





Staff Report

City of Manhattan Beach

TO: Honorable Mayor Montgomery and Members of the City Council

THROUGH: Geoff Dolan, City Manager 

FROM: Richard Gill, Director of Parks and Recreation 
 Idris J. Al-Oboudi, Recreation Services Manager
 Cameron Harding, Recreation Supervisor

DATE: July 15, 2008

SUBJECT: Six Month Progress Report for Bruce's Beach On-Leash Area for Dogs

RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends that the City Council discuss the six month progress report for the Bruce's Beach on-leash dog area and approve making the area permanent for on-leash dogs.

FISCAL IMPLICATION:

Approximately \$1,500 was spent for signage, mutt mitt dispensers and suggestion boxes. Refilling mutt mitt dispensers is approximately \$400/month.

BACKGROUND:

During the September 18, 2007 City Council meeting, Council approved opening up approximately one half of Bruce's Beach Park for dogs on leash for a six month trial period. Council directed staff to work with the neighbors of the park as to which half of the park should be used for the on-leash area. After neighbor input was received, it was decided to use the lower half of Bruce's Beach.

Staff installed signs, mutt mitt dispensers and suggestion boxes and opened the lower area of Bruce's Beach to dogs on leash in mid December. Parks and Recreation and Police Department staff met prior to the opening to develop the attached inspection sheets and suggestion forms (attachments A & B). A plan was also developed to monitor the area using animal control, community service officers, the park ranger and recreation staff.

DISCUSSION:

Staff used two methods to collect data on the operation of the on-leash area: 1) Parks and Recreation Staff including the Joslyn Center Supervisor, Recreation Service Manager, evening and weekend supervisors and Park Ranger; as well as Animal Control Officers completing inspections at least three times per day. .

The City made a significant effort to mitigate some of the neighbors' concerns mentioned earlier through 1) design of area, 2) placement of amenities, 3) municipal codes and etiquette rules posted, 4) neighbors included in planning meetings and 5) monthly reviews/data collection.

During the past six months, the Parks and Recreation Department staff collected 76 dog run participant surveys and 130 staff monitoring logs with daily statistics. The staff logs and user surveys both addressed the concerns raised at the September 18 Council meeting which were excessive dog barking, dog feces left behind, aggressive dogs and overcrowding.

As reported in this three month status report, staff eliminated the user suggestion box because of skewed information presented in the box that could not be substantiated by staff and most of the information was presented anonymously. At Council's direction, staff replaced the suggestion box with signs that stated email and phone contact numbers for the Joslyn staff and Animal Control.

Parks and Recreation Department staff conducted 130 inspections that revealed the following:

- 82 dogs observed in the on-leash area, mostly during the evening and weekend hours
- No aggressive behavior by dogs was observed
- Out of 130 inspections, waste was found seven times in the upper east part of the park which is not the designated on-leash area; eight times waste was found in the designated on-leash area
- One out of the two mutt mitt dispensers has been empty at times. Staff believes that the large use of mutt mitts at this park is due to over use by dog walkers and others passing by the park.

Park Ranger conducted two to three inspections per shift that revealed the following:

- Most persons contacted for being in areas of the parks not included in the off-leash project did not live in the area and were unaware of the old or new rules
- The new (trial) rules did not increase the usual amount of persons contacted for dog related issues in either park.
- No incidences of dogs off-leash or excessive barking were observed.
- Only four reported incidents of dog waste spotted; only one in on-leash area.

Police Department Animal Control staff conducted 249 (as of June 12, 2008) inspections that revealed the following:

- Conducted at least three patrols daily at Bruce's Beach
- 119 dogs in park between October 16, 2007 and June 12, 2008. Officers logged each patrol and noted how many dogs were in the area.
- Officers provided education to dog owners regarding newly posted signs, laws regarding unleashed animals and pick up of animal waste (16 total violations in six month span of inspections; no reports of excessive barking).
- Logged information consists of photos, citizen contacts and actions taken by officers.

In conclusion, during the times the Park Ranger has been in either Bruce's Beach or Polliwog Park, he has reported or seen no significant impact on enforceable issues above and beyond the normal scope of his duties. Persons violating the rules seem to be oblivious to the old or new codes that pertained to dog activity in either park. This is normal for almost any day that the weather allows

for walking dogs. Based on the Ranger's lack of derogatory contacts with persons involved with the dog on-leash expansions and persons who live in the area, obeying the new rules does not seem to be a problem.

