



# Dogs Impacts on Conservation Areas

## MLTC – February 2018

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# Goals for Today

- Begin a Conversation about Dog Issues on Conserved Land
- Recognize that this is a Shared Issue between Towns and Land Trusts and our Decisions affect one another
- Sharing of Best Practices/Successful Examples/Strategies
- Discussion of Possible Future Joint Efforts



# Dogs and Conservation Land Issues

- Natural Resource Issues
  - Streambank/Pondshore Destabilization
  - Impacts on Wildlife
  - Impacts on Water Quality from Dog Waste
- Human-Dog Conflicts
- Dog-Dog Conflicts



# Streambank/Pondshore Destabilization



# Impacts on Wildlife\*

- “The evidence that dogs negatively impact wildlife is overwhelming...”
- “Wildlife perceive dogs as predators”
- “The scent of dogs repels wildlife and the effects remain after the dogs are gone.”
- “Dogs transmit diseases”
- “Loose dogs kill wildlife”
- “Animals are alarmed and cease routine activities. This increases the amount of energy they use...”
- “Repeated stress causes long-term impacts on wildlife including reduced reproduction and growth, suppressed immune system and increased vulnerability to diseases and parasites.”
- “The disturbance effects of off-leash dogs are stronger than on-leash and substantially expand the amount of wildlife affected.”

\*The Impacts of dogs on wildlife and water quality: a literature review, compiled by Lori Hennings, Metro Parks and Nature [Oregon], April 2016.

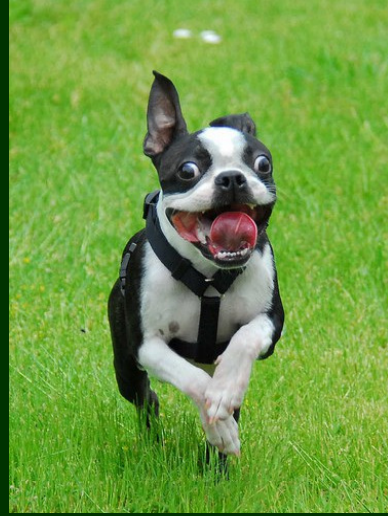


# Impacts on Water Quality

- The average dog produces  $\frac{1}{2}$  to  $\frac{3}{4}$  pound of dog poop per day
- Dog poop is a source of *e. coli* to waterways
- Humans (and dogs) can catch parasites such as hookworms, roundworms and salmonella from dog waste
- Nutrients in dog waste can result in excessive growth of algae and weeds in waterbodies
- Many dog walkers think that if the poop is off trail it is fine to leave it be. Or they don't want to venture off trail to pick it up.



# Human – Dog Conflicts



“There are people who have a fear of dogs. I find some dog owners can’t relate to someone who is afraid of dogs especially if they think their dog is “friendly.” A happy golden retriever running down the trail at someone who is afraid of dogs can be very unsettling to that person.”



# Human – Dog Conflicts

- Dogs and those with Fear of Dogs
- Dogs and Kids
- Dogs and Seniors or the Unsteady
- Dogs and Horseback Riders
- Dogs and Bikes
- Dogs and Runners
- Muddy Dogs and White Pants
- Dogs and Hiking Boots----->



