

What You Need to Know

Rocky Mountain National Park is a designated natural area. **Its purpose is to protect the wildlife found in the park, and to preserve the natural environment and scenic beauty.**

The park is a wild place. **Regulations are enforced to protect** park resources, you, your pet, and other visitors.



Pets are not allowed in most areas of the park, including on any park trails, tundra or meadow areas, or inside buildings.

There are no exceptions to these pet regulations for carried pets (in arms, carriers, strollers, backpacks, etc.) in the areas where pets are not allowed.

If you violate park regulations, you will be cited, fined and/or issued a mandatory appearance before the United States Magistrate Court in Denver.

Service Animals

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 or therapy animals are not service animals under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and are not allowed on trails or other non-motorized areas.

Why Are Pets Not Allowed in Most Areas of the Park?



Pets Threaten Wildlife Populations.

In national parks, the native wildlife has priority. The mere presence of pets in the park alters wildlife's natural behavior.

Odors left by pets, especially dog urine and feces, prevents wildlife from returning to important habitats. They can also chase, scare, and transmit disease to wildlife.



The Park is a Wild and Dangerous Place for Pets

Your pet could become prey for wildlife like coyotes, mountain lions, bobcats, or Great Horned Owls. Elk and moose are known to attack pets if they feel threatened.



Respect for Other Visitors

Park visitors should be able to enjoy wildlife in their natural environment without disruption from other's pets. Some visitors could be uncomfortable around domesticated animals. Even if your pet follows instructions and is well behaved, others do not know your pet and may feel uneasy when encountering you.

Where Can I Take My Pet?

Pets are only allowed in **picnic areas, parking lots, campgrounds, and along roadsides.** A good rule of thumb is that a pet may go anywhere cars are allowed.



Pets must be on leashes no longer than 6 feet at all times. Check your park map for locations of picnic areas and campgrounds.

- Do not leave your pet unattended in your vehicle if it causes harm to the animal.
- Pets may not be left tied to vehicles, trees, or other objects.



Always pick up after your pet and dispose of their waste in trash bins.

Looking for a place to hike with your pet? There are nearby trails outside the park, including trails in Arapaho and Roosevelt National Forest, multi-use trails around the towns of Estes Park and Grand Lake, and Larimer County Open Space areas.

See reverse side for a list of trails outside Rocky Mountain National Park



National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Rocky Mountain National Park

Pets and Alternative Trail Options



Hiking Options Outside of the Park

East Side (Estes Park)

Trailhead	Location	Trail Distance	Description	Pet Information
Buchanan Pass	24 miles south of Estes Park	Red Deer Lake 13.8 miles Buchanan Pass 18.2 miles	Trail parallels north side of the middle St. Vrain Creek.	Pets must be on leash no longer than 6 feet.
Crosier Mountain (3 trailheads)	7 miles northeast of Estes Park in and around Glen Haven	7.8 miles (from trailhead in downtown Glen Haven)	Summit hike with panoramic views.	Leashes recommended due to wildlife.
Hermit Park	6 miles east of Estes Park	2.5 miles of existing trails	Fee required.	Pets must be on leash no longer than 6 feet.
Brainard Lake	30 miles south of Estes Park in the Indian Peaks Wilderness	Lake Isabelle 4 miles Blue Lake 5 miles Mt. Audubon 7.5 miles	Timed entry and fee required.	Pets must be on leash no longer than 6 feet in Wilderness area.
Lake Estes	In Estes Park. Several starting areas around lake	3.75 mile loop	Paved trail. Dog park access nearby.	Pets must be on leash.
Lily Mountain	6 miles south of Estes Park	3.8 miles	Not accessible from Lily Lake. Steep summit hike with panoramic views.	Dogs may be off leash but must be under voice control and not harass wildlife or hikers.
Homestead Meadows	8 miles east of Estes Park on U.S. Highway 36	6.8 miles	Trail accesses historic area of eight homesteads.	Dogs may be off leash but must be under voice control and not harass wildlife or hikers.

West Side (Grand Lake)

Trailhead	Location	Trail Distance	Description	Pet Information
North Supply Trailhead	9.5 miles northwest of Grand Lake	Bowen Lake 8 miles	Trail begins as ATV-accessible road.	Pets must be on leash no longer than 6 feet in Wilderness area.
Grand Lake Metro Trailhead (Grand Lake Recreation District)	2 miles west of Grand Lake	Colorado River Trail 5.2 miles summer only Winter's Way Dog Trails 5.5 miles winter only		Dogs may be off leash but must be under voice control and not harass wildlife or hikers. In winter, dogs must stay on designated dog trails.
Monarch Lake	20 miles southeast of Grand Lake in the Indian Peaks Wilderness	Monarch Lake Loop 4 miles Crater Lake 14.5 miles	Fee required.	Pets must be on leash no longer than 6 feet in Wilderness area.