

# Keeping dogs safe at state parks

**Oregon State Parks reminds dog owners to keep pets on leashes while on the trail**

By Brenna Visser  
Cannon Beach Gazette

The fear associated with a pet gone missing is a feeling most owners never want to experience.

Felix, a 2-year-old border collie, made headlines after he went missing around 3 p.m. Christmas Day while on a hike with his owner, Sarah Stremming, in Ecola State Park. He was rescued unharmed from a precipice 60 feet from the crest of the Clatsop Loop trail by the Seaside rope and rescue team.

Thousands of visitors and locals bring their dogs on trails like the ones in Ecola State Park each year. Since Felix's rescue, many readers have asked why he was not leashed. Others are concerned with the risks taken by first responders, as well as the resources the rescue required.

So what can owners do to keep their dogs out of this situation?

"I know people hate to keep their dogs on a leash. But there's a reason we ask, and a worst-case scenario can happen when they aren't," said Richard Walkoski of Oregon State Parks. "I would hate to see someone have a part of their family not with them because of it."

Oregon State Parks requires dogs be physically restrained while hiking on trails, unless the area is specifically designated as off-leash. That means an owner must be holding them, holding onto their collar, or have them on a leash no longer than six feet.

Aside from getting lost, leashing dogs also prevents them from tangling with wild animals or other people's



COLIN MURPHEY/EO MEDIA GROUP

Highly trained members of the Seaside rope and rescue team rescued a dog that fell off a cliff while hiking with his owner at Ecola State Park.

pets, getting lost, ransacking campground garbage, damaging plant life or being hit by a car, Walkoski said.

While situations like this are rare, staff offer many off-leash warnings throughout all of the state parks, and after multiple warnings can issue a fine of at least \$110, Walkoski said.

"We want to see all visitors, including four-legged kind, in the same good shape they went out in," Walkoski said.

Stremming, a professional dog trainer at The Cognitive Canine in Seattle, chose to walk Felix off-leash on the hike, she said. If she were to go back, she'd invest in a GPS tracker that would have let her know where he was sooner and done more research about the trail conditions.

"I knew there were out-looks, but I wasn't aware of how close sheer cliff faces were," she said. "Had I researched that more thoroughly, I would have kept him closer on a leash."

While Stremming was aware of the rule, she stressed the importance of what walking a dog off-leash can do for

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Richard Walkoski,  
Oregon State Parks

their mental health, she said.

"The fact is, every other dog I saw on the trail wasn't on a leash. Most don't observe the rule. They all happened to be okay," Stremming said. "I know what people want to hear me say is I'm going to keep my dog religiously on leash. But I will continue to (go off-leash)."

She recognizes the resources that were spent to conduct the search and rescue mission, and plans to make "big donations" to Seaside Fire and Rescue as well as the Hamlet Fire Department for contributing the drone that

helped locate her dog on the rock face, she said.

"I know it wasn't a safe operation, and that's why I plan to give back," she said.

To avoid similar situations, Cati Foss of Arnicadia Dog Training said hikers should practice recalling with their dogs and to check in more often the usual. She also suggested checking trail terrain and weather conditions to know what type of hazards to expect.

"If you know there are cliffs, check in more frequently, so you aren't running into issues where they get intent on smelling something and get into situations where they get stuck," Foss said.

Foss recommends both on-leash and off-leash training. Dogs are allowed to be off-leash on Oregon beaches as long as owners can exercise "direct control," according to the Oregon State Parks website.

"It's an important skill set to be able to maintain control and also walk on a leash politely. A lot of dogs go on their own when leash comes off, and the impulse control goes," she said.

# County loses last Pearl Harbor attack survivor

**Keeth was a witness to Japanese attack**

By Edward Stratton  
EO Media Group

Spurgeon D. Keeth, who was Clatsop County's last living survivor of the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, died Thursday, Dec. 28. He was 92.

After spending most his life in Wapato, Washington, in the Yakima Valley, Keeth moved to Hammond in 2015 to be cared for by his daughter, Donna Barnett, and her husband, Bill. Keeth led a more private life and hadn't belonged to any veterans groups in Washington state, Barnett said.

"When he came here, things changed," she said. "He couldn't socialize a lot, but when people found out there was a Pearl Harbor survivor, they went nuts."

Keeth became a local celebrity on the North Coast and the county's last living survivor of the attack after the death of Seaside's Bill Thomas a year ago. Thomas, a sailor on the Navy's USS Medusa during the attack, helped lead the effort to dedicate Seaside's First Avenue Bridge the Pearl Harbor Memorial Bridge in 2000.

Keeth received free membership in American Legion Post 99 in Seaside and Clatsop Post 12 in Astoria and became a fixture at local parades and an annual wreath-laying ceremony on the memorial bridge.

Mike Phillips of Clatsop Post 12 said Keeth was one of about 50 World War II-era members of the post. Jay Blount, a spokesman with the National Park Service World War II Valor in the Pacific National Monument, told The Oregonian earlier this year there are likely fewer than 2,000 Pearl Harbor survivors left.

Keeth joined the Army at 16 and was stationed at Schof-



COLIN MURPHEY/EO MEDIA GROUP

Spurgeon D. Keeth, left, Clatsop County's last living survivor of the attack on Pearl Harbor, died Dec. 28.

ield Barracks in Honolulu. He was on kitchen duty at the time of the attack on Dec. 7, 1941.

"He went out to dump potato peelings, and he heard unexpected sounds of planes," Barnett said. "Then he looked up, and saw the rising sun on the planes."

Her father didn't talk about the attack much, she said, besides that he watched several of his friends die. Keeth served in the Pacific during World War II, including battles at Guadalcanal and in the Solomon Islands. In a 1944 interview with the the Yakima Herald, Keeth described surviving nearby shell explosions, a 19-day siege and being shot at and missed from 3 yards away.

"He could have touched me with his rifle," Keeth told the newspaper of his run-in with the Japanese soldier. "I don't know how he happened to miss."

After the war, Keeth married Ruby, and the couple had four children and nine grandchildren. Most of the family still resides in Yakima Valley, Barnett said. Keeth attended Perry Trade School and learned to be a mechanic who specialized in bodies and fenders.

"Dad was so handy," Barnett said, describing her father taking apart a surplus house at Fort Vancouver, Washington, and reassembling it as the family home in Wapato. "He self-taught himself to do everything."

## CORRECTION: John Williams was mayor during 2007 gale

In "Memories of the Great Coastal Gale," Jay Raskin was incorrectly identified as

mayor of Cannon Beach at the time of the 2007 Great Coastal Gale. Raskin was a council

member and became mayor in 2008. John Williams was mayor in December 2007.

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