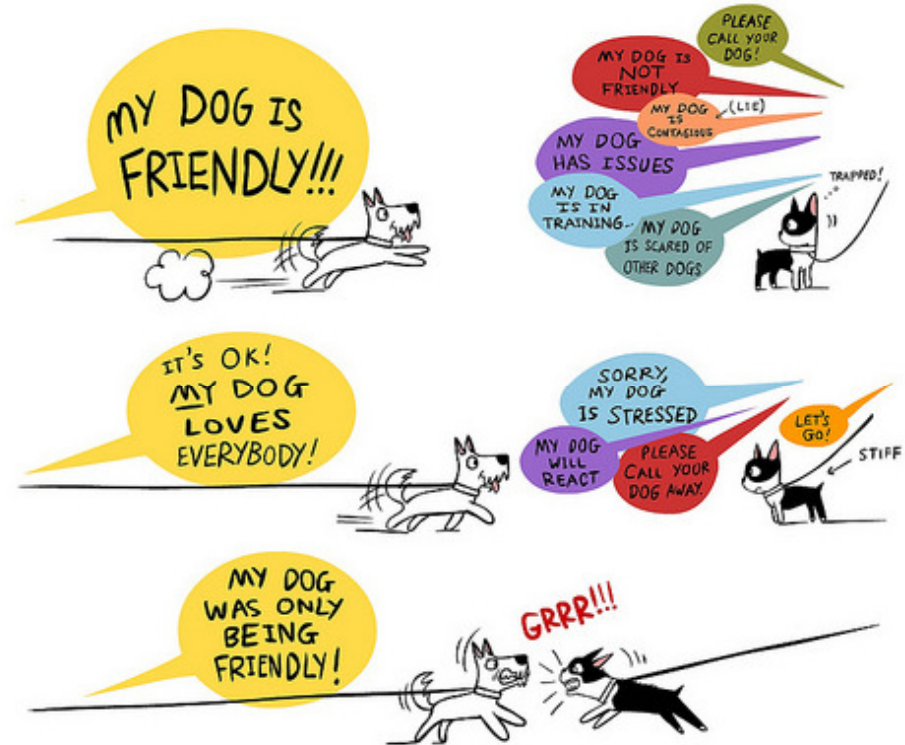


# Dog – Dog Conflicts



## SPACE ETIQUETTE FOR DOGS

To: People with "Friendly Dogs", Off-Leash Dogs, & Retractable Leash Dogs



**NEWSFLASH:** Running up to another dog and ignoring requests to go away is not "friendly", it is rude. Just like people, **DOGS NEED PERSONAL SPACE**. If a stranger came up and put his hand on your body, you'd be allowed to step back, yell, and push him away. Dogs have the same right to enforce their boundaries. Some dogs are called "reactive" because they are more sensitive than others. Reactive dogs are good dogs, they just need more distance and compassionate training. You can help them by honoring their need for personal space.

1. NEVER LET YOUR OFF-LEASH DOG GO UP TO AN ON-LEASH DOG.
2. LOCK RETRACTABLE LEASHES WHEN YOU SEE OTHER DOGS.
3. ASK BEFORE APPROACHING OR PETTING ANY DOG.
4. HAVE COMPASSION FOR PEOPLE WITH SHY OR REACTIVE DOGS.

Please do not chase us. Let us pass without interaction, and keep your judgements to yourself.

inspired by: [notesfromadogwalker.com](http://notesfromadogwalker.com) [functionalarwards.com](http://functionalarwards.com)

*Lili*  
doggiedrawings.net

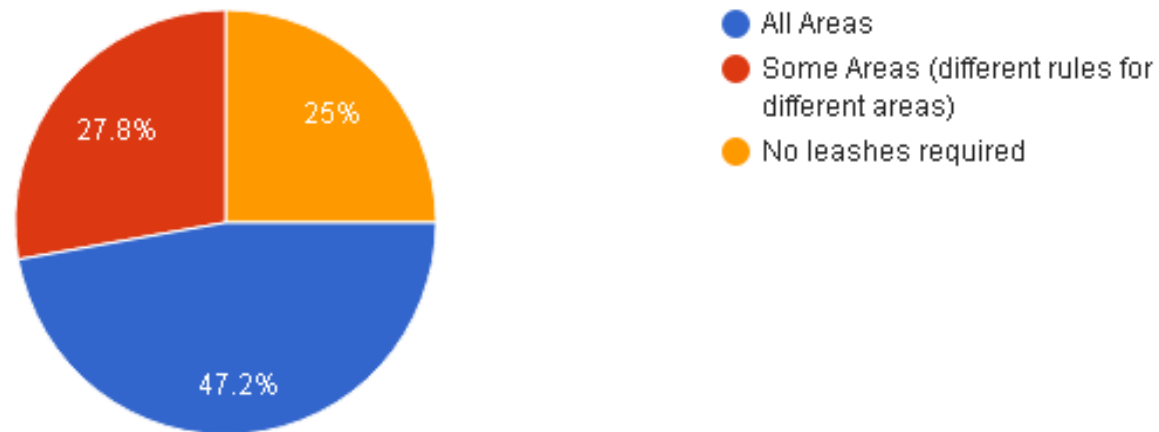
# Town Conservation Dog Survey – 36 Responses

