



We are responsible for our dogs when they recreate outdoors with us. (Mark Rackay/Special to the Montrose Daily Press)

Tips to keep your dogs safe when roaming outdoors

It seems I read a post on social media, a couple times a week, from someone who lost a dog in the backcountry while out recreating. These kinds of posts really bother me, because I am a dog-lover.

I have a long history with dogs. At one time we had cattle dogs that helped around the ranch controlling the cows. These guys were more workers than pets, but we cared for them just the same.

Later, when I was heavy into duck and goose hunting, a black lab was my companion in the outdoors, along with my ever-present pal, Murphy, of Murphy's Law fame. My Lab and I hunted many fields and rivers together, in search off game.

In law enforcement, we used K9 fur missiles for many operations. When you work every day with a dog like that, then go home together after shift, you become very attached. That K9 is your partner and takes much risk for you, his handler.

For the last 20 years, my wife and I have had a herd of Jack Russell terriers, or terrorist as I call them. My relationship with these dogs is more of an informal basis, and basically, they are our kids. One thing I will say about my Jacks is that they have the uncanny ability to turn 20-dollar bills into lawn fertilizer; still, they're cheaper than children if you include a college education.

Without turning this into an editorial piece, I would like to offer some advice for folks who take their dogs outdoors with them, on hikes, camping trips, fishing trips and just about any other type of recreation. They are our best friends and we should take them with us.

In the United States, it is estimated that 90 million dogs are living with people as pets. I could not find a statistic as to how many households that represents. I did see that 85 million



Tips from the Posse

By Mark Rackay

households own a pet of some sort, and that includes cats, dogs, birds and others. I seriously doubt some person is going to take their goldfish along on a hike, but nothing really surprises me anymore.

The number of dogs has been increasing by about a million dogs a year, for the last 20 years. It is pretty safe to say we have been seeing more dogs out in the woods with their owners.

I was on a hike in the Weminuche Wilderness Area a couple years back and was about 4 miles from the trailhead. It was an extremely hot July day, and humid from the recent rains in the area.

I ran across a young lady, wearing flip-flops, and carrying a water bottle that was empty. She had with her an unleashed dog, obviously suffering heat exhaustion. The lady had no food or water for herself or the dog, and obviously no common sense either.

I watered down the dog with my water and gave some to the lady while advising her to turn back as the trail only worsened from here up. I never really got an answer as to why she was so unprepared, but figured I saved search and rescue from a mission later that day.

If you decide to hit the trails with your pup, start out a visit to the vet. Your dog should be current with vaccinations and preventative medicines. Around town, you probably won't worry about things like your dog drinking water in a stream that an infected animal has contaminated with leptospirosis or giardia. Your vet can also advise you about the safe age for a

dog to hit the trail with you.

Be aware of the trail regulations for the areas you wish to visit. Most U.S. national parks do not allow even a leashed dog to share the trail. National forests, as well as most state and local parks, do allow dogs on their trail systems, but rules vary. Leashes are mandatory just about everywhere.

You have to maintain control of your dog at all times. Have your dog on a leash at all times. Dogs will run off after rabbits, deer, birds and just about anything else that shatters their limited attention span. Letting them run free is what gets dogs killed by other animals and snakes, or just lost. A lost dog in the woods has very little chance of survival.

Having your dog on a leash is not enough. You need to be able to keep your dog calm when other people and their dogs happen by on the trail. This is where some basic obedience training and trail etiquette come into play. There are many terrific trainers in the Montrose area to help get you started.

You still have to clean up the dog waste while in the woods. Some person coming along behind you does not want to step into one of your dogs "land mines," so please be considerate.

I have seen lots of dogs wearing a dog pack. These are a great idea because your pup can carry the waste bags, dog food and some drinks. I really like the pack that has a top handle. You can use the handle to hold your dog close during encounters with other people on the trail and creek crossings.

If your dog is new to the trail hiking, start slowly. Its feet may be accustomed to the shag carpet at home and take a few trips to toughen up the paws. Ease into the hikes and allow your dog's body to get into shape.

