

Pet Waste and the Environment

Pet waste is more than an unpleasant sight when not picked up. Pet waste can be harmful to humans, wildlife and the natural vegetation. Dogs are welcome guests in the parks, open space and along trails in Highlands Ranch but pet owners must abide by certain rules when bringing their dogs into these areas. This includes keeping your dog on a leash and picking up after your pet. In Highlands Ranch, dog owners can be issued a summons and fined for not picking up after their dog.



Contaminated Water

Dog waste can be a contributor to bacteria in water. If not picked up, dog waste contaminants may end up in our drinking water. Roundworm, hookworm, giardia, salmonella and E .coli are just a few of the contaminants we can be exposed to if dog waste is not picked up.

In Highlands Ranch, our water supply comes from surface water and groundwater. In 2009, surface water comprised 91 percent of our water supply. Surface water comes from above ground water supplies such as rivers, lakes and ponds in addition to stormwater conveyed through our open space drainage ways. This means that dog waste contaminants, if not picked up, may end up in our drinking water.

Unnatural

Dog waste is not fertilizer and provides no benefit to soil or groundcover. Dog waste is not natural because it is derived from processed foods. Once dog waste reaches waterways, it can add nitrogen to the water which depletes oxygen. This process can be harmful to aquatic wildlife and native vegetation, reducing the amount of oxygen needed to survive.

What can you do?

Parks, trails and open space in Highlands Ranch belong to everyone and it is important for everyone to look after it. Picking up dog waste is just one of the many responsibilities of being a good dog owner and a good neighbor. The simple act of picking up after your pet can make a positive impact in the appearance and health of our parks system and our water quality.

The next time you take your pet on a walk, take a plastic bag with you to scoop the poop. If you forget your bag, look for one of the many dog waste bag dispensers placed throughout the parks and open space system in Highlands Ranch and pick up after your dog.

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