Belchertown  
Belmont  
Canton  
Dedham  
Duxbury  
Eastham  
Foxborough  
Franklin  
Grafton  
Hanover  
Harvard  
Hudson  
Kingston  
Lincoln  
Lexington  
Needham  
Newton

North Andover  
Northampton  
Norton  
Norwell  
Palmer  
Plainville  
Rehoboth  
Salisbury  
Sherborn  
Shirley  
South Hadley  
Southbridge  
Stow  
Sturbridge  
Swansea  
Taunton  
Westford  
Weston

# Leash Requirements

Do you require dogs to be leashed? (36 responses)



# Poop Management

- 10 communities urge dog walkers to take home poop
- 12 communities require dog walkers to take home poop
- 13 communities (or friends group) provide poop bags
- 12 communities have poop collection (trash cans, etc.)
- 10 communities have no poop requirements

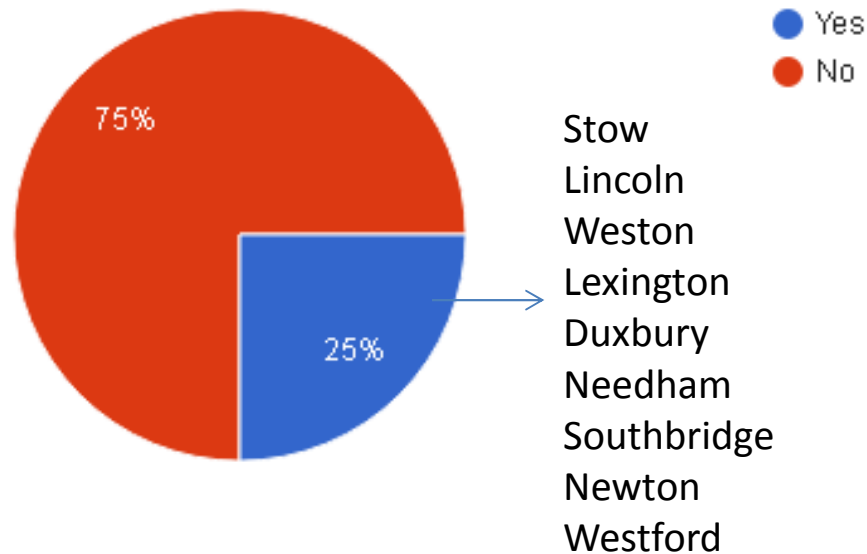


**If your dog poops  
but nobody is  
watching,  
you still need to  
pick it up!**

# Multiple Dogs/Commercial Dog Walking

Do you regulate or limit walking of multiple dogs and/or commercial dog walking?

(36 responses)