Attached are the emails and correspondences received from neighbors and users of the park. Staff also noticed the neighborhood around Bruce's Beach regarding tonight's Council meeting, inviting them to provide additional public input.

CONCLUSION

Based on approximately 500 inspections by the Parks and Recreation staff and Police personnel, and the lack of substantive complaints from the neighbors living near the park, staff recommends making the westerly portion of Bruce's Beach permanent for dogs on leash. City staff will continue to monitor the park and respond to calls as it does with the other City parks. Staff believes there has been no change with how the park operates. The implementation of the on-leash area in Bruce's Beach did not increase dog waste or create an unsafe area with aggressive dogs. There was no increase in the population of dogs using the park and there has been no sign that this has caused the park to become a destination point for dogs and their owners.

ATTACHMENTS:

- A. Inspection Sheet
- B. Suggestion Form
- C. Neighbor emails

BRUCE'S BEACH ON LEASH DOG AREA STAFF INSPECTION



DATE:

NAME OF STAFF INSPECTING:

Time of inspection:

Comments:

Dogs-

Aggression: Y/N

Dog Waste: Y/N

Time of inspection:

Comments:

Dogs-

Aggression: Y/N

Dog Waste: Y/N

MAINTENANCE / OTHER ISSUES:

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

Please return this form to Mr. Idris Jassim Al-Oboudi Recreation Services Manager max 2 Days after inspection. Please Contact Recreation Supervisor Mr. Cameron Harding 310-802-5420 charding@citymb.info and Mr. Idris Jassim Al-Oboudi Recreation Services Manager ialoboudi@citymb.info 310-802-5404 directly if there are issues needing immediate attention.

City of Manhattan Beach Parks and Recreation Department

Bruce's Beach Park on-leash dog access survey and suggestion form

Dear park user: Please note that the City of Manhattan Beach has approved the signed Walk-through and Lower-West grass areas of Bruce's Beach park for dog access on-leash. This area will be part of a three month trial / test to assess its success as a valued addition to the park.

Please use this survey and suggestion form to provide your input and suggestions on operational conditions at the park. Please insert the completed form in the suggestion drop box.

Date of visit to the park: _____ Time of visit to the park: _____
 Contact information: Name _____ Phone#: _____
 Email: _____ Address: _____

Safety concerns:

Did you observe dogs and children in the same area? Yes: _____ No _____
 Comments: _____

Did you observe any dog bites to children? Yes: _____ No _____
 Did you report the aggression? Yes: _____ No _____
 Comments: _____

Did you observe dogs off leash in the park? Yes: _____ No _____
 Comments: _____

Clean & Green:

Did you observe any dog leaving waste and the owner walking away without picking up?
 Yes: _____ No _____

Did you ask the owner to clean up? Yes: _____ No _____
 Comments: _____

Did you observe any "old" dog waste? Yes: _____ No _____
 Comments: _____

Did you pick it up? Yes: _____ No _____
 Comments: _____

Did you observe anybody else picking it up? Yes: _____ No _____
 Comments: _____

Do you think self-policing is working? Yes: _____ No _____
 Comments: _____

Did you observe an empty Mutt-Mitt dispenser? Yes: _____ No _____
 Comments: _____

Please contact the Parks and recreation department for further information at 310-802-5448 Or email us at charding@citymb.info . Thank you.

Bruce's Beach.txt

From: Marty Friedman [fidonow@worldnet.att.net]
Sent: Thursday, June 26, 2008 10:44 AM
To: Dog Suggestions
Subject: Bruce's Beach

My old dog can't make the round trip to Bruce's Beach Park. But I fostered a puppy several weeks ago and took her to the lower grass area of Bruce's Beach about two dozen times times (including approximately 6am, Noon, and 4pm).

The whole park was mostly empty. There were a few people sitting on the upper half and on a couple of occasions a solitary man sitting on a blanket on the lower half. There were no children rolling down the hill.

I met several other dog owners. We chatted about our dogs and built a "sense of community". We enjoyed the view. My puppy would face the ocean and smell the ocean breezes (probably lots of messages for her there????).

My puppy got additional exercise jumping and chasing its leash (still in control in my hand). A couple of young children came over and pet the puppy (a great learning/introduction experience).

The park was clean. The mutt mitt dispensers were filled (except for one occasion and I gave one of my extra bags to an owner in need). One weekend the garbage cans were overfilled.

As a responsible dog owner, I alerted one owner to get his dog on leash (they were just walking nicely) and twice I picked up dog "deposits" left along the sidewalk on the upper grass area.

