

Let Our Pups Swim!

Petition to Preserve Long Island's ONLY Public Off-Leash Dog Beach, Mud Creek County Park!

Whereas on Tues., May 29, 2007, the Suffolk County Executive Steve Levy signed into law the "Five New Dog Parks" bill, which passed with a unanimous 17-0 vote in the Suffolk County legislature, that directed the Parks Commissioner to designate five new dog parks on Suffolk County parkland, and whereas on July 27, 2007, the "Natural Borders Dog Parks" bill was signed into law by the County Executive,

Whereas on August 21, 2009, Mud Creek County Park, Suffolk County's first off-leash beach, where dogs can run, swim and play off-leash, was created at the end of Roe Avenue in East Patchogue in response to the passing of the "Five New Dog Parks" and the "Natural Borders Dog Parks" bills,

Whereas Long Island Dog owners have worked voluntarily since 2009 to clean, restore, and maintain the Mud Creek County Park beach, helping to restore a former dumping ground for Brookhaven recycling contaminated with years of accumulated broken glass and trash, to an area that can be enjoyed safely by all members of our community,

Whereas a plan to segregate a portion of Mud Creek County Park was created without consultation with Long Island dog owners who have worked hard to create and restore this park, including the building of a chain link fence at tax-payers expense that attempts to create a dog-exclusion zone that takes up half of the beach front, to appease residents who "are not dog people" who have not participated in the formation or cleanup of this park,

Whereas Mud Creek County Park remains the ONLY off-leash dog beach where all residents of Suffolk County can legally take their dogs to run, swim, play off leash, while there are multiple beaches that are dog-free within a short drive of Mud Creek County Park,

Whereas this plan to segregate Mud Creek County Park would create multiple practical and safety hazards for the continued use of this area as a natural borders dog park, including

a) It would be infeasible to safely partition off the proposed off leash dog park; currently the fencing stops far from the water line, which creates an open beach with no natural border, which dogs will not understand they should not be able to cross and will therefore create inevitable overflow into the non-dog area. It would also be unfair to expect dog-owners to somehow train their dogs not to follow their natural instincts to run and explore, which is a major reason for an off-leash natural borders dog park.

b) It would be further impractical, expensive, and unsafe to extend this fence to the water, e.g. if a dog swam or dug under the loose sand to the other side where the owner cannot quickly reach the dog, this creates the potential for serious harm to the dog, the owner in trying to get to get to their animal, and to 'non-dog' people.

c) The current plan would force dog owners and their dogs to walk across a large stretch of sand, where broken glass has often been found and which can get extremely hot, thereby putting people and their pets at additional risk of injury.

d) The already-built fence destroys the natural borders that are a major feature of this park, creating an eye-sore to the now-restored beauty of the park.

We therefore ask Suffolk County to remove the extensive fencing along the beach and develop a plan for Mud Creek County Park that preserves the County's intent to create an off-leash beach under the Five New Dog Parks bill and continues to meet the needs of resident dog owners for a safe, comfortable, and practical off-leash dog beach to legally allow our dogs to enjoy, swim, and play comfortably.

We further petition that this and all future plans for Mud Creek County Park be developed in consultation with concerned resident dog owners, including LI-DOG and the Mud Creek Dog Park group.

Respectfully Submitted by the following concerned residents of Suffolk County,