

Walkin' the Dog in Malabar

By Hans Kemmler – Parks and Recreation Board Member

This is a good time of year to get outside and go walking with a furry friend. There are many places in our town where pets and owners are welcome, and a few locations where dog walking is prohibited. This article will give you an idea where these locations are.

Here are the places where you can walk your dogs in Malabar: Malabar Community Park (by the fire station), Malabar Disc Golf Park, The Sand Hill Trailhead on Marie Street, the Tom Eschenberg Park (Weber Road), Fern Creek Crossing Park (Corey Road) and Huggins Park Johnston Avenue off of Marie Street. The Cameron Preserve, at the north end of Corey, is pet friendly, and stretches all the way north to the boundary canal. Dog walking is also allowed on this E-W path along the canal that borders Palm Bay.

There was a get-together in downtown Melbourne recently, and dozens of dachshunds and their owners showed up. At this event, I learned that a recent study showed that a significant amount of the stuff that is messing up the balance in the Indian River Lagoon comes from pet waste. This alone is a good reason to ALWAYS pick up after your pets, and dispose of their waste in the garbage can. It is not a good idea to use animal waste for fertilizer because

it contains E. coli bacteria that can end up making you sick.

Pets and dog walking are prohibited on EEL (Environmentally Endangered Land) property. This includes the new Al Tuttle Trail. The south end of this trail is at the Sandhill Trailhead, and it runs north, where it meets the east end of the boundary trail. When you drive into Malabar Community Park, you are on Malabar Woods Boulevard. This road, and all the land to the right (east) is EEL property, and the land north, past the gate, is too. EEL property also exists in the extreme NW portion of Malabar, west of the Cameron Preserve.

EEL is tasked with protecting land that has been purchased for preservation. Manager Mike Knight told me there is a problem that is not obvious, but well documented: Most household pets are inoculated against a variety of diseases. When they leave waste, urine or saliva in the wild, the local animals are attracted to it, and end up ingesting some of it. These animals are not inoculated, and they end up getting some of these diseases.

We have way more places where you can walk your dog than not, so get out and have some fun with a four legged friend. It's good for everyone!

SAVING WATER OUTDOORS

By: St. John's River Water Management District

More than half of residential water use occurs outdoors. One of the most important ways to help meet our water supply needs for today and in the future is through conservation, which is the efficient and effective use of water. Watering wisely outside the home promotes healthier lawns and landscapes, and conserves our precious water resources.

Water your lawn only when it needs it. Typically, Florida lawns need water up to two times per week in the spring and summer months, less if it rains. This amount drops to even less in the fall and winter months. Over-watering the lawns can result in shallow root systems, which means that your lawn is less drought and stress tolerant. Over-watering also promotes weed growth, disease and fungus.

Water lawns during the early morning or early evening hours when temperature and wind speed are lowest. This reduces losses from evaporation that can occur during the middle of the day. This also allows the water to seep into the ground to the grass and plant roots, promoting healthier plants with deep root systems. Watering early also reduces the potential for disease development. Become familiar with the watering rules in your area. District rules allow watering only before 10 am or after 4 pm.

For more information regarding saving water outdoors, please visit the website for the St. John's River Water Management District at www.sjr-wmd.com.