








Key Messages for Hiking with Your Dog

Summit County, Colorado



Travel Requirements

-  Keeping dogs safe and in control allows for a great recreational experience and protects your dog from backcountry hazards.
-  Dogs are required to be under control at all times in Summit County. In national forest Wilderness areas and campgrounds, dogs are required to be on a leash. In the rest of the county, dogs must be under control within 10 feet of their owners.

Safety

-  Dogs need to be conditioned for hiking. Start off gradually to allow their pads to harden and time to “get in shape.” Depending on the breed, an average-sized dog should be getting a minimum of two 30-minute sessions of running a day.
-  Watch for injury and fatigue. Stay tuned into your dog’s body language and behavior. Check his footpads periodically for tenderness, cracks, or bleeding. If Fido starts dropping behind, he’s tuckered out. Give him rest, water, shade, and food, pronto. After a break, turn back.
-  Owners not planning ahead have placed dogs in dangerous situations. There have been dog rescues on Buffalo Mountain and Quandary for dogs with pad injuries severe enough that they were no longer able to walk out. Potential hazards are numerous and varied and include porcupine quills, toxic heavy metals in water sources, and becoming trapped on steep unstable slopes.
-  Remember to bring enough water for you and your dog. Frequently high peaks do not have a water source and you will need a bowl (or zip lock bag) to make sure Fido is well hydrated.
-  Keep winter hazards in mind. Winter hazards include exhaustion and injury because of deep snow and slick ice. Abrasive snowballs may build up between dog’s toes, so check Fido’s feet often and gently remove the snow.

Resource Protection

-  Year-around, remove dog waste from the trail corridor.
-  Dogs are unnatural predators in wilderness ecosystems. Unleashed dogs harass, injure, and sometimes kill wildlife.

For more information contact:

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Dillon Ranger District
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