



Environmental Management Plan

for

walkers accompanied by dogs in the

Table Mountain National Park

Table Mountain National Park & the Mountain Bike Working Group

March 2002

The Table Mountain National Park was formerly the Cape Peninsula National Park

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# Introduction

This Environmental Management Program (EMP) has been compiled by Friends of the Dog Walkers (FDW) in consultation with Management of the Cape Peninsula National Park (CPNP). The EMP has been developed as a result of initial discussions held during the formulation of the Conservation Development Framework (CDF) for the Cape Peninsula National Park in March 2001.

## Background to walking with dogs in the CPNP

**The Cape Peninsula National Park** was established in May 1998 as one of the National Parks managed by South African National Parks (SANP). It encompasses much of the undeveloped publicly owned land on the Cape Peninsula. The CPNP is recognized as being unique in South Africa in that it is surrounded by suburbia with a large population who has traditionally used the Peninsula Mountain Chain as a green lung and leisure area. It is a park with exceptional global biodiversity and scenic qualities but it is a park that needs to be managed for the enjoyment of the people of South Africa, foreign tourists and, in particular, the citizens of Cape Town, without compromising its ecological integrity<sup>1</sup>. The Park has initiated a process in which recreational user groups are encouraged to formulate an Environmental Management Program (EMP) and Code of Conduct (CoC) to control and mitigate the environmental impacts of the respective recreational activities. To date, an EMP and CoC have been formalized for mountain cycling and sport climbing. It is envisaged that all recreational activities being undertaken in the Park will be regulated through an EMP and CoC that is collaboratively developed by the Park, the user group and other affected stakeholders.

**Friends of the Dog Walkers** (FDW) are a group of local citizens who approached Park Management with a view to opening discussions on the issue of reasonable rights of access to the Park areas for dogs accompanied by their owners or handlers<sup>2</sup>. FDW are not an elected body, but have obtained a mandate from interested persons to negotiate with CPNP. Their primary objective is to represent and protect the interests of the dog owning community while respecting the environment and the needs of other interest groups. FDW will offer education to dog owners, other Park users and Park employees as well as to act as a liaison between dog owners and Park Management.

FDW working group comprise the following members: Val Bennett, Phyllis Carter, Carol de Gendt, Geraldine Goncalves, Roy Joynt, Neil van der Spuy and Chris Walker. They can be contacted at [allweath@iafrica.com](mailto:allweath@iafrica.com) or [library@elru.co.za](mailto:library@elru.co.za) (ph: 021-671-7451 or 021-671-9689 / fax: 674-2283). The SA Kennel Union is also represented through the FDW membership.

FDW have undertaken an extensive review of conditions and restrictions pertaining to domestic dogs entering into nature reserves and parks worldwide.

## Dogs in the Park area

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<sup>1</sup> CDF 3.2.ii, p20

<sup>2</sup> As envisaged in *CPNP Management Policy 2000*, Theme 6: Visitor Management Objective 6b, p22.

With the change from rural communities to suburban, the emphasis has moved from using dogs for hunting to dog ownership for companionship and security. FDW represent those people who walk for leisure and not any groups who may presently be using lurchers<sup>1</sup> to hunt illegally in the Park area.

A comprehensive visitor survey conducted by the Cape Peninsula National Park during 1999-2000 indicated that some 78 000 dog-owners use the Park for recreational dog walking (see extract of summary table below) with the most popular destinations for dog walking including Newlands Forest (60% of users), Cecilia Forest (49%), Constantia Nek (39%), Silvermine south (35%), Noordhoek beach (31%), van Riebeeck Park (28%) and Scarborough beach (19%).

