

RYE DOGS AT LARGE COMMITTEE MEETING

**Thursday, July 5, 2018
6:00 p.m. – Rye Public Library**

***Members Present:* Chairman Ritchie White, Vice-Chair Mike Garvan, Shawn Joyce, Susan Shepcaro, Kevin Kobylinski, Selectman Phil Winslow and Police Chief Kevin Walsh (arrived 6:28 p.m.)**

I. Call to Order and Pledge of Allegiance

Chairman White called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. and led the Pledge of Allegiance.

II. Approval of Minutes

- **June 20, 2018**

Motion by Phil Winslow to approve the minutes as presented. Seconded by Mike Garvan. All in favor.

III. Additional Dog Control Measures for the Rye Town Forest

Chairman White noted that at the previous meeting there was a motion on the floor that was discussed but did not get seconded. He would like to address that motion. He continued that Member Garvan has provided some great maps for the committee.

Member Garvan noted that resident Lindsay Gray did a lot of work on the maps.

Referring to the motion that was made at the previous meeting, Chairman White stated that it was to require all dogs to be on leashes in the town forest, unless the dog owner paid for a tag and signed rules for having a dog off leash. That was the concept that was being discussed. He asked if anyone is prepared to make a motion in that regard or make it more definitive.

Member Joyce stated the he went on Boulder's website and downloaded their tag program. He also took the requirements of the program and pulled out the things that Rye is not going to require; such as, classes and other things that are not going to apply. *(He submitted a draft of his work to the committee for review.)*

Member Kobylinski asked if Boulder uses a flag or something that hangs off the leash.

Member Joyce stated that he is not sure; however, he did get the contact information for the person who runs the program. Boulder has been doing this program for eight years and it is very successful. There is a committee that meets once per year to update the program and information. There is a huge amount of compliance with the program. He noted that he could call the gentleman who runs the program and ask him if he minds if they use this information. He would also ask him where they get their tags, the costs and other background. The information submitted to the committee is for basic information on what the program looks like and changes can be made for Rye. Someone can come in and get a tag once they receive the rules and sign them. If the person is walking their dog off leash in the Rye woods and there is a problem, the tag is registered for that dog and that person. Someone from another town can also get a tag to walk their dog off leash. His understanding is that Rye can't require licensing for a dog, other than Rye dogs; however, the town can require that anyone who registers has a vaccinated dog. He reiterated that the information he submitted to the committee is just basic information. The program will allow people to walk their dogs if they are registered and receive a copy of the rules. If they violate the program, it is up to the Police Chief on whether the person will be fined or have their tag temporarily revoked.

Referring to the information received, Member Kobylinski asked if "guardian" is inclusive of a business, such as a dog walking business.

Member Joyce commented that if a business has the dogs registered for the tags and they have received the rules, they are following the program.

Member Shepcaro asked how they would be able to register the dog if they were not the owner.

Member Joyce stated that one of the rules could be that it can't be a commercial service.

Selectman Winslow noted that this can be done as long as it is consistent with the general public. Something can't be done for Rye residents that is not offered to anybody else.

Member Shepcaro stated that she still thinks that jumping to tags is a giant step. She thinks they should start with smaller things like certain areas for a leash. Boulder is a city of 150,000 people and is not really comparable to Rye. Boulder has a dog catcher. They do not use the police. She noted that she grew up in Boulder and lived there for many years. It's not the same in any way.

Member Joyce stated that the program is a good framework, whether they have more people or not. The framework itself is something that is needed and it works. Right now, the things that have been done have not had any material effect on control issues. People will still be able to walk their dog off leash if they are registered. It will also allow other people to use the forest without being concerned about a dog jumping on their dog or on them.

Member Kobylinski stated that it seems like a pretty “soft” law. The people just have to come in and read the rules about having a dog in the woods.

Chairman White stated that he would think there would have to be a signature to show that the person has acknowledged that they read all the rules and agree to abide by them.

Member Garvan commented their signature acknowledges that they have received the rules, understand them and are willing to comply.

Chairman White agreed.

Member Joyce noted that people have to renew annually and if there are any changes to the program they will receive the new rules.

