

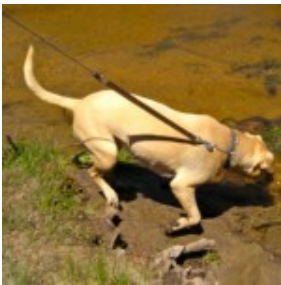
Seasonal dog ban intact for Upper Truckee Marsh

By Kathryn Reed

Dogs are allowed in the Upper Truckee Marsh area – for now.

Unless the California Tahoe Conservancy board suspends the summer seasonal ban, it will remain in effect indefinitely. For now, that appears to be what will happen.

Blame it on locals.



Dogs like AJ are allowed in the Upper Truckee Marsh area if on leash.

Photo/LTN file

“Eighty-five percent of citations and warnings issued by law enforcement were issued to local residents, with local being defined as a resident in the South Lake Tahoe-Stateline area,” Dana Dapolito, associate environmental planner with the CTC, told the board last week.

The Conservancy owns the 311 acres in South Lake Tahoe. Trout Creek, which flows into Lake Tahoe, runs through the property. This is prime habitat for wildlife, mainly birds.

Dogs off-leash are the problem. They ruin habitat, destroy nests, kill birds and stress out the birds. To protect the area, the CTC board in July 2010 approved the temporary dog ban from May 1-July 31.

While this has caused much controversy with people in the Al Tahoe neighborhood and others who access the land, no one from the public spoke at the meeting.

With winter lingering into June this year, about six weeks of data was collected. In that time period, El Dorado County sheriff's deputies issued 86 warnings or citations and the county's Animal Control officers handed out 21 citations.

Even though dogs are now allowed to be on the property, all must be on leash. That is not happening, according to Dapolito.

She told the board that in August the agency's land stewards said 75 percent of dog walkers were complying with the law, with locals accounting for nearly 100 percent of those violating the rule.

The Conservancy wants multiple years of data on avian counts in the marsh and to study shorebirds to know if fewer (ideally no) dogs in the habitat area help the birds. About three years is also the time period law enforcement says it takes to change human behavior – as in following the rules or going elsewhere.

This was an informational item for the board, with no action proposed.