

# Running commentary

By Charlie Kanzig  
Correspondent

I really never imagined writing a column about poop, but here goes.

Those of you who hit the local trails to hike, bike and run have probably experienced this: You are on a trail that you frequent, when, along the side of the path, you notice a green or blue “doggie bag,” or a recycled produce bag, used to contain poop from someone’s canine companion. On your way back, you notice it is still there. The next day, you use that same trail and there it sits.

If this were a rare occurrence I would write it off as someone simply forgetting, but it happens frequently.

My questions are two-fold: 1. Who do these offenders think is going to pick up their doggie bags? 2. If you’re not planning to dispose of the doggie bag, why use the bag at all?

This issue could be the foundation of a more extensive social commentary.

Are we dealing with entitled hikers who are above taking care of their dog’s doo-doo?

Are people simply conveniently forgetful?

Do people believe that using the bags “is the responsible thing to do” yet they can’t get themselves to actually complete the process and carry the dung to a disposal?

Do people really believe those bags are biodegradable?

Is it some sort of indirect protest against the new law that doesn’t allow plastic bags in the grocery store, so these rebels are saying “I’ll show you how to use a plastic bag, by gosh!”?

Most of the bags on the market, including those you put your produce in at the grocery store, are not

actually designed to return to the earth, despite what their label says.

Most bags are oxo-biodegradable, which means they do break down, but just into smaller pieces of plastic. The real biodegradable bags, which are made of maize flour and vegetable oil, actually do break down naturally within a few weeks, with the help of microorganisms, whether they end up in a landfill or among other compostables. These bags tend to cost about 10 cents apiece. If you are a dedicated bagger, look for the genuine article.

What I am about to say might seem old-fashioned, but on other than heavily traveled, close-to-town trails, wouldn’t it be better to just leave the poop, unbagged, in the woods? If Fido poops right on the trail, can’t we just take a stick and flick the pile off the trail, scuff a little dirt over it, and call it good?

With that said, I would rather see a forgotten poop bag along the trail than a pile of poo on the path. I have actually carried other people’s forgotten bags to a disposal site and encourage others to do so as well, but

my hope is that the owners themselves will do a little better job of taking care of their dogs’ business.



PHOTO BY CHARLIE KANZIG

A signpost on Sisters trails.

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