Chairman White stated that part of what the committee is trying to give the Selectmen are some ideas on how to get some funding for enforcement. This would be a way of doing that. Obviously, the numbers could be different and worked out between the Selectmen and the Police Chief. He continued that it should be made clear that when they are talking about the Rye Town Forest, they are talking about all the abutting pieces as well. He thinks they are trying to encompass all of that when they are talking about setting up rules and regulations. It would be the parking, the actual entrance from Parsons into the Rye forest, and the entrance from Rye Rec so it is an actual overall piece they are trying to set regulations for.

Member Shepcaro commented that Rye Recreation should be involved in this discussion because they are pretty possessive of their parts of the forest. They should be included if regulations are going to be made on their part.

Chairman White stated that the committee’s role would be to make recommendations to the Selectmen. The Selectmen have the authority to do it on the Rye Rec owned land. The Selectmen would be the ones to determine who else would be involved after the committee makes its recommendations. He continued that in order to solve this problem, they need to come up with recommendations that encompasses the whole area; starting from parking through all the walking trails. He asked the committee if it makes sense, for the areas that encompass the town forest, to have a mandatory leash law with the tag program. The committee can start with that concept and then get into the details of what the program would look like.

Motion by Shawn Joyce that all dogs must be on leashes in the Rye Town Forest and abutting town properties, with the only exception being dogs who are registered to the tag program that allows responsible dog owners to walk their dog off leash. Seconded by Kevin Kobylinski.

Selectman Winslow asked if the motion could be phrased differently.

There was discussion on the wording of the motion. The committee reviewed the definition from the town's prosecutor regarding "voice" and "sight" control.

Modified Motion:

Motion by Shawn Joyce that dogs who are registered in the 'Voice and Sight Control Tag Program' may be allowed off leash in the Rye Town Forest and on abutting town land; all other dogs must be on leash. Seconded by Kevin Kobylinski.

Chairman White opened to the public for comments or questions.

Peter Crawford, Brackett Road, spoke in support of the program. He hopes the whole town will get behind this idea because the community has struggled with this issue for twenty years. The program provides a happy medium that he thinks the average voter will support.

Chairman White stated that if someone is in violation and they lose the ability to walk their dog off leash, it would be pretty powerful and would ensure that a dog owner is going to keep their dog under control.

Robert Vose, Old Beach Road, stated that a lot of talk with his neighbors is about the whole dog situation on the beach and the town forest. One of the comments that always comes up is, "why should 98% of the people who have good dogs that are under control suffer because 2% are not taking responsibility". In reading over the program information, he thinks it looks great and he is very impressed. The committee has been working very hard to come up with some good ideas.

Referring to the program, Member Shepcaro asked if it would be for the beaches as well.

Chairman White noted that the motion is for the town forest.

Member Shepcaro asked if things would be different in other locations.

Chairman White commented that this is where the committee is at right now.

Member Joyce noted that if it works well in the town forest it may be something that could be applied in other areas.

Member Shepcaro commented that this might drive more people to the beach if they can't get the tag.

Mr. Vose stated that there are some great dogs at the beach that really wouldn't comply with that program. The owners take a tennis ball and throw it 100 yards and the dog brings it back. These are good dogs and the owners have control. That all has to be taken into consideration if this is going to apply universally.

Chairman White explained the intent is for the dog to be under voice control. The dog can run as far as a tennis ball can be thrown. When the dog officer asks the owner to call their dog, if the dog comes right back that is fine. This is not saying that the dog can't go a certain distance.

Member Shepcaro asked if there is going to be any other kind of leash restrictions in certain sections of the town forest.

Chairman White replied that this does not exclude any further motions. If there are other motions for something else, that can be discussed at that time.

Member Joyce noted that they are not voting on the program. They are voting on the principal idea of having a program with the details fine-tuned later.

Chairman White asked if there is any opposition to the motion. There was none.

Motion passed by consensus.

Note: *Police Chief Walsh joined the meeting at 6:28 p.m.*

Discussion on the details of the program:

Fees:

Member Shepcaro stated that she thinks there should be an opportunity for an abatement for people and maybe an elderly allowance. It should be flexible for people who have an economic need.

Chairman White agreed.

Member Joyce stated that the way he wrote the draft, it is for one guardian and one dog with extra dogs being \$10.

