

Bainbridge Island Metropolitan Park
& Recreation District

Board of Commissioners Statement on Off-leash Dogs
October 23, 2014

First and foremost, the public health and safety of citizens using our parks is of primary importance.

Off-leash dogs continue to cause the following problems in our parks:

- Off-leash dogs often startle park users.
- Off-leash dogs at times injure park users and park staff.
- People with a fear of off-leash dogs are often afraid to use parks.
- Off-leash dogs at times harass, injure or even kill wildlife.
- Owners may be less likely to pick up fecal matter left by their off-leash dogs, especially those dogs that are out of sight of their owner.
- Off-leash dogs at times cause problems for owners of on-leash dogs in the parks.

Off-leash dogs continue to pose these problems despite the fact that citizens may walk their dogs on-leash in any Park District park and exercise their dogs off-leash in our established Off-Leash Dog Parks.

The Park District instituted its leash requirement in 1972 and reaffirmed the leash rule in 2010 as part of a review of its policy manual.

The City of Bainbridge Island ordinances related to Animal Control and City Parks are not consistent with Park District rules related to leash requirements.

BIMPRD once again reaffirms its requirement that all dogs must be kept on a leash except when in a designated off-leash dog area.

BIMPRD requests that the City of Bainbridge Island amend its Municipal Code to state that it is illegal to allow a dog off-leash on BIMPRD property except in established off-leash dog areas, enforceable by a fine as set out in the COBI Municipal Code.