Hydration for your dog is best handled by fresh water carried with you. Some owners train their dogs to drink as they pour from the water bottle. I have to carry a bowl for my Jacks because pouring

from the bottle always turns into a disaster, water everywhere and a wet dog. Remember that dogs will require a lot of water, especially in the warmer months. If you are thirsty or hungry, pretty safe bet your dog is, too.

Your leash is the best defense against wild animals. Keep your dog close whenever you encounter an animal in the wild. You don't want to be heading home with a dog that got into a fight with a skunk or a porcupine.

Thorns and burrs can irritate a dog, but foxtails can be very serious. Found on a variety of grasses in the spring and summer, these barbed seedpods can snag on fur and end up between toes, or more sensitive areas like ears and noses. Foxtails can work their way into an organ and be fatal to the dog.

You should carry a first aid kit for you dog, just in case. Your vet can help you with some of the recommended supplies for the area you will be hiking in. If you are down low, in snake country, you may consider an antivenin kit. We carried these kits in Florida where there were almost always venomous snakes present.

Our dogs look to us for all their worldly needs, like food, water, shelter and above all, protection. For the sake of your dogs, don't let them run loose in the woods.

Make sure your little fur missiles come home with you.

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Western Colorado's early archaeologists

This past weekend the Colorado Archaeological Society (CAS) held its annual conference in Montrose. CAS has been around since 1935 and the local Chipeta Chapter formed a few weeks after the state organization was founded.

As a long-time member of the chapter, I was asked to present a brief history of the Chipeta Chapter as part of the conference's morning program. I joined the chapter in 1984 and had learned about the chapter's history from some of the early-day members.

When I joined the chapter, I met one of its charter members, Carlyle (Squint) Moore. Squint and his sister, Ruth had joined the chapter when they were teens. They both had more than a passing interest in archaeology. During their spare time they roamed the hills around their Pea Green home finding a plethora of artifacts and sites.

It was during those forays into the backcountry that they encountered Harold Huscher, a budding archaeologist who had built a small house in Roubideau Canyon, west of Olathe. Huscher eventually went to work for the Denver Museum of Natural History under the auspices of Dr. Marie Wormington.

Huscher and his wife, Betty Holmes, conducted extensive research in west-central Colorado and published their findings "The Hogan Builders of Colorado" in the September 1943 issue of Southwestern Lore.

In the late 1930s Huscher assisted Dr. Wormington with the excavations of the Moore and Casebier Sites near Olathe that Squint and Ruth had brought to Wormington's attention. Those sites became the focus of "Archaeological investigations on the Uncompahgre Plateau" that Wormington co-authored with Robert Lister in 1956.

Squint's knowledge of local archaeology made him an icon in the minds of local avocational and professional archaeologists. In the years following our meeting, Squint participated in every project the chapter organized besides taking chapter members to sites he and Ruth had found so many years ago. In 1997, Squint was awarded CAS' most prestigious honor, the C.T. Hurst Award.

Other chapter members who made major contributions to the early history of the Chipeta Chapter were Dexter Walker and Monte Sanburg. Dex owned the photo shop in town and had a vast collection of black and white photos of the sites he visited. He and Ernest Ronzio accompanied C.T. Hurst on his first visit to Tabeguache Cave.

Monte Sanburg was the president of the Chipeta Chapter when I joined. He had served in that capacity on and off for over 30 years. He also served as state CAS president in 1960. He and Squint had advised Bill Buckles about local sites when he was working on his doctoral dissertation "Ute Prehistory Project." CAS recognized Monte's contributions to Colorado archaeology in 2008 by awarding him the Ivor Hagar Award, CAS's highest honor bestowed on an avocational archaeologist.

During my research into CAS' history the one individual who caught my eye was C.T. Hurst, the primary CAS founder. Hurst was a professor at Western State College in Gunnison. He organized a field school each summer for his students visiting six different sites in the West End of Montrose County between 1939 and 1948. Hurst would report the results of his findings annually in CAS's journal "Southwestern Lore."

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Outdoors

By Bill Harris



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