Chairman White asked if registering the guardian starts to get complicated for the town to administer. It would be getting into two registrations; the dog and the owner.

Member Joyce commented that this would be done at the same time. If it is done by the guardian, that person has read the rules and are responsible. Anybody who is in the household would be registered at the same time.

Chairman White asked if everyone in the household would have to sign.

Member Joyce stated that he does not think it is as much as everyone signing. Once someone registers someone from their household, they are saying that they will take the information to all responsible parties in that household.

Member Shepcaro stated that she thinks that anyone who is going to be a responsible guardian should have to check in on it and sign. It should be documented. There should not be a “blanket” on the household.

Member Garvan asked what the guardian would get to identify themselves, if the dog gets a tag. How will the person prove that they are a registered guardian?

Member Joyce commented that he will ask Boulder that question. His understanding was that the dog would have the tag and the person who is registered to that tag would be responsible.

Chief Walsh stated that they should run this by Attorney Griffin who will be doing the prosecuting for the town. He continued that Boulder was pretty clear that their program was working because there is a leash law. If someone would like their dog off a leash, they have rules to get the dog off a leash. He thinks that Ms. Gray had a great idea, at the previous meeting, about having a cape because it is more visible than a tag.

Speaking to Chief Walsh, Chairman White asked if he would be comfortable with the owner/guardian not having something physically on them. If the dog has a physical number, the numbers can be matched to their guardian through the town hall.

Chief Walsh explained that if someone is issued a ticket and they take it to court, there should be a mechanism in place for the appeal process. He should be able to show that the dog owner signed the form and should have made their family members aware of the rules. This should be another step that is included.

Member Joyce commented that he will contact Boulder and ask for a copy of what they are using for tags.

Chief Walsh noted that he will have his staff call the Boulder Police Department to speak with them about any “glitches” they may have faced with this program.

Member Joyce stated that he thinks the town is going to see a lot more compliance right away.

In regards to the fees for the tags, Chairman White asked the commission if they feel the recommendation to the select board should be \$25 for residents and \$75 for non-residents.

Member Shepcaro agreed but there should be a provision for some flexibility for age and need related people.

There was discussion on adding the sentence “*the additional guardian or registration fees will be waived for Rye households that meet the income criteria*”. The commission agreed that the waiver should be based on income need. The commission agreed with the fees proposed in the draft.

Selectman Winslow stated that the Clerk's Office will be concerned about what additional time will be required for issuing tags for this program. Will the office have to go over the details with the person? Will they need to refer the people to a video that they will have to watch?

Member Joyce explained that the program should be kept simple. The people will be given a package to read. If they want to be part of the program, they will read the information, pay the fee and sign that they have read the documents.

Chairman White asked the thoughts of the commission in regards to requiring each guardian to sign.

The commission agreed that this should be mandatory.

Member Joyce commented that people should be able to bring their packets home so everyone in the household can read the information and sign that they have read the rules.

Referring to the fee schedule, Mr. Vose asked if they should knock the fees down to \$10 for residents and \$50 for non-residents to garnish more support. Then at some subsequent time, if it is felt that there is a need to escalate the fees, it could be done.

Member Garvan stated that he thinks they want to frontload the program because the education and enforcement will be needed up front. Chief Walsh has already pointed out that his staff is already "strapped".

Member Kobylinski pointed out that they still have not determined how much the tags are going to cost.

Mr. Vose commented that they should want this to be looked at in a favorable light.

Chairman White noted that this is a valid comment that the Selectmen will have to consider. He is sure they will also get input through this process.

Member Joyce explained that all voters are not going to pay for this. The funding should be coming from the people who want to use it. Why should someone be supplementing the program that does not have a dog? The numbers proposed will probably cover the costs of the program.

Infractions and Penalties:

Chief Walsh commented that he will have the town's prosecutor look this over and he will send an email to the group on his thoughts.

Regarding the two dog restriction, Member Shepcaro stated that four dogs would be a lot of dogs but three dogs seems more reasonable. It should be three dogs max for one person on the tag program.

Member Garvan agreed.

The committee agreed with the change from two to three dogs max.

Member Garvan commented that the penalties are really severe. One violation and the person can't have the privilege for a year.

Member Joyce explained that this would be up to the Police Chief. It would depend on what the dog did. That would be the maximum penalty. The Police Department could issue someone a warning.

