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| **From:** | Alan Merkle |
| **To:** | TSP comments |
| **Subject:** | Rocky Habitat Management Strategy - Proposed Chapman Point Marine Conservation Area |
| **Date:** | Thursday, April 1, 2021 12:02:05 PM |

I write to comment on the proposed new Chapman Point Marine Conservation Area. My wife and I have been homeowners and part time residents of Cannon Beach for more than 40 years. We have always been in the north beach area and now reside in the Chapman Point neighborhood. We have been accessing Chapman Beach via 7th street as our daily route for beach walks since the time it was a rough gravel " road" barely providing access to a few rustic cabins . We highly value the diversity and richness of the area. Our adult children took their first steps there, our 3 grandchildren now make sandcastles in the same place as their parents.

We are responsible stewards of the area - our daily walks almost always include picking up one or two bags full of trash/plastic bits or other matter harmful to birds.

We have always had well trained dogs and very much enjoy the wide open spaces of the beach for ball chasing, swimming, sniffing the kelp and all other enjoyable adventures. Our children have dogs - and none of our dogs have ever hassled any person or any bird and are not allowed on rocks or in tide pools. Our kids and grandkids are not allowed to climb the rocks either. As most observers of the area would know, high tide now comes all the way to the base of the dune and completely inundates the inlet north of 7th to Chapman point. No birds are "on the beach" when the Tide is in - and in 40 years of walking the area, I have never seen a fledgling walking the beach when the tide is out.

A number of the proposed restrictions are already in place. Fireworks are prohibited. Camping is prohibited - yet they regularly occur. Saying they are prohibited again will not change that behavior - although if some feel restating those restrictions will somehow bring about more compliance - fine.

I strongly recommend against the "dogs on leash only" recommendation. Dogs running up and down the beach is an important part of the beach experience for many, many beach visitors. There is an almost nightly gathering of dog owners "at the bench" at end of 7th for an evening beach walk. Almost none of the dogs stay on leash, none behave inappropriately.

The proposed area of restrictions inappropriately includes the beach in front of the 7th street access trail. Accordingly, the regulation would require all dogs to be on leash down the path at the end of 7th - down the dune - not allowed to go north and must go south - on the beach for some distance, still on leash before being released to run the Beach. That restriction is just way too restrictive. EVERY dog wants to be released at the end of the path, top of the dune, allowed to run down the dune to the beach.

I am sorry to read that one of the proposers has had unpleasant encounters with dogs, being intimidated, observing a dog knock over a photographers tripod, feeling it necessary to carry "dog spray". None of which have anything to do with protecting birds - and already a violation of the requirement that dogs off leash be under voice control. It is also unfortunate she has encountered irresponsible dog owners - however, if they are already irresponsible, putting new restrictions on the 99.9% of responsible dog owners is not an appropriate remedy.

The restrictions of no rock climbing, no drones, no dogs on rocks or in tide pools - all fine and appropriate. No kite flying too close to the rocks also fine. But the boundary as drawn - which again - appears to include the whole beach in front of 7th street access is way over the top. That is one of the most popular areas for families to make "day camp" on the beach with little kids and dogs hanging out for the day (and often flying kites). It is completely inappropriate to severely restrict the use and enjoyment of hundreds of beach goers - for fear that a fledgling might find itself on the beach when unable to fly. By all means protect the nests in the rocks - from everything - but do not restrict use of the beach. Perhaps a "no dogs

off leash” within 10 or 20 ft of the base of the rocks would give a buffer to discourage any dog from getting on the rocks - but declaring a huge portion of the desirable sandy beach area to be off limits to dogs unless on leash is a regulation completely out of balance.  It would seem that the likelihood of the black oyster catcher fledgling  on the beach exposure combined with  irresponsible dog owner event is very rare compared to the thousands of hours of beach time enjoyment by the residents of the north beach and visitors.

In summary - restrict access and use of the rocks and trails that are part of bird habitat - but leave the sandy beach to people and their dogs - and enforce the existing rules that dogs must be under control of their owners. This is the only proper balance that is appropriate.

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