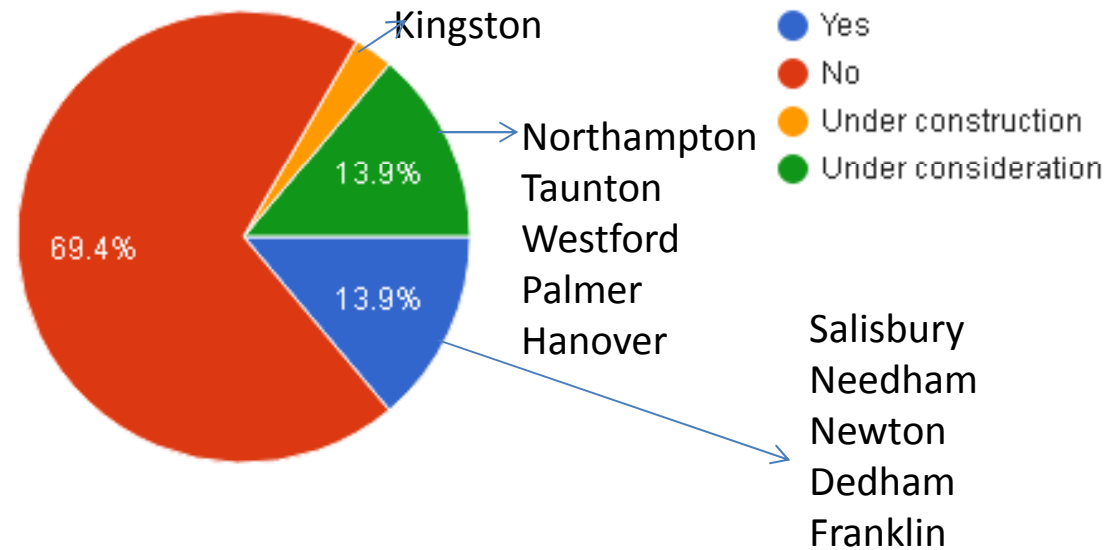
# Enforcement

- 21 communities have signage
- 8 communities have staff patrols
- 2 communities have volunteer patrols
- 4 communities issue tickets
- Other mechanisms
  - 2 animal control officer/dog officer handles complaints
  - Police enforce
- Remainder: No regs, or no enforcement mechanism



# Dog Parks

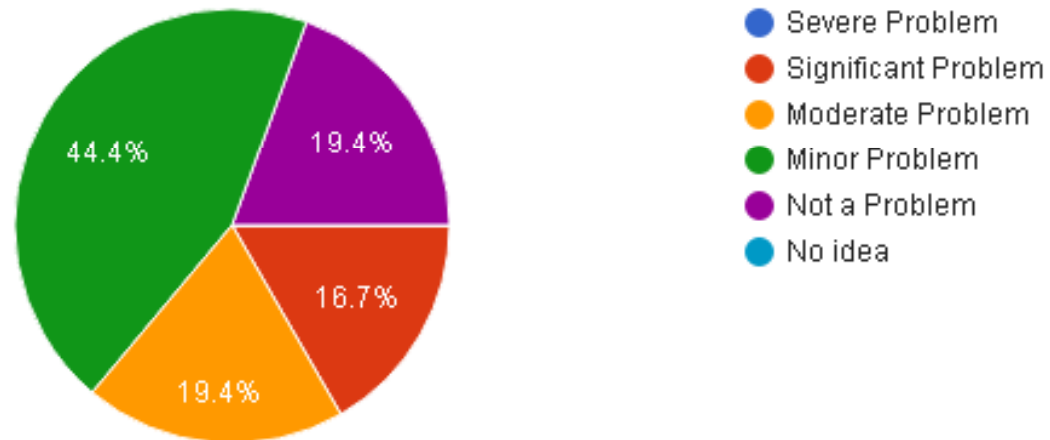
Do you have a formal dog park in your community? (36 responses)



# How big an issue are dogs?

How much of a problem (from your perspective) are dog-related user conflicts on your conservation land?

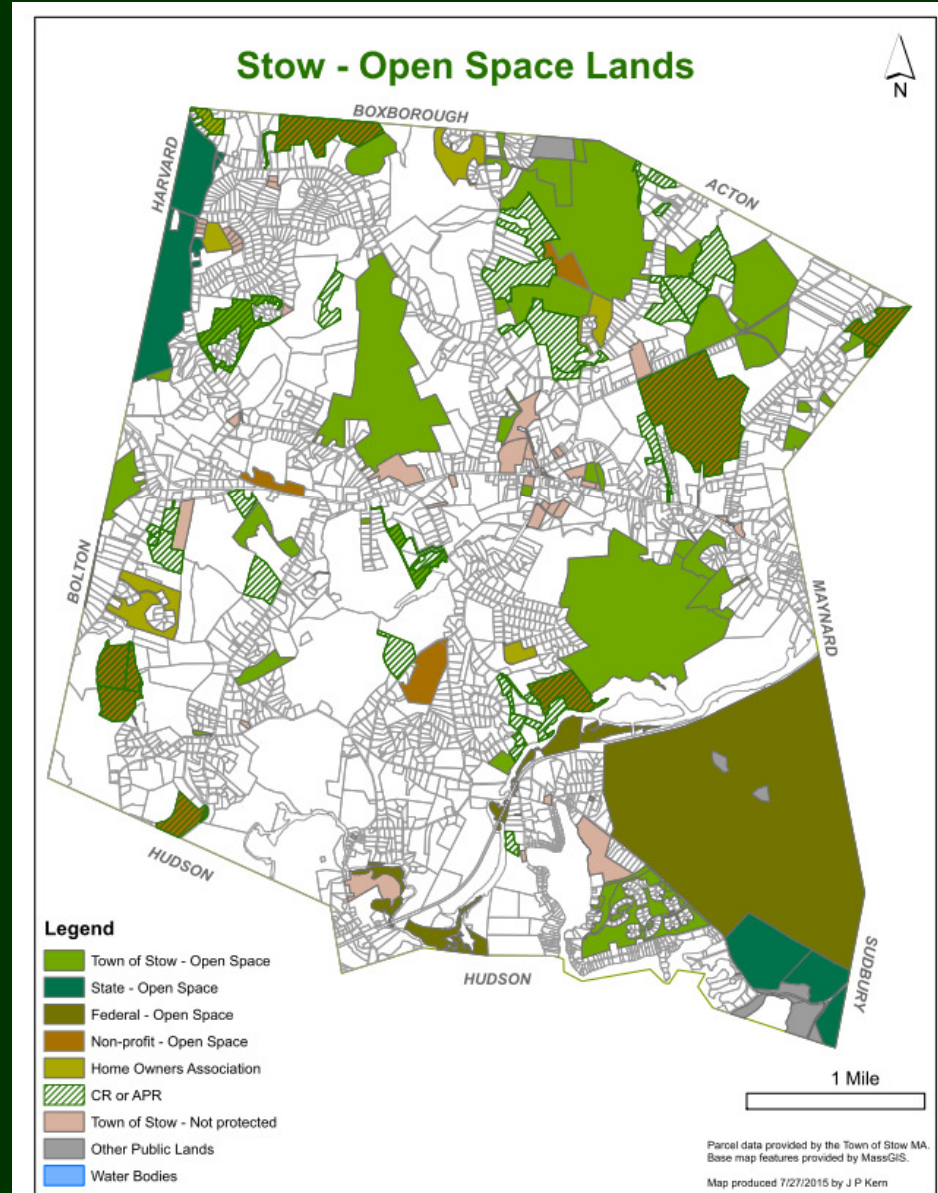
(36 responses)





