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November 2012



Friends Interested
FIDOS
Dogs and Open Space

Greetings for the Holiday Season & Green Tag

We skipped the October Newsletter as all eyes were focused on the OSMP proposals to modify the Green Tag program which were presented to Council on Nov 13th.

We recognize that the program could be improved, but FIDOS has significant concerns over some of these changes. A summary of the meeting is provided below. This is clearly the most important dog related activity going on in town at the moment.

When the revised proposals are available to the public we will make sure you are informed and can review them, before deciding on a course of action

..Ongoing.

Green Tag Meeting

During the 11/13/12 City Council study session, modifications of the GT program were discussed. Mostly Council approved a mandatory information session for those obtaining a GT. Dog guardians will be expected to participate in an on-site meeting discussing the expectations of off-leash dogs. Council also supported a Rabies vaccination requirement, as well as increasing fines for violations (the exact amount is still under discussion).

Many Council members expressed a need for the dog community to take more responsibility for monitoring off-leash dogs. This as well as informing other dog guardians when they are breaking Open Space rules.

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Green tags will be revoked for certain offences, including a no-tolerance approach for aggressive animals, and "failure to protect wildlife." At this point it looks like any 2 offences within 2 years will also result in revocation. The exact violations included are still under discussion as many violations are a result of people misbehaving (not picking up, unleashing dogs in leashed areas, etc) not dogs. There will be a path to reinstatement, but this has not yet been defined. This could include dog testing, and community service.

Fees for obtaining a Green Tag will also be rising, particularly for those living outside of Boulder County.

County residents will pay more than City residents, the exact amounts are under discussion. Some council members expressed the idea that Voice & Sight is a high end privilege to participants in the program and fees should be in the hundreds of dollars!

There was also a refreshing criticism expressed of the recent studies conducted by OSMP of off-leash activity, their methods are currently under scrutiny. OSMP is expected to communicate their approach before Council signs off on any future plans.

Cragmoor Connector

Reports that the rerouted Cragmoor connector was completed on schedule and reopened last week. It should be significantly better than the original route which clung to the neighborhood property lines.

McClintock and Enchanted Mesa Trails

As mentioned last month

The meadow was reopened for V&S visitors, except for the area around the riparian area but the area is being actively monitored for compliance. Please avoid creating new social trails in this area and let others know. We don't want to give ammunition to those looking to restrict this area again.

Lower Big Blue Stem & Fern Canyon

We have received a couple of notes about **Lower Big Blue Stem** becoming leashed. After much discussion this trail became a loss in the WTSA, but South Boulder Creek Trail remained V&S as an alternative. If anyone is in the area can you check on the status of **Fern Canyon**? It was supposed to return to V&S after the WTSA but a couple of weeks ago it was still marked as leashed.

Parks and Rec and the Rez

P&R is working on the [Rez Master Plan](#). At the moment V&S does not appear on the table however, an ecological company has been retained to assist with the plan. Its been noted that the organization has no "recreation" experts with this company so we are assuming there will be more restrictions.

Nothing to do at the moment but watch.

FIDOS Trails Group

There are FIDOS members on the trails every day but so far we have had no way of recording observations or incidents. During the summer we have been testing an automated reporting system which runs on computers or smart phones and it seems to work. The link is below.

[FIDOS REPORT](#)

I have this link on the "Bookmarks" bar of my browser to pull down and report easily, others have it saved on there smart phones.

Usually only reports from program participants are accepted but we'll open it up for a week or 2 to let anyone interested try it out (and also see how it works under a heavier load of users).

We are very interested in whats really going on on the trails. A hike with no problems is as important as reporting an incident. We believe there are very few problems on the trails but need data to support it.

If you would like top participate in the program on an ongoing basis, [let us know](#). After this demo period is over we need to be sure we are receiving data from responsible participants.

Trail Around Boulder

The [Trail Around Boulder](#) is moving forward slowly. An at-grade crossing of the rail road tracks north of Dry Creek is resisted by the Rail Company but an underpass is still a possibility.

