

Dog owners support Cache canine timeout

By Mike Koshmrl | Posted: Wednesday, March 4, 2015 4:30 am

Fido's humans have been naughty, and won't be allowed to venture into the Cache Creek drainage with their pooches in tow for a week later this month.

But rather than pushing back against the Bridger-Teton National Forest's decision to give dogs and their owners a "timeout," Jackson Hole's canine lovers appear to be uniting and recognizing the need for change.

"It's unfortunate that technically we've lost our privilege down at Cache Creek for a week," said Amy Romaine, executive director of PAWS of Jackson Hole. "But I do think it's a necessary call to action.

"I think it's a positive thing that they're doing," she said. "And I do hope that we don't have to see closures in other areas."

The News&Guide did not reach a single dog owner who was genuinely upset with the Forest Service's decision to close Cache Creek and its trails to dogs from March 18 through March 25.

Bridger-Teton officials announced the temporary regulation Monday. It includes a dog closure on the Hagen Trail, Putt-Putt Trail and Cache Creek Sidewalk Trail, and also at the Nelson Drive trailhead and Nelson Hill.

The rule is designed as a call to action for Jackson Hole pet owners and a prompt that something must be done to stem conflicts with wildlife and people. It's also aimed at reducing the volume of doggy doo-doo accumulating in heavily used parts of the forest.

PAWS will be meeting in coming weeks with the Forest Service, other agencies and dog trainers in town to try to devise a solution, Romaine said.

The Bridger-Teton is gathering input through an online survey at SurveyMonkey.com/s/MX28X36.

Some Jackson Hole residents pitched ideas on what to do over social media, including on PAWS and the News&Guide's Facebook pages. Ideas were floated about canine good citizen certifications,



Dog ban at Cache Creek

Dogs such as this weimaraner will be barred from Cache Creek and surrounding trails from March 18 to March 25.

Jackson's pet owners seem to have embraced the Forest Service's "time out" and call to action about uncontrolled canines and plentiful piles of poop.

heavy fines and mandatory leashes.

Lisa Roberston, a founder of Wyoming Untrapped, said dogs that run too far ahead of their owners or far off the trails are not only a hazard to wildlife, they can get caught in traps.

“Our organization has always expressed concern about dogs that are not in sight,” Robertson said. “We have got to change. Your dogs need to be under control.”

Recent monitoring found 70 to 90 dogs on the Cache Creek trail each day, and identified 168 dog poop piles left by owners in a one-month period, according to a Bridger-Teton statement. This winter in areas adjacent to crucial wildlife winter range — which include Putt-Putt Trail and Game Creek Trail — there have been 32 known violations of the leash requirements, the statement said.

The week of the dog closure, Bridger-Teton staff will host a service project to clean up the Cache Creek trailhead and trails. The public event is set for 9 a.m. March 21, a Saturday. Dogs, of course, are not invited.