Question / section	High use sites (10)	Medium use sites (11)	Low use sites (41)	Sample total (69 sites)	Comment
<b>Dogs present:</b>	17%	24%	29%	All: 15%	Walking with dogs considered important for personal safety; higher proportions of women and elderly visitors accompanied by dogs. Proportion of visitors with dogs increased at lower use sites. [Overall, 600 000 visits by dog-walkers per year; conservatively, this represents 78 000 individual dog-walkers]. Dog-walkers most common at Newlands Forest 60%, Cecilia Forest 49%, Constantia Nek 39%, Silvermine south 35%, Noordhoek beach 31%, Van Riebeeck Park 28%, Scarborough beach 19%.
With women				Women-20%	
With men				Men-16%	
With age > 65				Elderly-27%	

**The dog owning community.** There are no available statistics as to the number of dogs in the Cape Metropolitan area but, given the amount of pet products and veterinary services, they form a significant part of our economy. Dog owners comprise a multitude of individuals and families, relatively few of whom belong to kennel clubs and associations. The dogs which walk or run with their owners in city parks and the CPNP tend to be well socialised in that they are accustomed to interacting with strange dogs and people and a number of them have attended dog training.

**"Dog walking" or walking with dogs?**<sup>2</sup> FDW prefer to use the latter expression for the reason that, while dog racing and hunting could accurately be characterized as special activities or sports in the same sense as riding, paragliding or climbing, the walking community represented by FDW do not set out with the *sole* purpose of exercising their dogs. While walking is certainly a leisure activity, dog walking in itself is not. There is no such sport as dog walking and the people who enter the Park with their dogs are an amorphous entity who do not have an interest in forming dog-walking clubs though many walk in groups of friends. Walkers go into the Park for their own exercise and to enjoy the scenic beauty and natural wonders of the Park. Dog owners enjoy the psychological benefits of taking their pets with them as well as being able to exercise their dogs. They may be lone individuals, including especially, women who would not venture into the more remote areas unless accompanied by their dogs or they may be families whose dogs are regarded as valued members and are habitually included in appropriate family outings. FDW have taken the first

<sup>1</sup> Cross-bred hunting dogs

<sup>2</sup> For the sake of brevity, this EMP may occasionally refer to "dog walkers", but the intent is for this term to include the activity of walking with dogs.

step towards uniting these Park users to provide them with an organisation to protect their interests.

Nevertheless, FDW recognise that dog ownership confers special responsibilities in ecologically sensitive areas and where there is contact and potential for conflict with other members of the public.

With the population increasing in the Peninsula there is an accompanying increase in the number of people entering the Park areas for various leisure activities. This Management Program seeks to put forward strategies based on co-operation and consultation for the avoidance of problems arising from the interaction of users of the Park.

### **Negotiations between CPNP and FDW**

In November 2000 CPNP Management published for public comment a draft Conservation Development Framework (CDF). Many citizens of Cape Town perceived this document as proposing restrictions on the traditional access to the Park of dogs with their owners or handlers. During the comments phase, a large number of individuals and organizations voiced their opposition to the possible introduction of new areas where dogs would be prohibited and to the possible requirement that dogs should be walked on leashes.

SANParks responded to these comments as follows:

*"The issue of walking with dogs in the Cape Peninsula National Park has emerged as a significant and complex one in the light of public response to the draft CDF. As can be seen from this report, numerous comments were submitted; some comments were critical of the draft CDF and SANParks, but many provided constructive and useful suggestions as to ways of addressing the issue, in terms of management options for different areas, controls on dog walkers and dogs, a code of conduct, as well as ideas on a way forward.*

*In response to this effort, SANParks commits itself to undertaking a structured public process during this year, dedicated to addressing co-operatively the issue of walking with dogs in the Park. The objective, as required by the CPNP management policy, is to prepare an environmental programme and code of conduct for this popular activity"<sup>1</sup>.*

FDW were mandated by a number of these objectors and other dog owners to negotiate with CPNP Management to pursue the following objectives: - namely that dogs accompanied by their owners/handlers should continue to enjoy access to the Park area.

