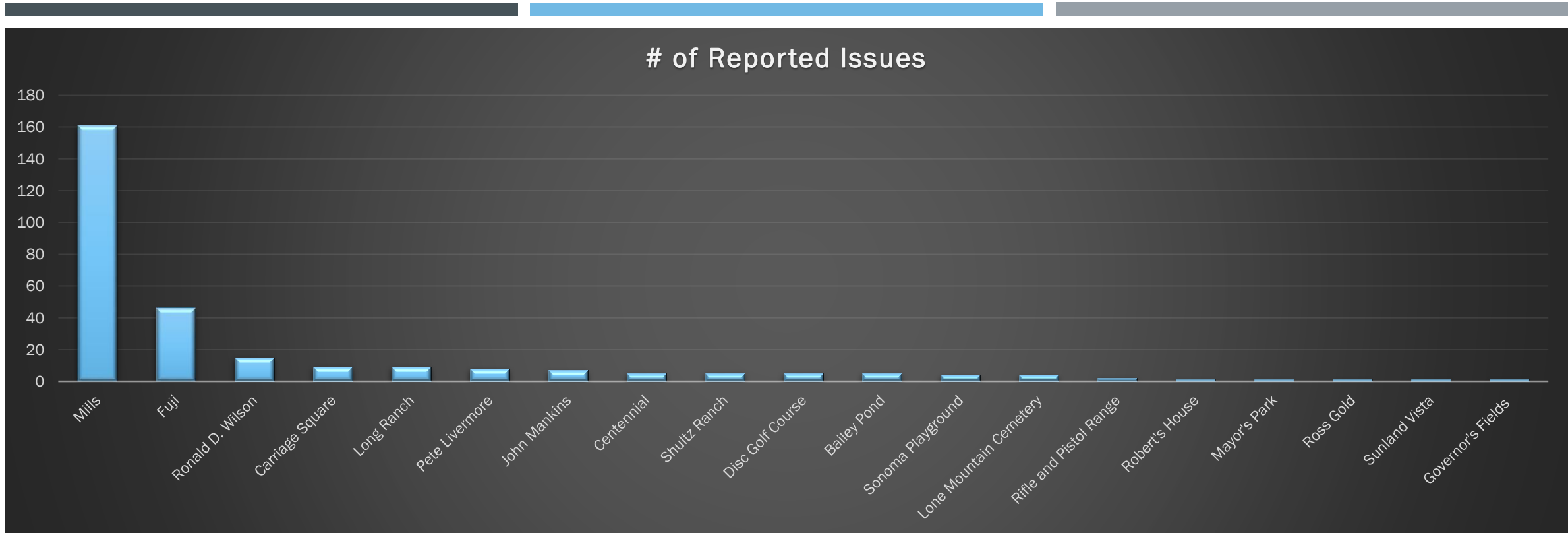
## PET FRIENDLY PARKS OVERVIEW

- Dogs are prohibited in Carson City parks unless otherwise stated
- Carson City has 15 city parks that allow dogs
  - 6 of them require dogs to be on leash at all times
- Carson City has two dog-specific parks and one planned
  - Fuji Dog Park
  - Sonoma Park
  - Lompa Ranch East Development (Planned)
- Parks that don't allow dogs often lack any CCMC and don't have adequate signage
  - Creates challenges for users and Park Rangers

## CARSON CITY CODES

- 13.02.090 - *Dogs in park.*
- 13.02.120 - *Animals.*
- 13.02.140 - *Flora and fauna.*
- 7.13.080 - *Responsibilities of owner: Duty to restrain; duty to provide food and water; duty to dispose of animal's solid waste; prohibition against causing offensive conditions; duty to arrange for medical care and report results that are positive for the rabies virus.*





## **CARSON CITY PARKS, RECREATION AND OPEN SPACE DOG COMPLIANCE**

Compiled data relating to dog contacts between dog owners and the Park Rangers in Carson City Parks

March 25, 2019 – November 10, 2020

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# NEVADA HUMANE SOCIETY

## CARSON CITY AGREEMENT

- Carson City contracts with the Nevada Humane Society to oversee animal issues on City's behalf
- They provide shelter operations, vaccines, licensing and other animal health services for Carson City residents
- They do not officially have citation authority
- Citations must be issued by the Carson City Sheriff's Office or the District Attorney's Office
- The Nevada Humane Society has 3 ACOs in Carson City
- They utilizes many forms of education including media outreach, informational brochures, social media, in person outreach, and through incoming calls to the shelter



# DOGS & OPEN SPACE

- 6,000-ACRES OF OPEN SPACE
- CARSON RIVER CORRIDOR, SILVER SADDLE RANCH, AND BUZZY'S RANCH ARE AREAS THAT MAY NEED ADDITIONAL REGULATION DUE TO SENSITIVE LANDS AND WILDLIFE
- HAVE HAD AN INCREASE IN USE ON OUR TRAILS, MAY NEED MORE GUIDANCE TO AVOID USER CONFLICTS





# COMMUNITY OUTREACH



**DETERMINE IF PETS ARE WELCOMED BEFORE BRINGING THEM ALONG**

**ACCORDING TO CCMC 13.02.090, PETS ARE WELCOMED IN PARKS THAT ARE SPECIFICALLY AUTHORIZED FOR THAT USE.**



## OPEN SPACE PET POLICIES

Open Space areas in Carson City welcome pets on and off leash.

It is important that your pet responds to your commands and does not disrupt other Open Space visitors.

Remember to practice Leave No Trace principles by cleaning up after your pet and preventing it from disturbing wildlife.

## MORE HELPFUL INFORMATION

Every park has a specific pet policy based on a variety of factors. Please know that if a park does not allow pets, there is a legitimate reasoning behind it. If you are uncertain if pets are allowed, please contact the Parks Department before bringing your pet.

Remember to keep our parks and open space areas clean; always clean up after yourself and your pet. Waste bags are available where ever pets are welcomed.

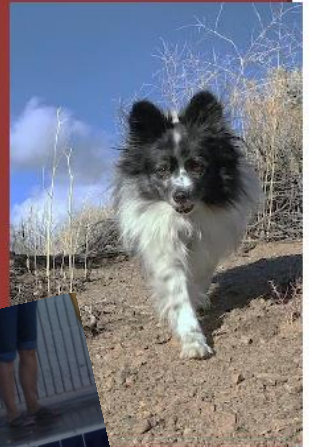
Carson City Parks and Open Space areas are open to all community members; always be respectful of others.



3303 Butti Way #9  
Carson City, NV 89704

## Carson City Parks

Pet friendly parks and other helpful information





**QUESTIONS?**

