



Outdoor Recreation Network

Promoting dog walking on the National Forest Estate

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The problems with dog walking



“Chased my sheep”

“Raided our picnic”

“Disturbed local wildlife”

“Left poo on the path”

Traditional response to problems: say NO!



DOGS NOT ON A LEAD WILL BE SHOT

NO DOGS IN THE RECREATION GROUND

NO DOG WALKING ALLOWED

THESE LANDS ARE POISONED FOR THE PROTECTION OF ANIMALS

Dog walking: human health benefits

- ✓ Motivation to exercise in all weathers
- ✓ Confidence in the outdoors
- ✓ Daily connection with the environment
- ✓ More social contact with others
- ✓ Enhanced physical and mental health
- ✓ Happier and healthier pets




UK dog walking and land access

- 8m dogs in 24% of homes: children best predictor
- All socio-economic groups
- Dogs on half of all outdoor visits
- National Forest Estate (NFE): 50m visits with dogs pa (EWS)
- 7,000 disabled people relying on assistance dogs
- Active people doing dog sports
- People only walking due to dog



Impact of incremental restrictions

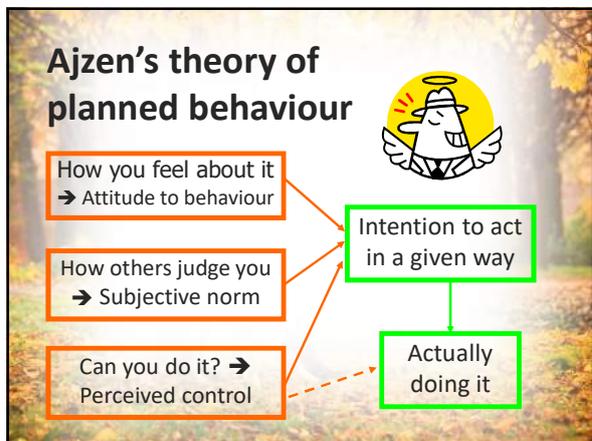
- 28% Walk dog less often
- 17% Less likely to get another dog
- 44% Drive further to walk dog
- 49% Displacement onto farmland
- 41% Displacement to wildlife areas
- Displacement → intensification
- What happens on the NFE has significant implications for all**



Devils
and
angels



Making it easy to
**DO THE
RIGHT
THING**



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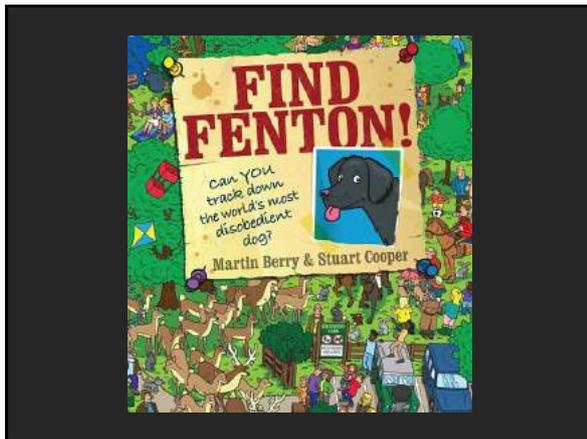
Environmental and social impacts of domestic dog waste in the UK: investigating barriers to behavioural change in dog walkers

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Forestry Commission and Kennel Club Concordat: launched 2005 | renewed 2015

Let your dog take you somewhere interesting...

Walking dogs in the woods

A concordat between
Natural Resources
Wales, Forestry
Commission and
the Kennel Club



Human & dog activity trails: pilot 2008

- Along a route ≥ 1.6 km
- Jumps, tunnels, weaves, log walks and more
- Attracts activity away from sensitive areas
- 60% owners more active
- 36% dogs lost weight / healthier
- Made area more attractive to 78% of dog owners

Image: Nigel Whitfield / FC

www.dogactivitytrail.org.uk

2016 NRW urban regeneration project: community demand for activity trail



Dog-friendly messaging and a positive offering

2016/7 Commercial Dog Walker (CDW) pilot

- CDW keen to add value from responsibility and advocacy
- 97% use car or van: 20 mins travel to walk area
- 78% clients want off-lead exercise at some point
- 58% would pay to walk where others don't go
- FCS pilot to permit drive-in access to quieter areas
- Support from Kennel Club Code of Practice 2017

www.jessthehog.org.uk

Research: less-active dog walkers near Glasgow's 12 Commonwealth Woods

- Investigated behaviours & beliefs of less-active people with dogs
- How can dogs increase walking frequency & duration?
- 300 less-active people with dogs surveyed in 2016 (<150 mins pw)
- 6 focus groups with dog walkers
- In-depth interviews with local vets
- Three funding partners:

Less-active dog walkers: behaviours and beliefs

- Most dogs walked 3x week, once a day, for around 30 mins
- Mostly on-lead walks, along streets close to home
- Less-active people were concerned about broken glass, rubbish and anti-social behaviour in woodlands
- Healthier the dog, healthier the human (self-assessed)

Walks in a week = 3

Walks in a day = 1

Average walk = 36 mins

Less-active dog walkers: some conclusions

- Strong positive beliefs about woodland walks keeping people and dogs fit and healthy
- Need more information to increase regularity of walks
- Vets not routinely talking about walking unless overweight dog
- Vets would promote local woodland walks if reassured about appropriateness

National Forest Estate: Managing dog walking

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graph LR; A[Reducing negative impacts] --> B[Promoting the benefits]; B --> C[One Health for all];
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Reducing negative impacts → Promoting the benefits → One Health for all

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Any questions?

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