



Parks and Recreation Department
City of Bellingham

MEMORANDUM

To: Parks and Recreation Advisory Board Members
From: Steve Janiszewski, Park Operations Manager
Subject: Proposed Dog Off Leash Changes – Bloedel Donovan Park
Date: December 9, 2024

The Park Operations Division is requesting a change in how the dog off leash hours are managed at Bloedel Donovan Park. Currently, dogs are allowed off leash from 6:00 AM – 10:00 AM. Over the past few years, we have seen an uptick in the amount of dog owners that are using the park throughout the entire year. In 2023-2024, the park sustained a substantial amount of turf damage due to the very wet and soggy conditions combined with the increased amount of dogs using the park each day.

It is important to also note that there is an extensive stormwater facility located underground and on the surface of the turf that includes filters, drains, pervious walkway, open lawn areas, and inlets that helps to clean runoff flowing into Lake Whatcom. Increased foot traffic has a detrimental impact on the stormwater filtering.

To protect the turf, stormwater system, and water quality of Lake Whatcom, we are proposing to restrict dogs from access to the park turf areas on the north side of the park from October 1 through May 31 and direct them to the open field south of the parking lot. Access to the beach areas will not be affected.

Park signage will be updated to reflect this change and explain the reasons for the shift in off leash rules.

Map showing the park areas:

