



Pets



Pets and their owners can have very special relationships. However, a national park is not always the best place for pets. Rocky Mountain National Park is a designated natural area and its purpose is to preserve and protect the park's natural conditions, scenic beauties and wildlife.

Dogs are predators. Dogs can chase, scare and transmit diseases to wild animals. Dogs leave behind a 'predator' scent typical of all wild canines like coyotes. This scent can linger in the area for long periods of time and can disrupt or alter the behavior of the native animals this park protects. Dogs can bite humans and some people are uncomfortable around dogs; park visitors should be able to enjoy native wildlife in their natural environment without disruption from other people's pets. Pets may dig or trample fragile vegetation. Additionally, park regulations help protect your pet's well-being; your pet could become prey for wildlife, including coyotes, mountain lions, bobcats and owls.

Backcountry Use

PETS ARE PROHIBITED IN ALL AREAS OF ROCKY MOUNTAIN NATIONAL PARK NOT ACCESSIBLE BY MOTOR VEHICLES, including ALL trails and meadows

Frontcountry Use

Pets may accompany you in the following areas of the park:

- Along established roads or in parking areas
- Within established campgrounds and picnic areas

Pets must be kept on leashes no longer than six feet. Pet owners must pick up and dispose of pet excrement in trash receptacles. Pets may not make noise that impacts visitors or wildlife.

When Your Pet is Here

Pet owners have the special responsibility of following park rules for pets. For the safety of your pet and the benefit of the park wildlife and other visitors, pets should not be left unattended. You may not leave your pet unattended in vehicles if it creates a danger to the animal or if the animal becomes a public nuisance. Pets may not be left tied to vehicles, trees or other objects.

Even in the mountains, interior temperatures of vehicles rise quickly and pets left in vehicles can overheat and die. A Stanford University School of Medicine study proved that temperatures inside cars can rise dramatically, even on mild days. A car's interior temperature can increase by an average of 40 degrees within an hour, with 80 percent of that increase in the first 30 minutes. A cracked window provides little relief from the rate of heating nor the final temperature.

Doggy daycare, boarding facilities and veterinary clinics are available in nearby communities.

Physiologically, pets, more than humans, are susceptible to overheating.

Service animals that have been individually trained to perform specific tasks for the benefit of persons with disabilities are allowed in the park. Emotional support ("therapy animals") are not service animals under the Americans with Disabilities Act and may not access trails or other non-motorized areas.

Pet owners violating park regulations will be cited, fined, and/or issued a mandatory appearance before the United States Magistrate Court in Denver.

Leashed pets are permitted on some Rocky Mountain National Park roads when those roads are closed in winter to motor vehicles. Check with a visitor center or call 970-586-1206 for current status.

U. S. Forest Service Options

The Arapaho and Roosevelt National Forest surrounds Rocky Mountain National Park on all sides. All trails in the national forest are open to pets. Some trails require pets to be leashed. *Always check for local conditions.*

USFS Boulder Ranger District, Boulder:	303-541-2500
USFS Canyon Lakes Ranger District, Ft. Collins:	970-295-6700
USFS Sulphur Ranger District, Granby:	970-887-4100
http://www.fs.fed.us/r2/arnf/	

Hiking Alternatives

If pet owners wish to hike with their dogs, many alternatives exist on trails outside Rocky Mountain National Park, including trails in Arapaho and Roosevelt National Forest, multi-use trails around the Town of Estes Park, and Boulder County and Larimer County Open Space areas. Some of these include:

Trail	Trailhead Location	Distance One-Way (or loop)	Brief Description	Dog Etiquette
East of Rocky Mountain National Park				
Buchanan Pass Trail	West end of Camp Dick campground, turnoff at Peaceful Valley, 24 mi south of Estes Park	Red Deer Lake 6.9 mi. Buchanan Pass 9.1 mi	Trail parallels north side of the middle St. Vrain Creek. Many trail intersections.	Dogs must be on leashes no longer than 6'
Crosier Mountain	3 trailheads near Glen Haven	3.9 mi from trailhead in downtown Glen Haven	Panoramic views from summit.	Dogs can be off leash but leashes recommended due to wildlife
Hermit Park	6 miles east of Estes Park on Hwy 36	2.5 miles of existing trail	Great views. Plans to increase trail system. Fee required.	Dogs must be on leashes no longer than 6'
Indian Peaks Wilderness	Brainard Lake, 30 miles south of Estes Park	Various, including Lake Isabelle (2 mi), Blue Lake (2.5 mi), Mt. Audubon (3.75 mi)	Many spectacular lakes and peaks are accessed from this beautiful area. Fee required.	Dogs must be on leashes no longer than 6' in wilderness area
Lake Estes Trail/ Dog Park	Trail has several starting points around the lake	3.75 miles	Hard surfaced trail encircles Lake Estes. Dog park on Community Drive by the lake	Dogs must be on leashes on the trail.
Lily Mountain	Trailhead parking along Hwy 7 6 mi south of Estes Park. This trail is not accessible from Lily Lake.	1.9 mi.	Panoramic views from summit. Elev gain is 1,006'.	Dogs can be off leash but must be under control and not harass wildlife or hikers
Lion Gulch / Homestead Meadows	8 mi east of Estes Park on Hwy 36	3.4 mi	Trail accesses an historic area where eight homesteads were established 1889-1923.	Dogs can be off leash but must be under control and not harass wildlife or hikers
Mud Lake Open Space	1 mi north of Nederland	3 miles of multi-use trails	190 acres of open space. Mud Lake has picnic tables.	Dogs must be on leashes
Rabbit Mountain	2 mi east of Lyons on Hwy. 66	Over 5 miles of multi-use trails	Beautiful views in this transition foothill area.	Dogs must be on leashes
West of Rocky Mountain National Park				
Cascade Mountain, Bowen Pass, Bowen Lake Loop	US Hwy 34 to County Rd. 4. Take Cty Rd 4 for 3 miles. Take the fork to the right, FSR 120, to the North Supply Trailhead	15 mile loop. Bowen Lake is 4 miles one-way from the trailhead.	Trail begins as ATV accessible road. Several small stream crossings. Great views on Blue Ridge Trail.	Dogs must be on leashes no longer than 6' in the wilderness area
Indian Peaks Wilderness Area	U.S. Hwy 34 to County Road 6/ Forest Service Road 125/ Arapaho Bay Road. Follow this road for 10 miles to the Monarch Lake parking area.	Access beautiful lakes and peaks, including the Monarch Lake Loop Trail (4 mi), Crater Lake (7.25 mi - 10,345').	Easy loop around Monarch Lake is popular year-round. The jagged and spectacular Indian Peaks predominate. Fee required.	Dogs must be on leashes no longer than 6' in the wilderness area