

Hiking With Dogs

The basics for hiking with your four legged friends



***As a hiker, you are responsible for your own actions.
As a dog owner, you have an added responsibility: your dog's actions.***

Canine Hiking Trail Etiquette

- Hikers should keep dogs on a leash or under strict voice command at all times. Strict voice command means the dog immediately heels, stays at heel, & refrains from barking.
- When dog owners meet any other trail users, dog and owner must yield the right-of-way, stepping well clear of the trail to allow other users to pass without worrying about “getting sniffed.”
- When dog meets horse, the dog owner must first yield the trail. Make sure your dog stays calm, doesn't bark, or move towards the horse. Move well off the trail and stay off the trail with your dog held close to your side until the horse is well past.
- Stay on trails and practice minimum impact. Don't cut switchbacks, take shortcuts, or make new trails. If your destination is off-trail, leave the trail in as direct a manner as possible.
- Obey the rules specific to the trail you're visiting. Many trails are closed to certain types of use, such as hiking with dogs or riding horses. Check with the land manager before you head out on trail.

Ten Essentials for Canines

*You know about the 10 essentials you should always have in your pack.
There are 10 important things any canine hiker should carry with them as well.*

1. **Obedience training.** Before you set foot on a trail, make sure your dog is trained and can be trusted to behave when faced with other hikers, dogs and wildlife.
2. **Doggy backpack.** Let your dog carry her own gear. Check that packs have reflective areas for night hiking, and are padded for a comfortable fit.
3. **Basic canine first-aid kit.** Including: gauze pads and tape in case of cuts, couple of bouillon cubes to encourage the dog to drink if he's getting dehydrated, and antibiotic cream for dressing wounds that might be infected.
4. **Water and bowl.** Don't count on finding water along the trail. Pack enough for the entire day. A good rule of thumb is 3 liters of water for your dog's day hike.
5. **Dog food and treats.** Keep your dog well fed on the trail because she will burn more calories than usual. Bring extra snacks in case you get lost and need to spend the night in the woods.
6. **Leash and collar.** Always carry a leash even if its not required; situations may arise that warrant leashing your dog.
7. **Insect repellent.** Some animals, like people, have negative reactions to DEET-based repellents. So, before leaving home, dab a little DEET-based repellent on a patch of your dog's fur to see if he reacts to it. Be sure to apply in an area where it cannot be licked off. DEET-free repellents that are specifically made for pets are also available.
8. **ID tags and picture identification.** Make sure your dog is properly identified should he become separated from you. Be sure you dog has her tags on and put a photograph of your dog in your pack.
9. **Dog booties.** Booties can be used to keep bandages secure if the dog damages his pads, or to protect against snowballs between the toes that melt, freeze, and cut, causing lameness.
10. **Plastic bags and trowel.** Be courteous, leave the trail as you found it. Pack out your dog's waste in places that require it. On other trails, dig a hole and bury it (200 ft away from the trail and water sources).



Great Hikes With Dogs

Here are a few trail suggestions to get you started.

Talapus Lake This is popular hike for families and dogs alike due in part to its proximity to Seattle and the nice wooded trail that follows a zig zaging creek to Talapus Lake.

Location: Snoqualmie Pass west

Length: 5 miles round trip

High point: 5200 feet

Best hiking time: June - October

Hiking time: 4 hours

Elevation gain: 1120 feet

Fletcher Canyon Though much of the Olympic Peninsula is off limits to dogs, Fletcher Canyon is located within the Colonel Bob Wilderness where you and your furry friend can explore this unique environment.

Location: Olympic Peninsula near Lake Quinault

Length: 3.5 miles RT

High point: 1320 feet

Best hiking time: May through November

Hiking time: 3 hours

Elevation gain: 1029 feet

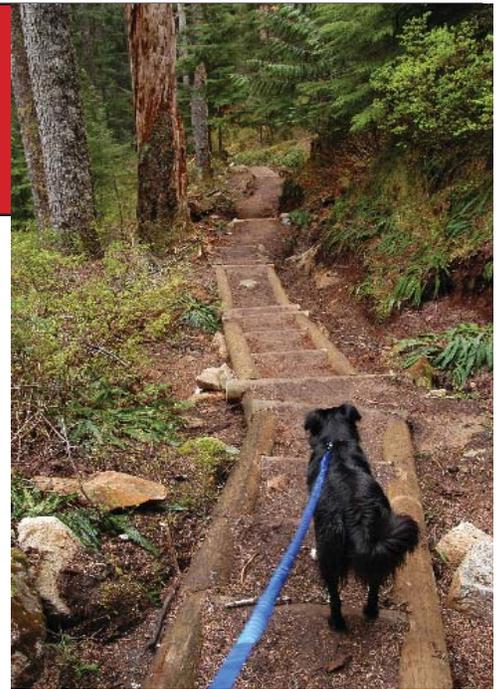


Photo by Alan Bauer

Big Creek Falls This backcountry trail is less than an hour from Seattle. This is a dog-hiker's paradise because it lets human and canine walk side by side much of the way up a broad trail, through ancient cathedral forests and past magnificent waterfalls.

Location: Snoqualmie Pass west

Length: 10 miles RT

High point: 1750 feet

Best hiking time: year-round

Hiking time: 6 hours

Elevation gain: 700 feet

Noble Knob Enjoy meadows punctuated with stunning horizons capped by the snow-clad peak of Mount Rainier. Add in a large resident herd of elk; some pretty, doe-eyed mule deer; and a few hundred birds.

Location: Near Enumclaw

Length: 7 miles RT

High point: 6011 feet

Best hiking time: July through early October

Hiking time: 5 hours

Elevation gain: 500 feet



Waptus Lake This trail makes a great three day trip.

Trail highlights include old growth forest, a beautiful waterfall and some challenging creek crossings during high water.

Location: Near Cle Elum

Length: 16 miles RT to Waptus and 27 miles RT to Spade Lake

Hiking time: 2-3 days

High point: 3000 feet

Best hiking time: mid-July through late September

Elevation gain: 600 feet

Washington Trails Association

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