

Opinions on Off-leash Dogs: Pillar Point Bluff & Quarry Park

MCC emails received through 1/26/22 at 9:47am

Criterion	Con	Pro
Environment (1) Risks to marine, sensitive wildlife	Bluff sensitive environmental habitat. Bluff trails closely linked to shoreline & marine life Pillar Point Bluff and the adjacent Ross' Cove Beach and rocky tidepools support more sensitive habitats and special status species than any other comparable County Park area.	No: Bluff is a former dairy farm and zoned agricultural by SMC LCP. Quarry Park is mostly eucalyptus forest. Dogs not allowed on beach; off-leash trails away from ESHA's; pilot program at Pillar Point Bluff only makes two trails legally off leash; program DOES NOT increase ACCESS to Beach, which is down near the golf ball. Off-leash pilot trails were designated only in areas not deemed sensitive. FMR not part of Bluff.
Damage to environment(2)	Owners and dogs don't follow the signs and Rangers cannot enforce.	Impact from bikes and humans is similar.
Damage to environment(3)	Need a complete on site/in zone testing demonstration of the rules and regulations proposed	The cumulative environmental impacts resulting from unregulated off-leash dog access in restricted areas is of far greater concern than those associated with this Pilot Program. Pilot is more control than current unregulated off-leash use; monitoring plan; strictest in CA; limits number dogs (i.e. no professional dog walkers)
Environment (4)	Dog owners who wish to let their dogs off-lease can use other close-by more suitable trails: Quarry Park, also proposed for the Off-Leash Dog Pilot Program, is just 2 ½ miles away, Half Moon Bay's Coastside Dog Park (7 miles), Pacifica's Esplanade Beach (11 miles), and Fort Funston (17 miles).	Local off-leash saves VMT going out of area for dog hiking.
Environment (5) Dogs leave trails – damage wildlife	Video of dog killing seal pup (2018) They run down from the trails to the beach and threaten wildlife.	2018 Dog incident was owner neglect; per video and court submissions, was caused by a couple bringing 2 dogs down to the beach and not supervising them. Coyotes killed 4, and possibly 5 baby seals in 2021 at this location, per Marine Mammal Rescue Center. 100' cliff prevents access; Responsible dog owners should not be penalized for bad actors. <i>If someone</i>

		<i>drives under the influence, we punish the behavior, we don't stop everybody from driving.</i>
Uncontrolled off-leash dogs	Interferes with other forms of recreation. Need licensing & training approach to allow off leash dogs into this sensitive area.	Trails are wide Owners must adhere to control & distance standards.
Owners violate signs	Owners been violating the rules for years.	How can you know this pilot won't work unless you give it a fair chance? They're violating the rules because they have no place else to go.
Off-leash dogs bother people	Many FRM incidents (<i>down from 190 to 57 since 2018.</i>)	Other jurisdictions have solved this problem; Legal, off-leash dog walking happens every day in every state in this country, and the world continues to turn; "exaggerated assertions"
Impact of Dogs	Ban dogs totally.	Dogs contribute to healthier quality of life
Parks not enforcing on-leash	Ongoing, continuous pattern of violations of Parks' dog policy at FMR. (table)	No good response on enforcement, and it will continue without a Pilot to demonstrate problems.
Purchase grant requires wildlife conservation in area	Preservation and enhancement of the Reserve's natural resources was prioritized above everything else, including recreational activities.	Parks prepared NegDec 10/28/21; 53 comments responded to. Depend on Parks and CCC expertise to rule on legality. County disputes this is part of the "Reserve"
Process	Why is the MCC getting involved so late?	Because the issue goes to the Planning Commission. Dog Committee studied since 2016; broad stakeholder representation; dozens of meetings; hundreds of comments; expert interviews. None of the environmental groups currently voicing opposition ever have come to a single dog committee meeting in five years [<i>not true, Green Foothills attended a couple</i>]. They have not participated in the process and frankly are not fully familiar with the considerations the dog committee has made. They suggest no alternatives.
Benchmarked vs other jurisdictions	[no counter-argument]	SMC has very few off-leash sites compared to other counties
Pilot program	GGNRA off-leash program failed miserably (taser)	Off-leash exists in 5 parks; 3 years w/o issues Give the pilot a chance; adjust as needed.