Member Garvan asked if others will misread this like he did. He suggested adding the words "up to" and "and/or loss" to the penalty; (*up to \$100 and/or loss of one year...*)

The committee agreed.

Referring to the suggested fines, Chief Walsh stated that the majority of the town's ordinances are \$50 with a penalty assessment attached to them. The violations can go up to \$1000 if the court decided to go that high. He continued the Selectmen are looking at parking and town ordinance fines. He thinks this violation should match and be consistent with the other town ordinance violations. Right now, the majority of violations are \$50 with a \$12 penalty assessment attached for court processing. He thinks this violation should be in line with that. He continued there should also be a process for people who lose their privileges and want to contest.

Referring to the draft, Chairman White asked the committee if they are comfortable moving this forward to the Selectmen, with the changes as discussed. At that time, the Selectmen, Police Chief and the town's prosecutor can work on the details.

Selectman Winslow commented that he would like to see a sample of what will be on the dogs who are in the program; such as, a vest or tag.

Member Joyce agreed to work on getting an example for the next committee meeting.

Mr. Crawford stated that at the last meeting the town attorney had some concerns about this program not matching state law. In looking at RSA 466:31; Dogs at Menace, it has some of the same sorts of things. He suggested that this be incorporated. There might not be a need to add anything beyond that.

Chairman White noted that this is going to the Selectmen. This will be fine-tuned by the town attorney, Chief Walsh and the prosecutor.

Mr. Crawford pointed out that maybe a recommendation should be that they follow the RSA, unless there is a real need to add some other criteria.

Chief Walsh stated that the RSA is to give the framework. This other criteria is to give the employee a better definition of what Rye is looking at for “under control”. The problem is where owners of dogs who let their dogs have too much freedom. The RSA does not really have any “teeth” to really bite down on that. This framework is giving the employee the opportunity to say the dog is not under control.

Mr. Crawford commented that he thought the comment from Attorney Donovan was that the town could have that framework but it had to follow the state laws.

Member Garvan noted that it couldn’t contradict the state laws.

Member Joyce stated that there will be a law that the dog has to be on a leash. This will be a privileged program that doesn’t have to be verbatim to what the RSA says. The RSA for ‘Dog at Large’, is very vague on what it means to control a dog. That has been a huge problem. He reiterated that there will be a leash law and to opt out of it there will be a program. It will be a privilege to be on this program.

Chairman White commented that dogs can still go into the town forest. They would just have to be on a leash.

Mr. Crawford pointed out that the RSA applies to dogs that are leashed or unleashed. If it is going to be in addition to what the State requires, it should be clear that it is an addition. Something similar shouldn’t be done if the State is going to cover it anyways.

Selectman Winslow noted that Attorney Donovan is going to review this. He continued that he thinks this is much more informative and outlines what the concerns are. He thinks the state ordinance is more general and this is more specific to Rye’s concerns.

Chairman White asked if anyone is ready to adopt the draft as amended.

Member Joyce reviewed the amendments agreed to by the committee:

- Number of dogs changed from two to three;
- Under penalty; add the words “up to” and “and/or a loss”;
- Add – “The additional guardian or registration fees will be waived for Rye households who apply and meet the income criteria.”
- Each guardian must sign the document.

Ms. Gray asked if there would be an age restriction.

Chief Walsh pointed out that it is not unusual to have a ten year old walking a dog.

Member Shepcaro commented that it should be sixteen and above. She noted that this is only for the town forest and ten year olds are not going in there without an adult.

Chief Walsh noted that he will speak with the town's prosecutor about this. He explained that if someone was under 18, the normal practice would be to go to the owner of the dog and that would be the person who would get the ticket.

After some discussion, the committee agreed to leave the decision on the age to the town's prosecutor.

Motion by Susan Shepcaro to recommend the details of the 'Voice and Sight Tag Program' for Rye Town Forest to the Selectmen for adoption with the revisions as discussed by the committee, which will be reviewed and fine-tuned by the Selectmen and the town's prosecutor. Seconded by Shawn Joyce. All in favor.

Note: *The details of the Voice and Sight Tag Program for Rye Town Forest are attached to these minutes.*

Chairman White asked the committee if there should be discussion on any additional restrictions for the town forest. No comments were heard.