Park management invited FDW to compile an Environmental Management Program (EMP) and Code of Conduct for walkers who enter the Park with their dogs. Underpinning the formulation of this EMP and Code of Conduct was a principle that minimal regulations are determined by the user group with continuous and uniform enforcement of these regulations by Park management. A draft code was circulated for comment by email among FDW supporters (including the SA Kennel Union); the code was displayed in veterinarians' surgeries; dog owners were invited by means of the media to contact FDW; and animal behaviorists and dog obedience specialists were consulted.

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<sup>1</sup> Comments and Responses Report: Draft CDF or the CPNP. De Villiers Brownlie Associates 22, p60

**Areas from which dogs were excluded prior to the proclamation of the Cape Peninsula National Park.**

These areas were:

*Cape of Good Hope.* FDW are in favour of continued absolute prohibition of dogs into this area which is conveniently fenced on its boundary or bordered by the sea.

*Upper Tokai Forest.* This is an old arboretum and an existing commercial plantation. FDW do not consider that there is any ecological justification for maintaining a prohibition on dogs. The opening of this area for dogs will require monitoring to assess the potential conflicts between baboons and dogs, horse riders and dogs and mountain bikers and dogs. If these conflicts cannot be mitigated, this area may again be closed for dog walking or a more specific area designated for dog walking.

*Orange Kloof.* This area requires a day permit for entry and is not, strictly speaking, a habitual leisure area for the surrounding population. As a result of this restricted access, the management objective of conserving this part of the Park as a remote or semi-wilderness area can be achieved. Consequently, FDW accept that dogs should continue to be prohibited so long as it remains a controlled access area.

*Devils Peak Game Camp.* This fenced off area, which may be expanded, is unsuitable for dogs.

*Areas surrounding dams on Table Mountain used for drinking water.* Dogs were prohibited in this area for health and security reasons. It is envisaged that this area be made available for walking with dogs.

*Klawer valley* – a restricted SANDF area used for weapons testing. This area will remain a restricted access area.

*Kirstenbosch Botanical Garden* – dogs in the garden area are prohibited with dogs in the upper mountainous reaches are required to be leashed. This area is not yet incorporated into the Park.

*Simon's Town catchment area* – Dogs were prohibited in this area for health and security reasons. Access was by permit only. It is envisaged that this area be made available for walking with dogs.

*Boulders* – The area below Willis Walk is a breeding area for penguins and access for dogs to this area is inappropriate. The FDW support the proposal that dogs be leashed when walking along Willis Walk.

# **Section 1**

## **Approach to the Environmental Management Program and Environmental Management Policy**

This EMP is designed to address the needs and requirements of CPNP Management and of the public with regard to the entry of companion dogs with their owners or handlers into the Park area.

Park Management undertakes its tasks in accordance with the National Parks Act 57 of 1976 and regulations made thereunder and in compliance with the management policy of the CPNP which promotes the maintenance of the current open access system to the Park<sup>1</sup>.

FDW seeks to honor the ecological integrity of the Park while fostering the interests of people using the Park to walk with dogs.

CPNP Management and FDW intend, jointly and separately, to address the issues of the environmental impact of dogs in the Park and of possibilities of conflict between dog owners/handlers and other Park users.

The Environmental Management Program envisages an ongoing process of consultation and co-operation between Park Management and FDW and an ongoing evaluation of policy with the objective of minimizing environmental impact.

The challenge for Park management is to ensure that all appropriate leisure pursuits within the Park are undertaken harmoniously, with the minimum of friction and maximum enjoyment for all.

In view of the variety of activities taking place in the Park, FDW and Park Management will seek to foster a culture of tolerance and respect together with a campaign to educate Park users. Specifically, Park users need to be given an understanding as to how to conduct themselves in the presence of people engaging in leisure activities other than their own.

CPNP will, with the assistance of FDW, engage in:

- Continually identifying and assessing the significance of the environmental impact of dogs in the Park;
- Continually monitoring dog-walking activities in the Park to ensure compliance with the code of conduct.

