

Voice & Sight

NEWSLETTER OF FIDOS, FRIENDS INTERESTED IN DOGS AND OPEN SPACE

Volume 8, Issue 1

www.FIDOS.org

October 2005

Vote the Dog Ticket

As Boulder's Open Space/Mountain Parks (OSMP) department begins to implement the new Visitor Master Plan (VMP), many practical decisions must be made affecting dog policy (see Visitor Plan Negotiations elsewhere in this newsletter). Ultimately City Council will be responsible for the decisions, so it is important for dog guardians to vote the dog ticket in this fall's election, which will fill five positions on Council. Based on our experience working with the incumbents seeking reelection and on conversations with newcomer Richard Polk, we make the following recommendations. We believe that these candidates would be friendly to dogs (more paws is better), and also have a reasonable chance of getting elected

Richard Polk (🐾🐾🐾🐾)

Suzy Ageton (🐾🐾🐾🐾)

Andy Schultheiss (🐾🐾🐾🐾)

Shaun McGrath (🐾🐾🐾)

Tom Eldridge (🐾🐾🐾)

Without the help of Suzy Ageton and Andy Schultheiss last spring, we could not have been successful in opposing a staff proposal to change the designation of the popular Skunk Canyon trail from voice and sight to leash. The motion to keep the voice and sight designation, made by Ageton and seconded by Schultheiss, was accepted unanimously by Council. Ageton and Schultheiss have been open to discussing our issues with us, and are

continued on page 2



TRAILHEAD LEASHING STUDY AREA AT SANITAS WOULD END AT THE SIGN POST.

Visitor Plan Negotiations: It isn't over yet!

In an effort to keep our voice and sight privileges on OSMP lands, FIDOS had made a number of concessions during the development of the Visitor Master Plan, which was approved by City Council last spring. But how these concessions ultimately work out will depend greatly on details of implementation, and FIDOS has been hard at work on behalf of Boulder's dog owners. Below is a summary of some of the important issues on which we have been working.

Dog Voice-and-Sight Video and Tag Program. We agreed to an

educational video explaining the rules of voice and sight control on OSMP, and recommending good trail etiquette. Guardians wishing to have their dogs off leash on OSMP lands will be required to watch the video. Then, upon signing a statement agreeing to keep their dogs under control on OSMP lands and paying a small one-time fee, guardians will receive special tags for their dogs. Leashed dogs need not wear a tag, but it will be a ticketable offense to have a dog, even a well-controlled dog, off leash without a tag.

continued on page 2

Dog-friendly Council Candidates: *continued from page 1*

currently our strongest supporters on Council.

Our discussions with newcomer Polk indicate that he could be one of our strongest supporters if he were to win. Traditionally, incumbents have always had an advantage in Boulder's elections, so Polk probably faces the hardest battle. If he should lose, an unfriendly candidate could fill this fifth seat, tilting the delicate balance on Council. Therefore Polk's race may be the most critical one from the perspective of dog owners.

Incumbents McGrath and Eldridge round out our list of recommendations. We have found them to be open-minded and fair during the development of the VMP. Find links to more information about the candidates at FIDOS.org.

Election Information

October 3, 2005: Last day to register to vote

October 7-17: Ballots to be mailed

October 21: Last day to apply for an absentee ballot to be mailed

October 28: Last day to apply for an absentee ballot to be picked up

November 1: Election Day

Drop off at 1750 33rd St., Boulder — Dates and Times:

Saturday, Oct. 29: 10:00am-2:00pm.

Monday, Oct. 31: 7:00am-6:00pm

Tuesday, Nov. 1: 7:00am-7:00pm



Visitor Plan Negotiations: *continued from page 1*

It seemed important to us that the video should depict realistic dog behavior and that it should accurately describe the rules of the voice and sight ordinance. Therefore, we participated in extensive discussions with OSMP staff about the content of the video and made numerous recommendations, many of which were accepted.

Trailhead Leashing Pilot Study. In hope of reducing perceived dog-related problems near trailheads, OSMP staff wanted to implement a rule requiring dogs to be leashed on certain busy voice-and-sight trails for a short distance beyond the trailhead. We suggested that the concept not be implemented unless a pilot study showed it to be effective. OSMP accordingly selected five busy trailheads—Doudy Draw, Chautauqua, Sanitas, Dry Creek, and Marshal Mesa—for the study.

During the first phase of the study, already completed, "baseline" data about dog behavior has been collected near trailheads of the five areas. Next May or June, data on dog behavior will be collected with the trailhead leashing regulation in effect. Between now and May, OSMP staff plan first to educate dog owners about the study, and then to

begin enforcing the regulation. After the studies, with and without leashing, are complete, they will be compared and a decision will be made about whether to permanently implement trailhead leashing.

FIDOS had concerns that the types of behaviors recorded in the study could set precedents for behavior to be tolerated in the future, so we offered substantial input, some-but not all-of which was incorporated into the study.

Concerns About Implementation of the VMP. Details in the implementation of the VMP could have big effects on the agreeability of the post-VMP climate for dogs and their guardians. For example, the voice and sight ordinance states that dogs must obey the "come" command immediately and without regard to distractions. In the real world, with real dogs, the response may be a little short of "immediate," but still adequate. Similarly, the statement that the dog must be "within view" of its guardian should not be interpreted too literally. We have pointed out that since staff claims serious violations of the voice and sight ordinance are occurring, that is where they should focus their efforts.