IV. Ideas on Revenue Sources

Chairman White asked the committee if they have any other ideas for revenue sources, other than the recommendation they just made.

Referring to the dog licensing fees, Member Joyce asked if the fees could be increased and people who have a financial need could apply for a waiver.

Chairman White asked if they should recommend to the Selectmen that the dog licensing fees be increased with the increase going towards enforcement.

Chief Walsh asked where the dog licensing fees go now. The dog fine tickets go to the general fund. His assumption is that any registration fees and permits go to the general fund. He thinks the committee should look at what the town makes total in dog licensing now. Maybe there should be a recommendation to the Selectmen to change that revenue source to another account that would fund the program.

Mr. Crawford stated that he thinks the State sets the fees. He read from RSA 466:39.

Selectman Winslow noted that this would be a question for Attorney Donovan. He agreed to follow up on information about the amount of income the town receives in dog licensing and what fund it is put into.

In regards to the suggested fees for the program, Member Joyce stated that he would be very cautious about making the fees less because there are going to be costs associated with making the packets and other expenses.

Speaking to Chief Walsh, Chairman White asked him to bring information regarding his budget for the Animal Control Officer for the next meeting.

Chief Walsh agreed to send the information by email. He will also gather information on the possible increase in hours and wages this program may generate.

Mr. Crawford read from RSA 466:4, which sets forth the fees:

- \$4.50 from 4 months to 7 months
- \$7.00 for unneutered/unspayed dogs
- \$2.00 animal population control fee – to the State
- Over 65 - \$2.00
- Town has the ability to increase \$1.00

Chairman White stated this is a substantial change to the town forest. They should see how this runs for a year; track the income and the costs for implementing the program. After a year, the town will have a pretty good sense of where they stand financially and how the program works. At that time, there can be some discussion on whether some form of this will work at the beach or not.

Ms. Gray suggested having the \$25 fee to be in the program, plus the cost of tag or vest worn by the dog.

Member Joyce commented they will first find out the costs of the tags and can discuss this idea.

Member Shepcaro agreed that having the tag bought separately from the program fee would be a good idea. People should be able to get two in case one is lost or destroyed.

Member Joyce commented that if someone loses their tag they would probably have to pay the fee to re-register.

Member Shepcaro stated that they should be able to get a replacement if the person pays the cost.

The committee agreed to wait to see a sample of the tag (vest) with the costs and discuss whether the fees should be adjusted with replacement costs also considered.

Selectman Winslow noted that there should be a restriction that if someone picks up three tags (vests) and one is given to someone else to use, if an officer finds out that the number does not match with the person, the person would automatically lose their tag.

No other comments regarding revenue sources was heard.

V. Education Program

Ideas for Education:

- Forms and information regarding the program posted to the Police Department's website with a link on the town's website.
- Post information on Police Department's Facebook and Twitter accounts.
- Posting in the newspaper which will reach other communities.

Other Discussion:

Member Joyce asked if the Conservation Commission would be okay with a leash law along the Tilton property and the property towards his land (land along the abutting property). As soon as fall comes, it is going to be inundated with a lot of people and there are going to be a lot of problems. That is when those problems really start to peak.

Chairman White asked if there should be a recommendation to the Selectmen to implement a leash law in that area temporarily until town meeting.

Selectman Winslow stated that one of the concerns would be enforcement; however, it could certainly be proposed. He pointed out that they would want to see support from the Conservation Commission. He thinks this should first go to the commission.

There was review of the map of the town forest on the areas where dogs are entering onto the abutters' properties.

Speaking to Member Joyce, Chairman White asked if he would like to see the committee make a recommendation to the Selectmen or will he and Mr. Tilton work this out with the Conservation Commission on their own. If that does not work they could then go to the Selectmen on their own.

Speaking to Member Garvan, Member Joyce stated that he would like him to bring this to the Conservation Commission to see if they would agree to put a leash law in those areas on a temporary basis (until the tag program is implemented). He noted that this would just be a control for dogs being on abutting land. If the Conservation Commission is not in agreement, he is going to make a motion at the next committee meeting to recommend this to the Selectmen.