Dog-walkers are required to be constantly aware of the potential impact of taking their dogs into the Park. To this end they are required to commit to the following:

- Minimising the impact of dogs on the geophysical environment, notably erosion and compaction;
- Minimising the impact of their dogs on indigenous fauna and flora;

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<sup>1</sup> *CPNP Management Policy 2000*, theme 7Objective 6 (b) (ii), p22

- Minimising the impact of their dogs on the cultural and historical environment including archeological and paleontological sites;
- Adhering to the Code of Conduct;
- Co-operating with managing authorities and responding to their concerns.

Education of the public will be regarded as the appropriate first strategy to avoid transgressions of regulations and codes of conduct.



## Section 2

### Environmental Impacts and issues

This section provides an overview of the potential environmental impacts of dog walking and proposals for mitigating these impacts are presented. This provides a starting point from which the objectives and targets for management can be set.

The potential impacts that have been identified in relation to activities associated with dogs is presented in Table 1. The status of these potential impacts is also indicated, ie, whether they are positive (P); slight if an appropriate Code of Conduct is followed (S); or negative (N)

**Table 1.** The potential environmental impact of dogs in the Park

Activities	Potential Impact	Status
Arriving at an access point	• Erosion/compaction of area at entry point	N
	• Trampling of, and damage to, indigenous vegetation at entry point	N
Walking with dogs	• Noise	N
	• Conflict with other dogs or users	S
	• Dog faeces	S
	• Litter	S
	• Security for handler	P
	• Experience of other users	S
	• Erosion of footpaths and surrounding area	S
	• Trampling and compaction of indigenous vegetation, notably indigenous forests	N
	• Conflict with other dogs	S
	• Noise	S
	• Presence in Park - report transgressions	P
	• Disturbance of animals and nesting or ground birds	S
	• Dog faeces	S
	• Disturbance of heritage sites	S
	• Litter	S
	• Physical exercise	P
	• Security for handler	P
• Experience of other users	S	

*Impact of dogs on flora in the Park*

FDW will liaise and engage in field trips with Park Area managers to investigate any adverse effects upon indigenous plant life and to design strategies for minimising damage. This may involve re-designing or temporary closure of paths and erection of warning notices in fragile areas.

Temporary closure of particular areas for purposes of establishing or re-establishing new plant growth will periodically be required. In such circumstances, area managers will erect appropriate signs after appropriate consultation with members of FDW, who will, in so far as they have the means, notify dog walkers of the restrictions. FDW will monitor such areas and request that they be reopened once rehabilitation is complete.

*Impact of dogs upon indigenous fauna*

FDW will educate people walking dogs on the dangers emanating from certain animals in the Park, such as snakes, baboons and porcupines and the effects of their dogs on indigenous wildlife.

Park management may impose temporary restrictions or closure around sites where birds are nesting, notably ground nesting birds on beaches.

Compliance with the code regarding prohibition on harassing indigenous fauna will be strictly enforced by CPNP.

## **Section 3**

# **Implementation of the Environmental Management Program**

### *Code of conduct*

The focus of the implementation of this EMP is around a program of education. A principal tool for this education is the “code of conduct” (see Section 4 for code of conduct).

- The codes for all leisure activities should incorporate simple instructions designed to inculcate courtesy and consideration towards other Park users engaged in different activities and to cultivate awareness of the needs and frailties of others.
- Codes of conduct relating to the various activities in the Park should seek to incorporate instructions relating to interaction between other Park users and dogs and their owners.
- All persons taking dogs into the Park will be expected to comply with the Code of Conduct.
- Dogs found to be harassing persons or animals or otherwise transgressing the code of conduct may be deemed not to be under control of the handler.