# Stow's Open Space & Conservation Land

- ~4,000 Acres of Protected Land
  - ~1,400 Acres of Town Conservation Land, 6 conservation areas with trails
  - Assabet River NWR (federal)
  - Delaney WMA (state)
  - Land trust properties
  - 760 Acres Under CR/APR
- Trails interconnect among ownerships including private trail easements
- Variety of regulations on dogs
- Conservation Coordinator, p/t assistant, p/t steward
- Active support of Stow PD & ACO
- No townwide leash law



# Conservation Land Regulations – Adopted in 2016

## Dogs:

- All dogs must be leashed at all times in the following locations: Flagg Hill, Heath Hen Meadow Brook, all parking lots, agricultural fields, and community gardens.
- At other areas, dogs that reliably respond to verbal commands may be off leash within sight of owner/keeper. A leash must be carried for each dog, and dogs must be held or leashed when encountering others on the trail. *Please be courteous, off leash walking is a privilege.*
- No more than two dogs may be walked at once per adult.
- Owners are responsible for removing dog waste from all properties. Do not leave poop bags behind.



## STOW CONSERVATION LAND REGULATIONS

Stow's Conservation Land is permanently protected by the Town and managed by the Stow Conservation Commission. It provides wildlife habitat, groundwater recharge, passive recreational opportunities, and many other community benefits.

These regulations have been adopted by the Stow Conservation Commission for all town-owned Conservation Areas. The regulations are designed to preserve natural resource values, minimize user conflicts, and foster visitor safety. Persons using Town property do so at their own risk and should be aware that properties may be monitored with remote cameras.

Please report suspicious or inappropriate activity, downed trees, or other hazards to the Stow Conservation Department at 978-897-8615 and urgent matters to the Stow Police Department at 978-897-4545.

### PERMITTED ACTIVITIES:

**PASSIVE RECREATION:** Hiking, jogging, cross-country skiing, snowshoeing, photography, nature study, picnicking, fishing (as permitted by state law).



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- No more than two dogs may be walked at once per adult.
- Owners are responsible for removing dog waste from all properties. Do not leave poop bags behind.



### BICYCLES:

- Restricted to colored, marked trails at all areas and must yield to other trail users including pedestrians and horseback riders.
- Trails may be closed during wet or muddy seasons.
- Riders are advised that trails are maintained for pedestrian use and hazards may be present.



