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## **Etiquette for Responsible Off-leash Dog Access by Kreg Lindberg and Meredith Gage**

Our ability to sustain off-leash access depends on our behavior – and the behavior of our dogs. We encourage dog guardians to follow these guidelines:

- Scoop the poop. If there's a chance that anyone will step in, see, or smell your dog's poop, pick it up and pack it out. Always bring a bag (or two) for this purpose. There are biodegradable bags with "carry straps" that make this easy ([http://www.jjbsolutions.com/dog\\_waste\\_bags.html](http://www.jjbsolutions.com/dog_waste_bags.html)). In short, follow Leave No Trace principles.
- Be sure your dog responds to basic commands, such as stay, sit/down, and come. If your dog is not under voice control, please leash it or take it to areas where you won't encounter other people or dogs.
- If your dog can be aggressive toward people or other dogs, please keep it on leash. Friendly dogs generally greet each other with wagging tails and quickly disengage or move into "play mode." Potentially aggressive dogs may snarl, raise their hackles, have a rigid tail and/or body position, or bark in a non-playful manner. Be sure you know your dog and its body language.
- Even when your potentially aggressive dog is on leash, let the guardians of off-leash dogs know in time for them to keep their dogs at a distance.
- Respect other walkers/runners/bikers. Keep your dog a safe distance unless it's clear that others would like to greet your dog – let them approach your dog rather than the other way around. This is why commands such as stay and come are important.
- When approaching a dog that is on leash, put your own dog on leash. When one dog is on leash and the other off, it often creates an unbalance that can trigger aggression.
- Always bring a leash, even when it's not required. Just to be safe, take your dog off the trail and hold it by its collar or use a leash when you encounter small children, people who appear afraid of dogs, horses, or mountain bikers. Even the best

behaved dogs have their moments. Remember that horses and dogs can spook each other. With horses, it's best if people and dogs are off the trail on the downslope side.

Have fun out there, but remember to be courteous and err on the side of caution. It only takes one incident to do real harm or simply to create opposition to off-leash access.

Meredith Gage

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