### *Go Green card*

CPNP has proposed that all leisure activities will require possession of a Green Card endorsed for whatever activity has been applied for and applicants will be required to familiarize themselves with the contents of the relevant code. The FDW endorses this proposal if it is applied equitably across all leisure activities within the Park, including walking without dogs. The current Go Green Card system will be used to regulate walkers in the Park accompanied by dogs. This card currently costs R145 per family or R75 per individual for a full year access to the CPNP. A 50% discounted rate applies for all pensioners. All walkers accompanied by dogs will be required to acquire a Go Green Card as a pre-requisite for using the Park for the purposes of dog walking. Go Green Card holders will also retain all the normal benefits of the card. Current Go Green Card holders will simply have their current card endorsed for walking with dogs in the Park. On acquiring a Go Green Card, walkers accompanied by dogs in the Park will be required to read and sign the Code of Conduct. This signed copy will be kept on file by CPNP management and a copy provided to the applicant, on request. Dog walkers will be required to produce the Go Green Card to CPNP staff, on request, when accessing any part of the Park for walking with dogs. Any dog walker not able to produce their Go Green Card may be requested to leave the Park and/or face a warning or fine. Dog walkers will be required to have the card with them at all times when using the Park. The Park will investigate the feasibility of introducing a Go Green Card disc for dog collars as an optional extra for dog walkers unable to carry a Go Green Card on their person. A shorter-term (one month) Go Green Card is being considered for out of town visitors or infrequent dog walkers.

### *Correction and enforcement*

The Go Green Card provides CPNP management with an effective enforcement tool, as the identity of the dog walker will be known and the dog walker has agreed to abide by the code of conduct as a pre-requisite to acquiring the endorsed Go Green card. A variety of enforcement options are available. These will include:

- Park rangers can issue a warning to a particular dog walker disobeying the Code of Conduct.
- A fine can be issued.
- Immediate confiscation or revocation of the Go Green Card is also possible in certain circumstances.
- The individual may be requested to leave the CPNP.

#### *Education and information*

- FDW will offer education on dog behaviour and handling of dogs for Park employees who operate in the field
- FDW will continue to provide education on dog handling, continue to interact with other Park users on behalf of walkers accompanied by dogs and continue to apprise walkers of areas that, for environmental reasons, should temporarily be avoided.
- FDW undertake to publicize the concept of the endorsement of Green cards among dog owners using the Park and to undertake and maintain a program of education for dog owners.

#### *Relationship between, and responsibilities of, the Park and FDW*

- CPNP will consult with FDW when formulating new rules and regulations that affect dogs in the Park
- Correction and enforcement of the code of conduct is the CPNP management responsibility.
- Members of FDW will be assigned to liaise with each area manager.
- Meetings between FDW and Park management will be held every six months (or as required) to discuss any issues relating to dogs in the Park.
- FDW will be consulted (level of consultation dependant on scale and nature of closure) before the imposition of any new restrictions, such as temporary closure of areas, which affect walking with dogs in the Park.
- Dog handlers will take personal responsibility for their dogs.
- CPNP will provide receptacles for depositing dog faeces at well-used entry points to the Park.
- Park staff will record all warnings and fines for transgressions of this EMP.
- CPNP will provide FDW with a database of permit holders with permits endorsed for dogs.

#### *Signage*

Signs incorporating restrictions relating to dogs will be erected by CPNP to inform walkers accompanied by dogs of prevailing management restrictions and the code of conduct. All signage is to include Park contact details.

#### *Public process of EMP*

- CPNP Management undertakes to publicize the concept of the endorsement of Green Cards and to facilitate a public participation program to obtain the support of Park users.
- CPNP will formally advertise the EMP for public comment and post this EMP on their website.

- FDW will maintain a list of email addresses of dog owners and will send regular information updates to these addresses.
- Kennel clubs and associations in the Cape Metropolitan area will be notified by FDW about the implementation of the EMP.

*Limitation of number of dogs per person*

- The issue of the Go Green card to dog walkers will be for a maximum of 2 dogs per handler
- Any dog handler wishing to walk more than 2 dogs must specifically state the number on the Go Green Card application, up to a maximum of 4 dogs. This permission will automatically be granted.
- Should any dog handler, with permission to walk more than 2 dogs (to a maximum of 4), be considered by Park management to be unable to control these dogs in terms of the Code of Conduct requirements, this permission will be rescinded and the default number of a maximum of 2 dogs will apply to this dog handler. This condition will be strictly applied.
- Dog handlers wishing to walk more than 4 dogs in the Park must provide a strong rationale and motivation to the Park before this permission, with conditions, is to be granted.