This access to Bruce's Beach is a great community amenity for an underutilized facility. Please make it permanent.

Marty

From: Sue Harragan [sue@yourhousesoldresource.com]
Sent: Sunday, June 22, 2008 8:50 PM
To: Dog Suggestions
Subject: Bruce's Beach

South Coast
GMAC

6080 Center Drive.
6th Floor
Los Angeles, CA 90045
Phone: 1-800-660-9140 ext. 328
www.yourhouseSOLDresource.com

I finally have the email address to write to you about Bruce's Beach. I have been meaning to write you to show my support but when I am with my dogs, I have not had pen to submit a comment sheet. I pass by Bruce's Beach every single day and more often than not I observe someone sharing the park with the dog-whether they are just soaking up the sun or strolling along. Numerous times I've passed by and seen families with their children and their dog rolling around or having a picnic on the grass...the total picture of what this trial is striving the accomplish! I will admit I once did see two young girls playing with their dog off leash...I graciously approached them and explained the situation and the policy. They had no idea (or so they said) that their dog couldn't be off the leash so once I told them they quickly leashed their dog. I have a feeling that the occasional violator really doesn't not know they dog can't be off the leash but once they are told they are more than willing to obey the policy.

Many people have also mentioned that they love having a place for their dogs to 'stretch their legs'. I wish I had taken a picture every time I've seen dogs and people enjoying the park because there have been so many opportunities. For the last 6 months, I have only seen good things with the exception of the young girls I mentioned above who were enjoying the park but just needed a little guidance!

As a tax paying citizen, I would like to be able to enjoy and share our public parks with my dogs. You will never be able to please everyone so splitting the park is a very fair compromise.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sue Harragan

Information from ESET NOD32 Antivirus, version of virus signature database 3207
(20080622)

The message was checked by ESET NOD32 Antivirus.

<http://www.eset.com>

From: susan dumas [suzie2jesse@yahoo.com]

Sent: Monday, June 16, 2008 5:32 PM

To: Dog Suggestions

this is the only town I know where dogs do not have the right to walk through parks ?? . it seems so ridiculous to me. the beautiful town of Carmel allows dogs everywhere !

From: nolim8s@aol.com

Sent: Tuesday, July 01, 2008 9:33 PM

To: Dog Suggestions

How great it feels to just rest on the grass with my dog and enjoy the park! Lynn Harris

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Sorry for the delayed response, but thank you very much for the positive email.
It is great to hear you are enjoying the area.

*Cameron Harding
Recreation Supervisor
City of Manhattan Beach
310-802-5420*

-----Original Message-----

From: Heather Venegas [mailto:hvenegas@gmail.com]

Sent: Monday, June 16, 2008 10:57 PM

To: Dog Suggestions

Subject: Thank you for allowing dogs at Bruce's Beach Park!

We live right down the road and it is such a pleasure to be able to have the whole family together on the hillside. Our 10 month old loves to have his black lab nearby to play with!

We really appreciate all of the efforts that the city has made to make Manhattan Beach a more dog-friendly town!

Heather & Marc Venegas
2921 Manhattan Ave.

Sorry for the delayed response, but thank you very much for your email.
It is greatly appreciated and good to hear you are enjoying that area.

*Cameron Harding
Recreation Supervisor
City of Manhattan Beach
310-802-5420*

-----Original Message-----

From: joanne mclaughlin [mailto:mclaughlinjoanne@gmail.com]
Sent: Monday, June 16, 2008 8:42 PM
To: Dog Suggestions
Subject: Bruce's Beach

Hello City Council Members,

I just want to share with you some of my some observations of Bruce's Beach over the last months.

I have a view of Bruce's Beach from my house just off of Bayview and 26th. I have seen many people and their dogs truly enjoying the park. Overall with only a few exceptions, people have been very respectful of the on leash and west side rules.

I have noticed a decrease in dog feces in the last months. I regularly work out in the park, and have seen very few infractions in regards to people not picking up.

I have not noticed any problems between people and dogs or even dogs and dogs. From a personal standpoint, I cannot even tell you how nice it is to go and sit in the grass with my senior dogs and enjoy the view.

Lastly, it appears the only damage to the park is unrelated to usage by dogs, rather the workers who were responsible for sewer renovation.

I speak for many in saying that the park will be loved and respected by the dog owners of this wonderful community if given the permanent privilege.

Thank you for your ongoing consideration in this very important issue.

Best Regards,

Joanne McLaughlin
2517 Bayview Drive