



Washoe County Regional Parks & Open Space

Proposed Off-Leash Dog Pilot Program





Why do we need off-leash areas?

- **The population in the Truckee Meadows (Reno, Sparks, & Washoe County) in 2020 was 504,000**
- **The national average of households owning at least one dog as pets is 39%.**
- **Based on the national average, there are at least 197,000 dogs as pets in our area.**



Why do we need off-leash areas?

Truckee Meadows area currently has:

- 6 dog parks (Whitaker, Virginia Lake, Link Piazza, Sparks Marina, Biggest Little Dog Park, and Cyan Park)
- 2 off-leash areas (Rancho San Rafael, Wedekind Regional Park)
- 3,819 acres of developed parks in Reno, Sparks, and Washoe County
- BLM and USFS open space has multi-use on public lands, including target shooting, where pet owners are not willing to take their dogs off-leash with the threat of wildlife and people. Also, most pet owners must drive too far to reach public lands and end up using any close open grass field.
- Widespread apartment living with dogs has people searching for open space to let their dogs run!
- The off-leash areas and dog parks we have are very busy and impacted by the growing population.



City of Boise Off-Leash Dog Program

City of Boise, Idaho has a similar climate, population numbers, topography, and parks compared with the Truckee Meadows. For the past five years, Boise has implemented off-leash areas on their soccer fields during the league off-season and certain non-use times.

Speaking to the City of Boise Athletic Fields Manager, here are the logistics and benefits of this program.



City of Boise off-leash program

Program Logistics

All soccer fields in off-season (Nov-March) have off-leash allowed during park hours

During soccer season, off-leash is allowed during posted hours of non-team use, such as 7am-10am.

Dogs are not allowed on softball fields, only soccer fields

Dog waste stations are at every field. Volunteer clean-up is done every spring before soccer season.

Hours and rules are posted at each athletic field

Easy to navigate website with all parks and what they offer, including off-leash hours or restrictions.



City of Boise Off-Leash Dog Program

Results and Benefits of Program

When irrigation comes back on in spring, grass comes back green, and they have had minimal damage

Animal Control has only been called 2-3 times in the past five years for patrons not following rules

Lack of geese on all their soccer fields

Spreading the wealth over many parks has lessened the impact on any one park or field



Washoe County Parks Pilot Program

- Washoe County Regional Parks and Open Space is proposing a one-year pilot program
- Four Washoe County Parks with flat fields will have off-leash hours during the off-season, November through March
- The same four parks will have off-leash hours during non-team use times March through November



Rule signs for off-leash areas

This field is designated as a “off-leash” dog area during non-team use.

Hours:

November 1st through March 1st 8am-sunset everyday

March 1st through November 1st Monday thru Friday 8am-1pm

****THIS IS A PILOT PROGRAM. IF RULES AND HOURS ARE NOT RESPECTED THEN THIS FIELD WILL NOT BE PERMITTED FOR “OFF-LEASH”. IF RULES AND HOURS ARE FOLLOWED, MORE PARK FIELDS IN ADDITION TO THIS ONE WILL BE DESIGNATED FOR “OFF-LEASH”.**

PLEASE BE RESPECTFUL!



Rule signs for off-leash areas con't

- **Aggressive dogs are not permitted.**
- **You are legally responsible for your dog's behavior and any injuries or damages he/she causes.**
- **By entering the dog off-leash area, you do so at your own risk and agree to abide by all park rules.**
- **Never leave the off-leash area without your dog(s), leave them unattended, or allow them out of sight. Your dog should be under voice control, meaning they are obedient and respond to your commands.**
- **You are required by law (WCC Chapter 55) to clean up after your dog and carry a suitable container for dog feces. Remove and dispose of waste in bins provided.**



Rule signs for off-leash areas con't

- **Always carry a physical leash; leash dog(s) when entering/leaving park.**
- **Female dogs in heat are not permitted in this area.**
- **All dogs must have current vaccinations and licenses by law (WCC Chapter 55)**
- **No more than three dogs per handler**

**For animal related emergencies please call Washoe County
Regional Animal Services dispatch**

(775) 322-DOGS

**For any questions or concerns please call
Washoe County Regional Parks (775) 785-4512**



Proposed Pilot Program Parks

- **North Valleys Regional Park (80 x 80 soccer field)**

8085 Silver Lake Rd., Reno 89506

Fully fenced 80 x 80 soccer field



- **Lazy 5 Regional Park (lower soccer field)**

7100 Pyramid Way, Sparks 89436

Unfenced soccer field far away from main road and surrounded by sagebrush on three sides. Playground and pavilion are at a distance from fields.





Proposed Pilot Program Parks

- **White's Creek Park**

2525 Killington Dr., Reno 89511

Fully fenced soccer field



- **South Valleys Regional Park**

15650 Wedge Pkwy., Reno 89511

Lower soccer field between Library and playground. Chain link fence on two sides, split rail and retaining wall on the other sides.





Review of Pilot Program

Data throughout the year will be collected for each off-leash dog use field from Washoe County Regional Parks.

This data will include:

- 1. Number of users during off-leash hours by day/month/year**
- 2. Number of users during non-off-leash hours and public informational interactions**
- 3. Dog waste left on field**
- 4. Number of calls to Washoe County Animal Services**
- 5. Number of refilled dog waste bags**
- 6. Damage reports filed**
- 7. Comments and suggestions from the public**



Review of Pilot Program

How will we collect this data?

- **Rangers and park staff will observe use during off-leash hours at least once per day. Any use during non-off-leash hours will be recorded and the visitor informed of the rules.**
- **Rangers and park staff will track number of phone calls with comments or questions and record public responses through social media.**
- **Washoe County Regional Animal Services will track number of calls related to each off-leash field use.**
- **At the end of the year, surveys will be available at each field and online for public feedback on the program.**
- **Spreadsheets will be created to display the data collected over the year.**



Recommendation

- **Staff recommends that the Open Space and Regional Parks Commission approve moving forward with an off-leash dog pilot program, utilizing various flat fields throughout Washoe County Parks as off-leash areas during non-league use times and evaluate the use after one year.**



Possible motion:

- **“Move to recommend that staff move forward with an off-leash dog pilot program, utilizing various flat fields throughout Washoe County Parks as off-leash areas during non-league use times and evaluate the use after one year.”**