

Oct 22, 2006 7:17 pm US/Pacific

SF Leash Law Negotiations On Hold

(BCN) *SAN FRANCISCO* Golden Gate National Park Recreation Area officials have temporarily halted negotiations with citizens who want to change current dog leashing rules in the park, following a series of dog attacks and accidents that threaten human and animal safety, Brent Plater of the Center for Biological Diversity said Saturday.

Plater said that after six months of leashing negotiations, off-leash dogs continue to be lost, killed or injured, citing three different incidents in which off-leash dogs wreaked havoc.

According to the Golden Gate Audubon Society, a one-year-old terrier ran into traffic and had to be rescued after it was attacked by two standard poodles. Another dog fell off a cliff at Fort Funston and was stranded for over 24 hours during a rainstorm as police searched for it. On September 16, three dogs attacked a horse and rider, leaving the horse with cuts and bite marks on its legs and posing a serious danger to the rider.

Plater also expressed distress at the danger presented to a "small endangered fluffy bird" called the western snowy plover.

According to Plater, scientists studying the snowy plover say off-leash dogs present a great threat to the animal's survival.

Plater said that because the Golden Gate National Recreation Area had not been enforcing leash laws for a long period of time, officials needed to get special permission before they could begin enforcing them.

However, according to Plater, leash laws will be enforced at Ocean Beach and Crissy Field beginning November 8, protecting the snowy plover until a more complete leashing agreement can be reached.

There are more than 12,000 pet dogs in San Francisco, and while a few people oppose leashing dogs on principle, over 71 percent of people want leash laws enforced in the park, Platter said, citing a statistic gathered by a private surveyor for Golden Gate National Park.

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