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national park service

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NATIONAL PARK SERVICE ANNOUNCES PROCESS FOR PUBLIC INPUT ON DOGWALKING REGULATIONS

Acting on a January recommendation from the Golden Gate National Recreation Area (GGNRA) Citizens Advisory Commission, the National Park Service (NPS) announced today it will take a leadership role in involving the public in a review of dog leash policies in the GGNRA. The process, called Advanced Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (ANPR), has been successfully used to resolve controversies in other agencies. Once our research identified the ANPR option, we sought and received endorsement by NPS headquarters in Washington for its use in the GGNRA.

The ANPR, though detailed, basically outlines different avenues that can be used by the NPS and the public to identify and address controversial park issues. The process involves several steps: publicizing an ANPR, collecting public input through a Federal Register Notice, evaluating that input and determining if there is a need to revise the present regulation requiring dogs on leash. If the need for a revised regulation is established, the park will then engage in a rulemaking process beginning with a notice in the Federal Register of proposed rulemaking seeking further public comment.

"There is a real need for this process," said GGNRA Superintendent Brian O'Neill. "The dogwalking issue has caused heated debate in the Bay Area as well as growing visitor use conflicts in national, state and local parks. The ANPR is a creative opportunity for us to take the lead, bring all the ideas to the table and find a solution that is acceptable to the public at large and consistent with the Park Service mission."

O'Neill said he and local NPS staff will immediately begin taking the next step of providing ANPR briefings to interested groups including the Bay Area Congressional delegation, state and local government officials, the GGNRA Citizens Advisory Commission, and dogwalking, environmental and other interest groups. "We want the word out that there is a solution-oriented process and someone willing to lead it," O'Neill explained.

O'Neill stressed that the local NPS office is not taking a position on what, if any, revision should be made in the existing dogwalking regulation. "That's for the process to decide," he said. "The ANPR process is a clean slate. It allows us to put conflict behind us, invite everyone to the table and open-mindedly pursue a long-term solution. Let us prove we are the region that knows how."

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NEWS FROM . . .

Congresswoman Nancy Pelosi

2457 Rayburn Building, Washington, D.C. 20515 202-225-4965

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"Congresswoman Pelosi commends Park Superintendent Brian O'Neill for his commitment to identifying solutions to balance the interests of those who want to walk their dogs off-leash with those of other Park users and goals.

Today's announcement is an important step in an administrative solution. I hope we will ultimately be able to set-aside space for off-leash dogs in the Golden Gate National Recreation Area, while protecting the environment and creating a welcoming and safe park for other users."

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