

## **TRAILDOG ETIQUETTE**

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1. Follow leash laws. Aggressive or timid dogs should never be off leash. In off leash areas make sure you have a good recall and a friendly dog.
2. Yield the right of way to most other trail users, especially horses, skijorers, llamas and packgoats. Step to the side of the trail and put your dog at heel while they pass you. Talk softly to horses to help them relax.
3. When meeting other traildogs, call your dog to you and ask permission before allowing your dog to sniff and get friendly. The other person may not want his dog to socialize.
4. Pick up your trash and dog poop. Leave the area as clean as you found it, or cleaner. Let your dog pack out some extra garbage.
5. Don't allow your dog to chase wildlife, especially in the winter when energy stores are low.
6. Remember that a reliable recall doesn't mean repeatedly screaming at your dog and annoying other campers.
7. Consider carrying a cell phone for emergencies, dog and otherwise.

## **TRAILDOG TEN ESSENTIALS**

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1. Basic first-aid kit.
2. Dog food and treats.
3. Purified water, and a bowl to drink from.
4. Lead and collar or harness, jacket for short haired dogs and...
5. Have ID tags, a card with medical information, and picture of him to show rescuers.
6. Dog booties for rough ground or if feet are not conditioned.
7. Dog pack, carry his own gear as appropriate.
8. Spray for fleas and ticks, and carry mosquito repellent.
9. Feet should be checked often, look between toes for grass seeds and foxtails.
10. Plastic bags to clean up poop.

## **CARING FOR YOUR TRAILDOG**

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### **All dogs need:**

- Regular daily exercise
- A clean dry place to sleep
- Adequate nutrition for their age and level of activity
- Regular worming and vaccines

### **Traildogs need (in addition to the above):**

- Continuous progressive conditioning to the level of fitness required for their work
- Socialization to strange sights, sounds and people
- Obedience training
- Foot care

## **RESOURCES**

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### **Books**

- *Calming Signals* By Turid Rugaas
- *Open and Utility Training: The Motivational Method* by Jack Volhard, Wendy Volhard

### **Internet**

- Traildog email list, sponsor of this brochure: subscribe at <http://www.egroups.com>

### **Gear & Supplies**

- Foster & Smith Pet Supply, 800-826-7206  
Internet: <http://www.DrsFosterSmith.com>
- Omaha Vaccine Pet Care Catalog, 800-367-4444



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*Traildogs*



*Man's Best Friend in the Woods*

## WHY DO WE HIKE WITH DOGS?

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Since the dawn of time, people have used dogs as companions. The relationship between canines and their human companions creates a feeling of oneness with nature. In this mechanized age, hiking with a dog rekindles the ancestral relationship with man and dog working together in harmony.

A traildog is a dog who has a job to do, companion, friend, load hauler, and an extra set of eyes and ears to filter your experiences through. Traildogs are true companion animals, sharing your love of the outdoors on the level of an equal.

A dog never debates where to camp, how many miles you hike or complains if you hog the sleeping bag. A dog can be a buffer between you and threat from man or beast.

The joy a dog experiences when hiking is contagious and spiritually fulfilling.

This is why you should know how to make wilderness experiences safe and trouble-free for you and your dog.



## WHAT KINDS OF DOGS MAKE THE BEST TRAIL COMPANIONS?

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Here are some things to keep in mind as you select a dog. First, a dog that is going to be out in public needs to be a friendly dog. He will be meeting people and other dogs constantly. When selecting your dog choose a one that can be easily trained and socialized. All dogs have different characteristics, big, tall, short, fat, heat/cold tolerant, long hair, short hair, aloof, and never-met-a-person-they-did-not-like. Research the differences to make an accurate decision and choose a dog that will enhance your lifestyle.

Any dog can make a good hiking companion, but a dog that will pack needs to be a medium to large size dog, as he will be able to carry a useful amount of weight and negotiate most obstacles by himself.

Mixed breed dogs can be just as useful as a registered dog. You can use the dog you already own, or adopt a dog from a shelter. Most dogs, purebred or mixed, will love to hike with you if given the chance. While many registered breeds have been bred for work and will take to packing easily, there is no *best breed* to hike with.

As long as your dog is healthy and has a good temperament, hiking together will be rewarding for you both.

## CONDITIONING AND ADDING WEIGHT TO YOUR TRAILDOG

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Well conditioned dogs can carry up to 30% of their body weight. The average load your adult dog should be expected to carry over a day's hiking should be around 20-25% of their weight. Work up to the desired weight gradually with your daily walk/jog. Add pounds and distance as conditioning improves, allowing bone and muscle time to work-harden in order to prevent injury.

Provide plenty of water both during and after exercise. Check paws for soreness, especially if the dog is licking at them. Work in cool weather until the dog is fit, to prevent overheating. Your dog's comfort level needs to be constantly monitored. If she is hanging back or staying on trail constantly, panting or lying down, she is overloaded or overheated, so stop for a break and lighten her load.



Regular work *with* the loaded pack is needed to keep the dog in condition. Vary the different kinds of terrain you cover and throw in random *fun* walks (no pack, loose lead) to keep your dog's interest piqued.

Puppies should be encouraged to wear their packs for training, but should not be expected to carry weight till they are 12 to 18 months old. Generally, the

larger the dog the longer you will wait for it to grow up enough to work. Just as a human who had previously done nothing but watch tv on the couch, a dog needs to be brought into condition slowly. Just think about how you felt after your first aerobics classes. Easy does it!