The V&S Community needs to be aware of the TAB as Dry Creek is one of the areas that needs to be integrated into the trail, We may see new visitors to the area but with creative planning it should be easy to maintain the quality

of the experience for all. Watch this Space.

V&S on the County Trails

A busy month of County Meetings. There was a meeting on Sept 28 in Longmont at which representatives of all the local government and private organizations discussed the future of the County Open Space. Shelley Dunbar (OSBT Member) and Mike Patton (Director OSMP) represented Boulder OSMP. V&S trails were discussed at the very end.

There was another meeting on **Walker Ranch** planning at which the bikers were very heavily represented with various plans for new trails. We requested V&S access be included in the area and we'll be watching progress. The full details are here

<http://www.bouldercounty.org/os/openspace/pages/walkerplan.aspx>

under the DOCUMENTS tag.

Finally, there was a meeting reporting on dog management at **Twin Lakes**. The West Twin Lake is one of only two small areas in County Open Space where dogs are allowed off-leash. County Staff reported satisfaction with the program and looked for more support and involvement of the public in maintaining the high standards on these trails. If you are a local to Twin Lakes, well done, your efforts are noticed.

If you live near a County Open Space area where you would like to see some off-leash dog access, please contact FIDOS. The County will be discussing a new Visitor Use Policy in the upcoming year, and we would like to include suggestions for further off-leash dog access.

OSMP Metrics

Continuing our review of how OSMP uses numbers, how often do we here about our Boulder dogs killing deer and wildlife? Problem is, as with so many things, the "facts" are not quite as they seem.

It is a documented fact that residents have witnessed a decline in the deer population southwest of Boulder over the years. Some are swift to blame dogs, demanding they are driven from the Open Space, but a 2008 report by OSMP/CDOW staff on why the deer are dying paints a very different picture.

The report, "Lions and Prions and Deer Demise" is not easy reading, but it is referenced in a number of other articles on Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) which break out some interesting details hidden among the numbers. CWD is a contagious disease which attacks the brains of some deer species,

leading to their deaths.

Take a look at the report and do a search for "45". You'll come up with:

"Prevalence rates documented in mule deer near Boulder , CO were 41% for adult males and 20% for adult females. Chronic wasting disease has been present in this herd since 1985 and has coincided with a 45% decline in mule deer abundance despite adequate habitat and no hunting (Miller et al. 2008)"

Dogs are not mentioned in the report at all. The real issue here is that OSMP staff are happy to blame dogs whenever this subject is mentioned, but stay quiet on their own reported data.

Helping FIDOS

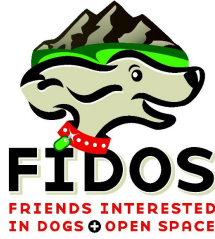
Its surprising how much V&S activity is going on the Boulder and the County which FIDOS members try to cover.

Just last week there were three meetings to attend,

- the Councils Green Tag Program Review,
- the County Review of the V&S program at Twin Lake West
- the Review of Walker Ranch Plans

If you'd like to help out, but cant make long term commitments, we are pulling together a list of volunteer activities which simply involve turning up. For example, organizing a social event or attending an OSBT or Council Meeting and reporting back. (these meetings may seem dry, but when you have some skin in the game, such as preserving V&S access, they can be fascinating).

Let FIDOS know if you are interested in these ad-hoc activities and we'll put you on the mailing list.



FIDOS Meetings, Membership and Feedback

Members of FIDOS include a wide cross section of the Boulder Community, the common factor being an interest in enjoying and protecting the the Open Space, accompanied by our dogs. Many supporters are in fact "between dogs", but value meeting others with their dogs on the trail.

In order to retain and expand this access we each need to be "good stewards" of the lands around us and keep an eye on whats going on on the trails as well as in the meeting rooms.

Let us know if you have any ideas or observations on the direction of FIDOS. New perspectives on V&S are always valuable in developing our arguments.

FIDOS meets on the first Monday of each month, 7pm at the Outlook Hotel, Boulder. The agenda is always published in advance to make sure we hit all the issues. If anyone would like to address the group let us know in advance (mail here) and we'll make time in the schedule.

Sincerely,

[Newsletter Team](#)

Friends Interested in Dogs and Open Space

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