### HORSES:

- Restricted to colored, marked trails at all areas. Horses are not permitted on wooden bridges and boardwalks.
- Trails may be closed during wet or muddy seasons. Riders must yield to pedestrians.
- Riders are advised that trails are maintained for pedestrian use and hazards (including overhead clearance) may be present.



### PROHIBITED ACTIVITIES:

- Hunting, trapping, and target shooting or carrying firearms/bows/traps for such purposes.
- Camping and campfires, except for organized groups with a permit.
- Use or parking of motorized vehicles of any kind (cars, trucks, snowmobiles, ATVs, motorbikes, remote controlled aircraft, etc.) except in designated parking lots and at community gardens.
- Littering or dumping of any kind including yard waste, leaves, brush and woodpiles. Release of animals.
- Collecting firewood, mushrooms, rocks, plants or animals.
- Use of conservation land, trails, or parking lots after dark (from ½ hour after sunset to ½ hour before sunrise).
- Creating, trimming or marking trails, using chainsaws or performing any other land management work.
- Smoking or use or possession of alcohol or illegal drugs.
- Commercial activities, fee-based programs or events, or organized group activities without a permit.

Individuals violating these regulations may be subject to a fine of up to \$300 per day. For further information or to obtain permits, contact the Stow Conservation Department at 978-897-8615 or [conservation@stow-ma.gov](mailto:conservation@stow-ma.gov).

# Outreach Efforts

- Signage
- Facebook
- Flyer to Dog License Holders
- Direct Interactions with Users
- Letter to all Commercial Dog Walkers
- As Needed Letters to Violators

**ALL PETS  
MUST BE  
ON A LEASH**



**PLEASE CLEAN UP  
AFTER YOUR PET**

SmartSign.com • 800-952-1457 • K-1187

# Kiosks



# The **SCOOP** on **POOP**

Why you should clean up after your dog

- Pet waste does not just “decompose” - it adds harmful nutrients and bacteria to the environment
- Pet waste releases nutrients which cause excessive growth of algae and weeds making water murky, green, and smelly
- Pet waste can also spread disease to humans, wildlife, and other pets

Please be sure to pick up after your dog  
even when your dog is off leash

Please bring dog waste out with you and  
do not leave poop bags on the trail



**Stow Conservation Department**

Published by Kathy Sferra [?]

Like This Page · February 1, 2016 ·

Today's poop bag wall of shame. Did the person who used a leaf to camouflage this bright pink bag left sitting on the stone wall at the Captain Sargent parking lot think that it would not be noticed? At the risk of repeating ourselves...your dog's poop belongs to YOU. Please take it home and dispose of it there... and thank you!

Tag Photo

Add Location

Edit



# Commercial Dog Walking



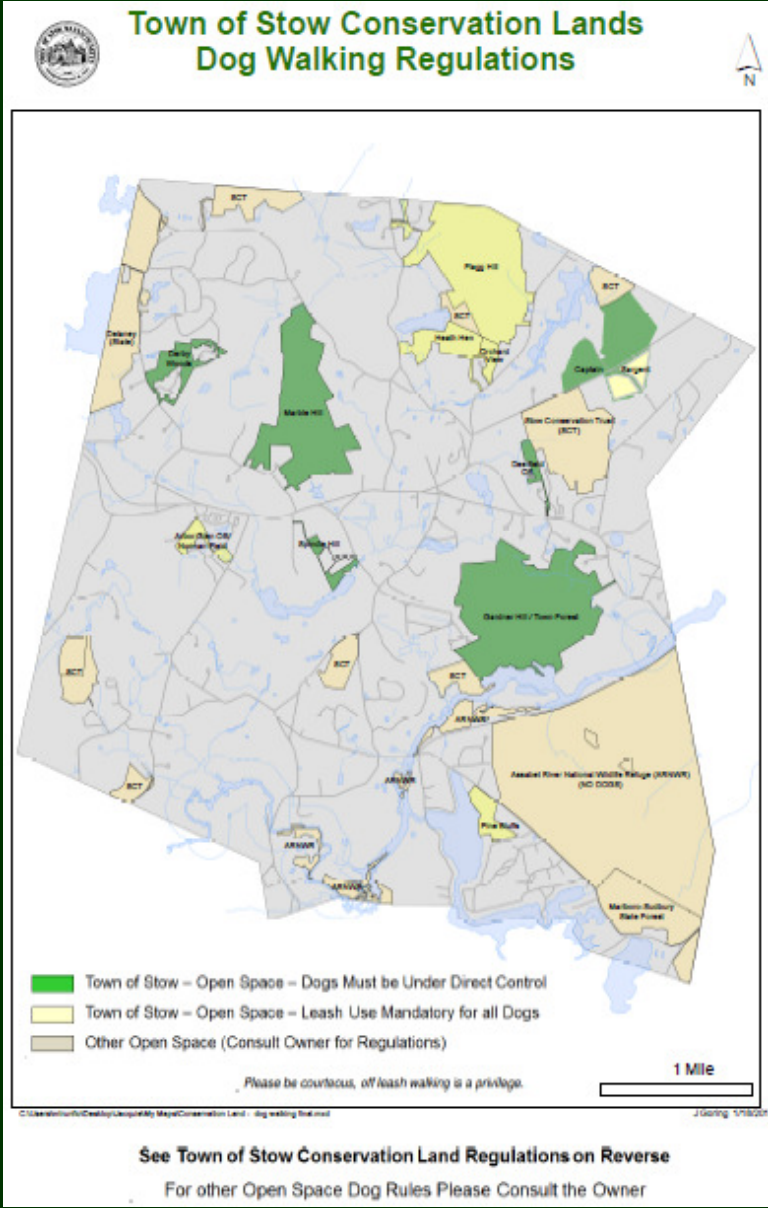
Dear Stow Area Dog Walker:

