



## Proposed Rule for Dog Management Frequently Asked Questions

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### 1. Why has GGNRA developed a Dog Management Plan and Proposed Rule?

Since GGNRA was established in 1972, annual visitation to the park (including Muir Woods and Fort Point) has grown elevenfold – from around 1.4 million to over 17.5 million visitors. At the same time, dog walking in the park has increased dramatically. GGNRA must establish a Dog Management Plan that addresses current problems and looks to the future. While many people who walk dogs do an excellent job controlling their dogs, and picking up after their dogs (and even after other park visitors) there are too many conflicts that involve dogs, including serious injuries to park visitors and employees. The Proposed Rule would improve the conditions that support the wide variety of recreational activities that park visitors pursue, in a safer and cleaner environment, while protecting natural and cultural resources for future generations.

### 2. What is a “Rule” for dog management?

A Rule is the specific federal regulation that governs an activity in a national park. In the case of dog management, the Proposed Rule reflects in draft only the NPS preferred alternative from the Draft Dog Management Plan/Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (SEIS) that was reviewed by the public in 2013/14. The Proposed Rule describes how the preferred alternative would be implemented if selected.

### 3. What is included in the Proposed Rule?

The Proposed Rule identifies those places in the park where people would be able to enjoy the park with their dogs – both on and off-leash - and those places where dogs would not be allowed. It also defines terms like “voice control” that are essential to dog management, and describes the responsibilities of dog owners to manage their dogs effectively. The Proposed Rule also describes commercial dog walking opportunities and requirements.

### 4. What was the Preferred Alternative in the SEIS, which the Proposed Rule reflects?

The 2013/14 SEIS considered and evaluated a range of alternatives for the management of dogs in the park, and identified an NPS preferred alternative (Alternative F) that would best meet the objectives for managing dogs:

- Provide a variety of visitor experiences
- Preserve and protect natural and cultural resources and natural processes
- Improve visitor and employee safety
- Reduce visitor conflicts
- Maintain park resources and values for future generations.
- Provide clear, enforceable rules for dog management

### 5. Have there been any changes made to the SEIS preferred alternative that appear in the Proposed Rule?

- Addition of conditions for walking four to six dogs under an NPS permit
- Changes to two Voice and Sight Control Areas (formerly known as Regulated Off Leash Areas, ROLAs) - Crissy Airfield and upper Fort Funston
- Addition of four new trail segments for on-leash dog walking (Rancho Corral de Tierra)
- Addition of clarifying definitions
- A few minor adjustments to dog walking areas based on new information or public suggestions
- Clarified considerations for the Monitoring and Management Program
- Updated and corrected trail and road names. In some cases, these are different from the names used in the SEIS. These trail and road name changes have no operational impact.
- Two scenarios under which dog walking opportunities may be expanded, including addition of authority for the superintendent to determine whether to allow dogs on-leash where the park adds new trails within the 22 locations

## 6. In the Proposed Rule, how much of the park would be available to people with dogs?

Under the Proposed Rule the park would be the most dog-friendly of any of the 410 units of National Park system. Significantly, GGNRA would be the only NPS unit that would permit dog walking off-leash. Of the 8.7 miles of beaches, about 2.7 miles (31%) would be available for dog walkers, and 2.3 miles (over 26%) would be available for off-leash dog use. Of the 137 miles of trails addressed in the SEIS, approximately 46 miles (about 34%), will be available for dog walking.

## 7. Where can I walk my dog off-leash?

Under the Proposed Rule, off-leash dog walking would be permitted in seven areas: Rodeo Beach; Fort Mason; Crissy Field (two areas); Ocean Beach; and Fort Funston (two areas).

## 8. What about dog access at two of the most popular locations - Fort Funston and Crissy Field?

At these two locations, the area available for dog use is substantial. At Fort Funston, of the total of 180 acres (excluding the 10 acre Bank Swallow Protection Area), approximately 95 acres are steep cliff or dense vegetation, and are not accessible for any use. Of the remaining 85 acres, the Proposed Plan includes 35 acres (41%) for off-leash dog use. In addition, most of the trails and parking lots would be available for dogs on leash. At Crissy Field, dogs will be permitted in most places. Approximately 30% of the airfield, and 40% of the beach front mileage would be available for off-leash dog use. In addition, the rest of the airfield, the East Beach picnic area, and nearly all of the trails would be open to dogs on-leash.

## 9. Why does the Proposed Rule limit dogs to a maximum of six dogs per dog walker when the City of San Francisco permits up to eight dogs?

A maximum of six dogs per dog walker is the standard limit on public lands throughout the country, and in all jurisdictions surrounding the park, except the City of San Francisco. During the multi-stakeholder Negotiated Rulemaking process in 2006/07, there was a consensus that six dogs is a reasonable maximum. When the matter was being considered by the San Francisco Board of Supervisors in 2013, the San Francisco Animal Care and Control Department advised a six dog limit; the Supervisors decided upon a maximum of eight dogs. GGNRA currently has an interim compendium limit on six dogs and this limit has been very well received by the commercial dog walking community.