## **Section 4**

### **Code of conduct for dog walking in the CPNP**

1. Dogs must be under VOICE or other signal control at all times<sup>1</sup>.
2. Dog handlers must always carry a leash.
3. Dogs must be leashed:-
  - i) If the handler is unable to control the dog or if it is vicious or otherwise dangerous.
  - ii) While passing through any demarcated area.
  - iii) At the start of a walk, through car parks and at access points.
  - iv) While passing through a picnic and/or braai sites.
  - v) When the handler sees indigenous wild life.
  - vi) On reasonable request by other Park users.
  - vii) Upon instruction from a Park official.
4. Dog handlers must be aware that not everyone is familiar with dogs. They must have control of their dogs at all times and not allow them to interfere with the pleasure of others using the Park.
5. When meeting a leashed dog, the handler of the unleashed dog should provide space for both dogs to pass without incident.
6. Unleashed dogs must be discouraged from running up to leashed dogs. Vicious dogs must be muzzled, on request from a Park official.
7. Give right of way to people unaccompanied by dogs.
8. Dog handlers must be responsible for removing their dog's faeces from paths, car parks and any other areas used by pedestrians. Faeces should preferably be removed or deposited in bins, where provided.
9. Bitches in heat may not be walked in the Park.
10. Dog handlers must ensure that their dogs do not chase or injure wild life.
11. Park notices must be complied with.
12. No more than two dogs per person may be taken into the Park except by special permission from CPNP.
13. Dog handlers are to remain on Park-approved paths and tracks at all times. No new paths may be created and no shortcuts are to be taken.

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<sup>1</sup> *Dogs transgressing provisions of the Code may be deemed not to be under control.*

## **Section 5**

### **Areas where dogs are prohibited**

*Dogs are not permitted in the following areas:*

- Cape of Good Hope section (fenced area)
- Orange Kloof (valley bounded by escarpment)
- Rhodes Estate Game Camp (fenced area)
- Boulders (area below Willis walk)
- Kirstenbosch Garden (as designated by NBI)
- Klawer Valley Restricted Military Area (as designated by SANDF)

*Future incorporation of land into the CPNP including the seashore*

FDW will be consulted should CPNP contemplate imposing restrictions upon entry of dogs into newly incorporated areas.

## **Section 6**

### **The way forward**

- 6.1 This is considered a binding “contractual” document between Park management and dog walkers to facilitate responsible dog walking in the Park.
- 6.2 The EMP implementation is to be phased-in over a period of four months (May 2002 - August 2002) during which the FDW and the Park will inform dog handlers of their responsibilities in terms of this EMP.
- 6.3 The dog walking EMP will hence be effectively enforced from September 1, 2002. All dog handlers must have purchased a GoGreen Card by September 1, 2002 to walk with dogs in the Cape Peninsula National Park.
- 6.4 This EMP will be integrated into the CPNP ISO-14001 compliant Environmental Management System (EMS) as an editable, dynamic and adaptive document. All changes to this document will be document controlled through the EMS which is currently driven by the ISO-compliant document management software ZIZO (zoon-in-zoom-out) and remotely served to all Park management staff. The data indicating the geographic extent of the areas closed for dog walking will be integrated into the Parks GIS-based Information Management System (IMS). All changes will be maintained on this IMS and served to staff through the ARCIMS interface developed for the Park.
- 6.5 The Park will initiate changes to signage for areas under its management control, use its marketing program to communicate this EMP, initiate a mechanism for endorsement of the Go Green card, provide bins for dog faeces, maintain the trails under its management control and enforce this EMP.
- 6.6 The FDW will communicate the implications of this EMP to all their members and the general dog walking fraternity.