Member Garvan commented that he will not be at the next Conservation Commission meeting; however, Member Shepcaro will bring this to the commission. He suggested to Member Joyce that he or Mr. Tilton be present to advocate for this proposal.

VI. Public Input

Ms. Gray asked Chief Walsh if someone is subject to fines if they call the police department because their dog is lost and running around town.

Chief Walsh stated that technically they are subject to a fine but this is something that happens every day at the department. So far, his staff has never issued a ticket to someone in that situation. The staff will help the person look for that dog. It comes down to the officer's discretion. If this happens three or four times over a two month period, they will look at ways for the owner to make sure the dog is secure. When those steps have been exhausted, that is usually when the tickets will be issued.

Mr. Vose asked if the last seven bullets of the tag program details were incorporated into the 'Dog Under Control' definition for the whole town to help keep things uniform.

Chairman White confirmed.

Member Joyce gave Mr. Vose a copy of the definition that was voted on (and passed) by the committee.

Referring to the education piece, Ms. Gray stated that she did not hear anything addressing vacationers renting in Rye who use the town forest. She suggested a pamphlet that could be printed out and distributed to rental properties in Rye.

VII. Set Date for Next Meeting

- **Thursday, July 19th, 6:00 p.m.**

VIII. Other Business

- **None**

Adjournment

Hearing no objections, Chairman White adjourned the meeting at 7:50 p.m.

**The attached details of the Voice and Sight Tag Program for Rye Town Forest includes the changes as discussed by the committee at this meeting.*

Respectfully Submitted,
Dyana F. Ledger

Details of a Voice and Sight Tag Program for Rye Town Forest

This information was taken from the City of Boulder Colorado's program that has been in place since 2006. Its program is more robust and requires folks take education classes. The Town of Rye is not as large as Boulder. If folks are given the following guidelines when they register, we should have a lot less issues and responsible dog owners would still be able to walk their dogs off leash in the Rye Town Forest.

General Questions

What is the Voice and Sight Tag Program?

In 2019, The Town of Rye, adopted a leash law in the Rye Town Forest that requires all dogs to be leashed unless they are registered in the Voice and Sight Tag Program. This allows dogs to access the Rye Town Forest off leash if they display special participation tags and they are under "voice and sight control" of their guardians at all times.

Can I carry the tag instead of displaying it on my dog?

No. The tag must be displayed on your dog so that it is visible. If the dog is small or the tag seems uncomfortable, guardians can try using a harness with the tag attached or affixing the tag directly to the collar or harness. Dog guardians must display the tag on the dog at all times when using voice and sight control.

Is participating in the program a requirement or just a request?

It is required by law for anyone intending to use voice and sight control privileges. Participation in the program and displaying a valid program tag on all dogs under voice and sight control is required by Town of Rye Ordinance.

I paid the fees – where will my money go?

The money from fees will pay for the expenses of the Voice and Sight Tag Program.

I do not allow my dog to go off leash in the Rye Town Forest. How does the program affect me?

It does not. You do not have to be a part of the program if your dog is always leashed. Anyone can walk their dogs on leash anytime in the forest.

Is the Voice and Sight Tag unique to a specific dog?

Yes, the tag signifies that the dog guardian has registered in the program, has been given the guidelines of program and that the dog meets vaccination requirements.

Is there a test or certification process associated with getting Voice and Sight Tags?

No. By registering for the program and displaying the tags on your dog, you are simply stating that you have received the guidelines and will comply with them. You also agree to walk your dog under voice and sight control terms while in the Rye Town Forest.

Getting a Voice and Sight Tag

What do I have to do to obtain a Voice and Sight Tag?

You need to go to the Rye Town Hall and received the materials about The Town of Rye's expectations for voice and sight control. All participants will be required to provide proof of a current rabies vaccination for each dog to be registered and will be required to pay registration and annual renewal fees. Rye residents will need to have a Rye dog license for each dog to be registered.

Registration Fees:

- Rye residents: \$25.
- Non-Rye residents: \$75.
- The registration fee includes one guardian and one dog. The fee for each additional guardian in a household is \$5, and the fee for each additional dog in a household is \$10. All guardians must sign that they received the materials and understand current Voice and Sight Tag Program requirements.
- The additional guardian and dog registration fees will be waived for Rye households who apply and meet the income criteria.

