



Washoe County Regional Parks & Open Space

Quarterly Review of Off-Leash Dog Area Pilot Program





Washoe County Parks Pilot Program Overview

- **Washoe County Regional Parks and Open Space is testing a one-year pilot program**
- **Three Washoe County Parks with soccer fields have off-leash hours during the soccer off-season, November through February**
- **The same three parks will have off-leash hours during non-team use times March through November**



Pilot Program Parks Review

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

8085 Silver Lake Rd., Reno 89506

Fully fenced 80 x 80 soccer field



- 1. Number of users during off-leash hours by day/month/year**

On average, weekday and weekend use is consistent at 20 people per day from November 15th 2021 to present

- 2. Dog waste left on field**

Only three piles of dog waste have been found on the field by staff. Garbage cans at each entrance have been full of mostly dog waste bags.

- 3. Number of calls to Washoe County Animal Services**

Zero



Proposed Pilot Program Parks

4. Number of refilled dog waste bags

7 boxes of dog waste bags (50 bags each) have been refilled

5. Damage reports filed

None

6. Comments and suggestions from the public

Social Media comments: "This is cool!" , "Wow! There's some thinking outside the box!", "Please clean up after your pet to not stop the pilot program", "Good to know!" "Thank you for providing an option closer to home"

- **Every interaction with the public within the park has been positive and people are thankful**



Review of Pilot Program

■ 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.

- 1. Number of users during off-leash hours by day/month/year:**
Average of 16 users per day from November 15th to present
- 2. Dog waste left on field: Zero**
- 3. Number of calls to Washoe County Animal Services: Zero**



Review of Pilot Program

- 4. Number of refilled dog waste bags:** 2 boxes of bags (50 bags per box) Most users have brought their own bags
- 5. Damage reports filed:** Zero
- 6. Comments and suggestions from the public**

At the packed Spanish Springs CAB meeting the Pilot Program was well received. Two questions were asked afterwards: “Who do we call in an animal emergency?” Call the Animal Control Dispatch number posted on the entrance sign. “Will the off-leash fields add to Park Ranger duties and make more work?” Actually, the opposite is true. Having an option to tell people about creates fewer negative interactions and off-leash rule breakers.



Review of Pilot Program

- **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.

1. Number of users during off-leash hours by day/month/year:

Average users per day has been 53, with January as the busiest month

2. Dog waste left on field: 25 dog piles/waste have been picked up

3. Number of calls to Washoe County Animal Services: Zero

4. Number of refilled dog waste bags: 15



Review of Pilot Program

5. Damage reports filed: Zero

6. Comments and suggestions from the public

Social Media: “This is wonderful for responsible dog owners and their puppers!”

Contact with users at park: “We’re so thankful to have this”, “We hope this program stays around”, “We live nearby and really like this new program”, Several families have been observed playing sports on the field while including their off-leash dogs.

Report of one small dog being attacked by a German Shepherd on the off-leash field. Owner of attacked dog posted about the attack on Nextdoor and received over 73 comments, mostly negative regarding the German Shepherd owner. Animal Control was never contacted.



Review of Pilot Program

Emails received:

“I support experimenting with dogs being allowed at White’s Creek and South Valleys Park during certain times.”

“Thank you so much for a creative solution to the dog off-leash areas.”

“This is a monumentally bad idea. What is needed first is better behaved dog owners who follow the existing rules.”

“Perhaps people who live in apartments or who have tiny backyards shouldn’t have dogs as pets. They could have snails, like me, instead.”



Review of Pilot Program

- **Whites Creek Park Update:**

White's Creek Park was originally on the Pilot Program for off-leash dog use during non-team use. Due to residents resisting the proposal due to suggested reasons such as an increase of traffic and concerns of dog waste left on field, the park was taken off the list.

According to park staff- a group of about 10 people regularly use the field for their off-leash dogs everyday.

Washoe County Animal Control has started a 10-day park patrol of this park to inform people of the rules and ticket as needed.



Summary

- **Total average users per day November-present: 89 people plus their dogs**
- **Busiest off-leash field: South Valleys Regional Park**
- **Total dog bag boxes replaced November–present: 24 boxes**
- **Total dog waste picked up by staff November-present: 28 piles**
- **Total Number of damage reports: Zero**
- **Total calls to Animal Services: Zero**
- **Comments from the public: Personal interactions have been 100% positive. Social media and email comments have been 80% positive, 20% negative.**
- **Sport Leagues have been informed, no comments or questions have been voiced.**



What's Next?

- **Sport field reservations start March 1st. Off-leash dog use hours will change to Monday thru Friday 8am-1pm starting March 1st thru October 31st**
- **Volunteer cleanup of off-leash fields will take place end of February**
- **Possible “Clean Field Volunteer” program to start in March**
- **South Valleys CAB meeting is February 3rd**
- **North Valleys CAB meeting is February 15th**
- **Next quarterly update in May**