## 10. What is GGNRA doing to protect wildlife and native plants from dogs?

The park considered impacts to wildlife and native vegetation in designating areas where dogs would be permitted. Areas with known or probable sensitive wildlife or plant species were designated as off limits to dogs or for dogs only on-leash. Additionally, trails away from developed areas were designated as dog-free areas because these areas have the highest prevalence of wildlife and native plant species, and are more susceptible to disturbance and damage by dogs on or off-leash. Once a dog rule is implemented, regulations related to the impact of dog use on wildlife and plants would be monitored for compliance.

## 11. Would access to GGNRA recreational uses be reduced?

Visitors enjoy dozens of different recreational activities in GGNRA, and well-managed dog walking can be a healthy, enjoyable and appropriate experience in many areas of the park. The Proposed Rule will not eliminate any recreational activities. For those who avoid or do not visit an area of the park because they want a dog-free experience, the rule could increase recreational access. For those who want maximum off-leash dog walking, the rule would reduce the area available for that use. Overall, the Proposed Rule would not diminish the recreation opportunities for the more than 17 million annual visitors who use the park for a countless variety of recreation experiences.



## 12. What is the Monitoring Based Management Program?

All areas open to dog walking would be subject to a Monitoring and Management Program. This program would include regular monitoring and recording of compliance with the Final Rule and other regulations related to potential impacts of dog use of the park. If the Superintendent determines the level of compliance to be approaching unacceptable levels, then primary management action would be taken to address noncompliance. Examples include additional outreach and education, increased area-specific enforcement, fine increases, and additional barriers to increase separation of areas. If primary management actions do not address the problem, secondary actions would be taken, such as short or long term closure of some areas to dog walking, additional use restrictions, or increased buffer zones. The park will involve the public in developing and implementing the Monitoring and Management Program, through workshops and recurring meetings with the public.

## 13. What are the steps in the overall dog management planning and rulemaking process? Where does the Proposed Rule fit in?

- a. Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (2002)
- b. Scoping for development of a dog management plan – included an Negotiated Rulemaking process (2002-2006)
- c. Release and comment period for Draft Dog Management Plan/Environmental Impact Statement – DEIS – with six alternatives (2011)
- d. Release and comment for Draft Dog Management Plan/Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement – SEIS – with NPS preferred alternative (2013-2014)
- e. **CURRENT STEP:** Release and comment on Proposed Rule based on SEIS preferred alternative (Winter 2016)
- f. Review of comments on SEIS and Proposed Rule (Summer 2016)
- g. Release of Final Environmental Impact Statement – FEIS – incorporating public comments and identifying a final preferred alternative (Fall 2016)
- h. Record of Decision issued that selects the preferred alternative, pending adoption of the final rule (Fall 2016/Winter 2017)
- i. Final Rule published in Federal Register that reflects the selected alternative; the rule may be implemented 30 days thereafter (Winter 2017)
- j. NPS will initiate a public outreach and education effort to increase understanding of and compliance with the new rule.

## 14. Will there be public meetings on the Proposed Rule? Will there be an opportunity for attendees to make a public statement during the meetings?

There will be six public informational meetings – two each in Marin County, San Francisco, and San Mateo County – during the 60-day public comment period. The dates and times of these meetings will be publicized well in advance and in a variety of ways. At these meetings, there will be opportunities for the public to learn about the content of the Proposed Rule and ask questions, speak directly one-one-one to park staff, and briefly speak publicly to the assembled group if desired. For comments to be officially submitted, they must be submitted either directly to the superintendent by mail, or through regulations.gov as noted in #14 below.

## 15. If I can't attend one of the public meetings, will I have a chance to hear a presentation on the content of the Proposed Rule?

Yes. We will post a video recording of one of the public information meetings and the subsequent question and answer session on our website during the comment period. Park staff will also answer phone and email questions from individuals throughout the public review period.

## 16. Where can the public get the Proposed Rule and how can comments be submitted?

The Proposed Rule is available for review and comment for 60 days, from February 24-April 25, 2016. Visit regulations.gov (search, "RIN 1024-AE16") to review and comment on the Proposed Rule online. To have a copy of the Proposed Rule mailed to you, please call 415-561-4728. Copies of the Proposed Rule may also be picked up in person at Golden Gate National Recreation Area headquarters, Building 201, Upper Fort Mason, San Francisco (Bay and Franklin Streets).

### Comments may be submitted:

- o Online at regulations.gov (search "RIN 1024-AE16")
- o By mailing comments to Christine Lehnertz, Superintendent, Golden Gate National Recreation Area, Building 201, Fort Mason, San Francisco, CA 94123-0022.

Comments will be accepted only as described above, and will not be accepted by fax, email, or in any other way than those specified above. Bulk comments in any format (hard copy or electronic comments submitted on behalf of others) will not be accepted.

