

WHY



DOGS ARE NOT ALLOWED

Dear Dog Owner, the Sonoma Overlook Trail was approved by the City of Sonoma, then designed and constructed exclusively for hiking/walking and to bring back and protect the wildlife on the property. The funding for construction and stewardship of the SOT is primarily from private donations with very little, if any, use of taxpayer public funds. Volunteers, committed to protecting the natural habitat and wildlife, constructed and maintain the SOT.

Your dog may be gentle and on a leash. But wild animals will still react the same as they do for any predator and may flee in fear, often before you know they are there. The effects of all dogs that come here are cumulative. Please read this brochure and be considerate of others and wildlife by leaving your dog home while enjoying the SOT.

Effects of dogs on the SOT

- Even well-behaved dogs on a leash can act aggressively toward animals in the wild, chasing and sometimes killing small animals and birds. Off leash dogs can chase animals completely from the property or worse.
- Dogs mark the trail with their urine and feces. These leave messages that interrupt the normal behavior of wildlife and can cause wild animals to leave the area.
- The SOT is today remarkably clean and free of debris, including dog feces.
- Dogs carry diseases that can spread to wildlife.
- Dogs disturb the quiet, natural experience for other hikers. This is one of the few nearby trails in a natural habitat where walkers/hikers (even those who are dog-lovers) do not have to encounter and contend with dogs and dog owners trying to control their "friendly" dogs from barking or trying to jump on other hikers.
- Some people are allergic to dogs or fearful of them.
- Many long segments of the trail are very narrow (2' wide in some places) and rocky. Hikers encountering leashed dogs may be forced to step off the trail exposing themselves to poison oak, snake bite or falling.

Prepared by Lynn Clary & Sonoma Overlook Stewards,
volunteers who fund and maintain the Overlook Trail
4/2014

Hazards for dogs on the SOT

- Dogs can be bitten by snakes, ticks or wild animals. Dogs illegally on the SOT have been bitten by rattlesnakes. The rocky terrain is a natural home for rattlesnakes.
- Dogs can become the prey of mountain lions or coyotes. A dog running through the brush can trigger the pursuit reflex of a mountain lion — leading it back to the dog owner.
- Dogs can get diseases from wildlife including rabies, canine distemper, and parvo virus.
 - Dogs sniffing in the grass can ingest/inhale foxtails or get them in their eyes, ears or nose.
- Poison oak can be easily spread by contact with an animals fur.

Parks where leashed dogs are allowed

- The Bike Path
- Sonoma Regional Park
- Bartholomew Winery Trails
- Depot Park
- Nathanson Creek Park Maxwell
- Regional Park
- Jean K.T. Carter Park
- Dog Park-(allows off leash)