Here at the Stow Conservation Commission we love dogs and their human companions. And we also have a responsibility to manage a wide variety of uses on Town Conservation land in a manner that is designed to minimize conflicts among users.

In April 2013, in response to numerous complaints, the Commission amended its conservation land rules and regulations to make clear that commercial dog walking is prohibited at Stow's Town Forest



# Dog Walking Regulations Flyer – Supplied with Dog Licenses



# Direct Interactions with Users



Stow Conservation Commission

**REMINDER**

of

**Stow Conservation Land Rules and Regulations**

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Vehicle Description: \_\_\_\_\_ Plate #: \_\_\_\_\_

Location: Stow Town Forest

There is no

# Poop Fairy

BE A GOOD DOG OWNER AND:

- Remove dog poop from trails
- IF you bag it, take it home

Thank You.



# Concord Unleashed



JANUARY 19, 2018

## Public Letter to the Town Manager and Select Board

Dear Chris and Members of the Select Board,

Concord dog owners have been trying to work with the NRC, have been shut out. With its vote to require leashes at Punkat NRC has alienated, angered and disappointed the segment of community most motivated to help in efforts to maintain our wild places. The 1100 plus citizens who have expressed opposition to the NRC's position include nature enthusiasts, environmental activists, conservation writers, young men like Watts (Age 11, whose letter of protest appeared in the Journal photographers, transcendentalists, and health-conscious individuals. Daily, we visit conservation land to walk with our off-leash dogs in town, regardless of weather. We work extensively with the NRC on other issues like combating invasives and providing trail stewardship. We financially support the Town's efforts to acquire additional conservation lands. We know and love the area's natural history and are motivated to help the NRC create a community-driven effort to support those outlying dog owners who are not respectful of conservation and other visitors to it.



# Dog leash regs for MassWildlife land spark debate



Mr. Oestreicher said he had a vested interest in the proposed regulations as someone who uses the property for his business and profits from it.

“There are not enough places in our state where people can take our dogs off leash, and I’m asking that WMAs be made exclusively available to dogs that are off leash,” he said.

Judy Palken of Northboro emphasized the health benefits for both dog owners and dogs for off-leash use, particularly at the MacCallum area.

“Having a dog on a leash is not the same as an unleashed dog. Maybe wildlife management needs to re-evaluate its mission for non-hunters, who have every bit as much right to the land,” Ms. Palken said.

# Big Picture Considerations

- What are you trying to protect? What impacts will dogs have?
- Who are your users? What potential conflicts are there with dogs?
- What is the bigger community picture? Do people who want to take dogs off-leash have a place to go? Do people who fear dogs have a place to go? How do we provide for a diversity of experience?
- As you change rules in one place, how will other places be affected?
- How will you engage the public in these decisions (never underestimate the passion of “dog people”)