Dogs need space to run	Dog parks provide plenty of exercise	<p>Dog Parks don't provide exercise for the owners, and not enough exercise for medium to large dogs. A dog park to off leash walkers is like telling a mountain biker to go to a pump track or a hiker to go to a stadium and walk in circles</p> <p>San Mateo County is the only San Francisco Bay Area county that does not provide legal off-leash dog walking trails for its residents.</p> <p>I have a service dog. In order for him to perform his required activities, he needs to exercise adequately.</p> <p>We need this in our community.</p>
Legality (1) Bluff is part of FMR by grant	<p>2004 Fitzgerald Marine Reserve (FMR) Master Plan (MP) applies to the Pillar Point Bluffs(PPB) and restricts dog presence there to only on-leash dog walking on the CA Coastal Trail</p> <p>Policy 11 (pg 45) recognizes that dogs are detrimental to the Reserve's natural resources</p>	SMC Parks has reviewed, and CCC will review whether these concerns are accurate. County thinks not.
Legality (2) MCC involvement	Inappropriate for the MCC to write a letter to the Planning Commission and/or and the California Coastal Commission.	The MCC's job is to reflect community sentiment
Parks not staffed up to enforcement task	<p>Table of incidents shows unable to manage FMR; no staff increase; now extra Tunitas Beach Park to cover.</p> <p>Details of dog distance from trail and owner, vision control and response time impossible for Rangers to administer.</p> <p>Is the county committed to monitoring this area forever, through good budgets and bad?</p>	Strictest off-leash rules and regulations in CA
Precedent		<p>Off-leash walking for 50+ years; Providing some Offleash trails and rules to sanction what is already happening is a good thing.</p> <p>Proscriptive easement on such use.</p>

Support	Many form letters from OUTSIDE the Coast (Portola Valley, Santa Cruz, Menlo Park, Foster City, SSF)	Petition: 267 favor (copy from AmyTezza); Meetings: supporters far outnumber opposition
Will Crowd out non-dog recreation	<p>There are plenty of other options for dogs and their owners to enjoy without putting Nature at more risk. <i>(Not documented)</i></p> <p>There is not one stretch of beach in Half Moon Bay that doesn't allow off leash dogs. While off leash is <u>legally not permitted</u>, there is zero enforcement and every single piece of shoreline has off leash dogs all day/every day.</p>	<p>A. "off-leash pilot program is NOT expected to significantly increase park usage " Other counties have more options without the burdensome commute here. Rules will ward off many owners.</p> <p>B. Dog haters still have 92% of county trails to choose from if they prefer a "no dog" experience). "There are many places for people who are afraid of dogs to go here where dogs are not even allowed "</p> <p>C. Create segmented hours for jogger, dogs, bicycles</p>
Community sentiment	Pro comments are Inflated by national group using out of area emails and cut and paste commentary; Menlo Park and Portola Valley clearly opposed	Con comments inflated by GF group using out of area emails and cut and paste commentary Local responses heavily favor this pilot.
What about Quarry Park	No specific objections; some on-leash trails requested.	Favored, or ignored, by negative commenters.
Humane Treatment		The county cannot out of one side of its mouth expect the community to adopt stray and homeless animals from our county's shelter and then out of the other side of its mouth remove all routes for safe off-leash exercise that many dogs deteriorate without.
Quality of Life Benefits (1)		Dogs provide both mental and physical health improvements to owners Especially critical during the Pandemic .
Quality of Life Benefits (2)		Dogs can provide people -- women especially -- with a feeling of safety that can mean the difference between being able to enjoy the outdoors alone and being scared to be alone in remote place for fear of assault.
Off-leash works elsewhere	Pillar Point Bluffs is too small for this experiment	If you are not a dog owner, visit a place like Fort Funston or Point Isabel, famous off leash areas which are peacefully visited by hundreds of dogs daily. --Fort Funston in San Francisco --Oyster Point waterfront in East Bay

		<p>--multiple off-leash dog beaches and trails in Marin county</p> <p>--off-leash hiking in Palo Alto (Windy Hill)-- Santa Clara County</p> <p>--off leash beaches in Santa Cruz County and Carmel</p>
Recreation Fairness /Equity (1)	This is racism and white privilege.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. No racial barriers to participation in program. 2. People of color have owned dogs for millenia. 3. Horses were also used for suppression, yet they are allowed in all County Parks and the people making this argument aren't asking for horses to be denied access.
Recreation Fairness /Equity (2)	<p>I do believe certain areas should be off-leash that are NOT, like Montara Beach.</p> <p>I would support the entirety of Wavecrest Park to be off-leash.</p>	<p>40% of taxpayers are dog owners; 92% of County parks require leashes or no dogs at all.</p> <p>It is sad and shameful that SMC and the Coastside does not already have opportunities for off leash dog walking. As taxpayers we expect EQUITY. That currently does not exist: only 8% of San Mateo parks are open to the 40% of us who own dogs while 90% of parks are open to horses who's owners comprise a tiny minority of the population</p> <p>Coyotes are native to the bluff. There is no call to put these canines on leash.</p>
Pandering	Calderon and Horsley don't want public attacks	Well, they're sure getting them by supporting this...