Annual Renewal Fees:

- Rye residents: \$25.
- Non-Rye residents: \$75.

Do I have to renew the tag every year?

Yes, all Voice and Sight Tags expire Dec. 31 of each year.

What else do I need to do to be in compliance with the program?

Voice and Sight Tag Program privileges must be renewed annually. Program participants will get updated information on the program to ensure that participants understand current Voice and Sight Tag Program requirements.

Dog guardians and dogs must remain registered in the program and demonstrate proper voice and sight control at all times. While in the Rye Town Forest all off-leash dogs must wear their program tag and guardians need to have a leash for each dog in their possession.

Infractions and Penalties

Am I protected from getting a ticket if my dog has a Voice and Sight Control Tag in the Rye Town Forest?

No. A dog guardian who participates in the program and walks a dog under voice and sight control may still be issued for any violation of voice and sight control rules including but not limited to the following infractions:

- The dog guardian is walking more than three dogs under voice and sight control
- The dog guardian is not carrying a leash for each dog being walked under voice and sight control
- The dog guardian fails to display a voice and sight tag on dog
- The dog guardian has a dog under voice and sight control and is not registered in the Voice and Sight Tag Program
- The dog is not within the guardian's sight and under voice control at all times
- The dog does not come to and stay with the guardian immediately upon command
- The dog jumps on, charges, chases or otherwise displays aggression toward any person, or behaves in a way that any reasonable person may find harassing or disturbing;
- The dog charges, chases or otherwise displays aggression toward any dog
- The dog chases, harasses or disturbs wildlife or livestock
- The dog is on private property without the permission of the landowner
- The dog guardian does not carry dog waste bags and does not immediately pick up their dog's waste, carries it with them (does not leave it to be pick up at later time) and disposes it in a waste can

What are the penalties associated with violations?

Offenses related to not meeting the requirements of the Voice and Sight Tag Program, off-leash or voice and sight control violations, and dog at large circumstances are subject to a maximum penalty first violation of up to \$100 and/or loss of one year of Voice and Sight Tag Program privileges for the dog and its guardian. For a second violation, the maximum penalty is a fine of up to \$200 and/or loss of one year of Voice and Sight Tag Program privileges for the dog and its guardian. A third violation will result in a fine of up to \$300 and/or a permanent loss of Voice and Sight Tag Program privileges for the dog and its guardian. Additional fines may be applied of up to \$1,000 for dog waste violations.



Techniques to be Successful with Voice and Sight Control

- ➔ Stay alert and attentive to where your dog is and what they are doing at all times. Keeping your dog close and in front of you will help you control him/her immediately if needed.
- ➔ Consider your line of sight (like when driving a car): how far ahead can you see the open trail? Keep your dog closer on trails with limited sight lines and when conditions create poor visibility.
- ➔ Be proactive by maintaining a manageable distance between you and others. This can give you more time to react when facing a possible conflict with other dogs and recreationists.
- ➔ If you see another person with their dog on a leash, leash your dog or keep your dog close to you with voice commands. There is a reason why they have their dog on leash.
- ➔ Read your dog's intentions. Learn their body language such as signs of unease, stress, fear, or signs of predatory interest.
- ➔ Know when your dog is stressed, excited or in distress by having basic awareness of body signals and fearful behaviors. These can differ from dog to dog. A tail wagging is not always positive and hackles rising (when the hair raises up on the ridge of a dog's back) is not always negative.
- ➔ Be aware of the environment and your dog's reactions to it. Are deer more active today? Are there many other dogs? Is it so windy your voice will be carried in a direction AWAY from your dog? Are there other dog guardians who seem distracted and unable to control their own dogs?
- ➔ In a calm environment with no stimulus factors like other dogs or people, play a call-back game rewarding your dog when they return. After your dog consistently returns, practice the call back game in a stimulating environment where there are other people and dogs around. This can support your dog to be successful under voice and sight control in the most stimulating environments where there are hikers, bikers, dogs, and wildlife.

If you have any doubt that your dog can not meet the voice and sight control standards, play it safe and use a leash. Consider working with a trainer. We highly recommend working with a trainer because it will greatly enhance your relationship with your dog which means both you and your dog will be happier and will have a better time together.