The VMP contains a provision that would revoke voice and sight privileges of guardians who incur multiple violations. The privileges could only be regained by passing a voice and sight obedience test. We have urged that only "serious" violations, such as dogs out of control or dogs harassing people, wildlife, or other dogs should be counted as a "strike." Violations such as failure to have a leash in one's possession or failure to have a tag on one's dog—while causes for citations—should not count as a "strike." We have not received a firm answer from OSMP on this issue.

As part of the VMP, Council approved the goal to: "Establish additional no-dog opportunities on some trails, using a collaborative process and suitability criteria." FIDOS has suggested that short no-dog "nature loops," appropriate for senior citizens and small children, should be created at accessible trailheads. However, our position has been that new no-dog opportunities should be provided on new trails, and that no more existing trails should be designated "no-dog," since we have already agreed to convert trails such as Greenman and Long Canyon to "no-dog" under the new VMP. This is an issue that we must watch closely.

Message From the President

Most dog guardians are responsible people who just want a safe, enjoyable experience with their dogs on Open Space/Mountain Parks (OSMP) land. Only a few misguided individuals fail to adequately control their dogs, but those wishing to either ban dogs from open space or to implement further restrictions often exaggerate canine conflicts. FIDOS will continue to work to bridge the gap between preserving access and protecting the environment.

The past year, leading up to the approval by Council of the Visitor Master Plan (VMP), has been a hard one, and we have had to make some concessions in order to keep our most important privileges. But we had some successes too. For example, in spite of the OSMP staff recommendation to leash Skunk Canyon, FIDOS was able to convince City Council that such restrictions were unnecessary on this neighborhood trail. We were able to

"win" this trail with the help of those of you who contacted Council with your perspectives on the issue. A sympathetic Council is crucial to our cause (see "Vote the Dog Ticket "in this issue).

Over the coming year, we will witness the implementation of the new VMP, which may involve some changes in the way we use OSMP lands. We will still have voice and sight privileges on most of our favorite trails, but there are some details to be worked out, and FIDOS has been involved in the process. Many compromises have been reached and OSMP has incorporated some, if not all, of our suggestions. Our position is that dogs must be allowed to be dogs. If the regulations are enforced too severely, the VMP will not have the support of the dog community. (see "Visitor Plan Negotiations" in this issue).

Ed Mills, President, FIDOS



FIDOS Meetings:

Everyone welcome; second Tuesday of each month. 6 to 8 p.m. at the Nature Center, 4201 N. Broadway.

FIDOS MEMBERSHIP FORM

If there's a beloved dog in your family, please support FIDOS. FIDOS acts as the only organized voice of dog lovers who value access to Open Space on the Front Range.

E-mail is the fastest and most economical way of keeping our members informed. Please send us your e-mail address with this form, or send it to us by going to boulderfidos@yahoo.com (please include your name too). FIDOS does not share your e-mail address with other organizations (we sometimes share postal mailing addresses with the Humane Society).

FIDOS needs your e-mail.

If you want to receive action alerts and an e-version of this newsletter (and save paper and FIDOS valuable \$\$), please go to boulderfidos@yahoo.com and give us your name and e-mail. THANKS!

- Regular Membership (for individual or household) \$10
- Supporting Membership (for individual or household) \$25
- Sustaining Membership (for individual or household) \$50
- Other contribution \$_____

new member renewing member address change

Human(s)' name: _____ Dog's name: _____

Address: _____ City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Phone: _____ E-mail: _____ Today's Date: _____

- Please DO NOT send me e-mail news and event announcements.
- I prefer a hard copy of Voice & Sight (if this box is not checked, you will receive the e-version only).

Send form with check to: FIDOS • P.O. Box 18928 • Boulder, CO 80308-8928.

“Hurricane Katrina: Assisting the Animal Victims”

The Humane Society of Boulder Valley is working with a coalition of animal welfare agencies to respond with the resources needed in the areas affected by the storm. This coalition is prepared to provide staffing, supplies as well as shelter and care for displaced animals. The Humane Society of Boulder Valley has offered to accept animals from the areas affected by the storm. Please visit their website for more information: <http://www.boulderhumane.org/help/hurricane.html>

How to Contact FIDOS

E-mail us from www.FIDOS.org or send us a letter: FIDOS, P.O. Box 18928, Boulder, CO 80308-8928.

FIDOS Meetings: Everyone welcome; second Tuesday of each month. 6 to 8 p.m. at the Nature Center, 4201 N. Broadway.

Please Support FIDOS

FIDOS has a large membership, but we are not particularly strict about collecting dues. We are always in need of money for copying, printing, and mailing, and the last three years have been expensive. We filed many position papers, handed out flyers on the trails, conducted petition drives, and were active in last spring’s City Council election; sending out approximately two thousand post cards. We do not mind working hard for all of our mutual interests. FIDOS board members often cover expenses out of their own pockets, but we cannot do it alone. We rely on your contributions and involvement. If you have not contributed lately, please help.



FIDOS RATES CITY COUNCIL CANDIDATES. VOTE! SEE PAGES 1, 2.

In this issue:	page
Dog-friendly Council Candidates.....	1, 2
Visitor Plan Negotiations ..	1, 2
Election Information.....	2
Message from FIDOS President.....	3
Become a FIDOS member (the form).....	3
Hurricane Animal Victim Assistance.....	4
How to Support FIDOS.....	4

FRIENDS INTERESTED IN DOGS AND OPEN SPACE
NEWSLETTER OF FIDOS

Voice & Sight



FIDOS
P.O. Box 18928
Boulder, CO 80308-8928
www.FIDOS.org

Presorted Standard
U.S. Postage
—Paid—
Boulder, CO 80302
Permit No. 537