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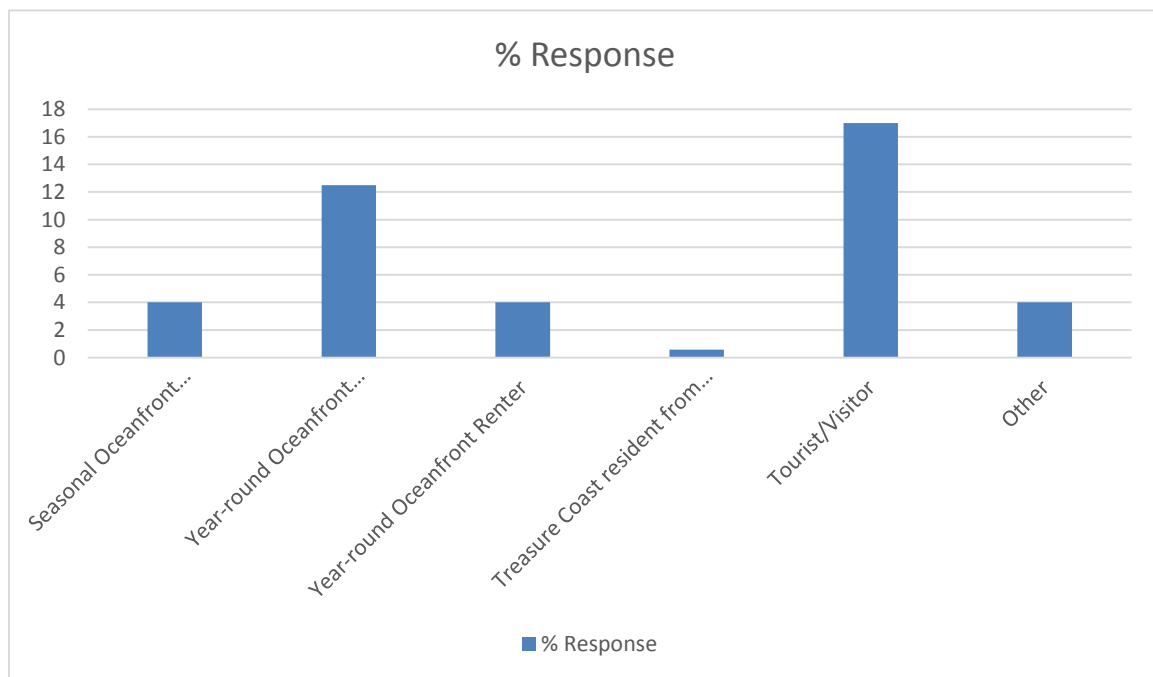
**Service Project:** Survey of Dog-Friendly Practices at Walton Rocks Beach

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**Florida Master Naturalist:** Marinkate Castle, Marin007@comcast.net

St Lucie County has one official “dog approved” beach: Walton Rocks Beach. Rules are posted at the beach detailing what is and what is not acceptable dog etiquette at this beach. For example, improperly supervised dogs digging on the beach during sea turtle nesting season can be problematic. Florida Master Naturalist Marinkate Castle surveyed beachgoers to determine if they are aware of the dog-related rules.

Twenty five dog owners at Walton Rocks Beach were surveyed in Jan-Feb 2016. They were asked to describe if they lived oceanfront or were visiting from the mainland.



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They were asked how often they walked their dog at Walton Rocks Beach (n=25)

12%	(3/25)	Daily
12%	(3/25)	A couple times per week
16%	(4/25)	Weekly
32%	(8/25)	Monthly
28%	(7/25)	Other

67% (16/24) of dog owners were asked if they felt there was adequate signage informing beachgoers about the dog etiquette requirements at Walton Rocks Beach. (n=24)

67%	(16/24)	Yes
33%	(8/24)	No

77% (17/22) of dog owners thought there was nothing else that could be done to improve compliance with dog etiquette at Walton Rocks (n=22). Those that thought more could be done, gave these suggestions for improvement:

- Information (bigger signage), police enforcement, family education (lack of manners)
- Use common sense
- Disallow fishing due to dangers from hooks/bait and lines. Very dangerous.
- This is the only beach the dogs are “allowed” to be off leash. Martin County allow dogs on all their beaches as long as they are on leashes unless otherwise stated.

30% (7/23) of dog owners allow their dogs to dig on Walton Rocks Beach

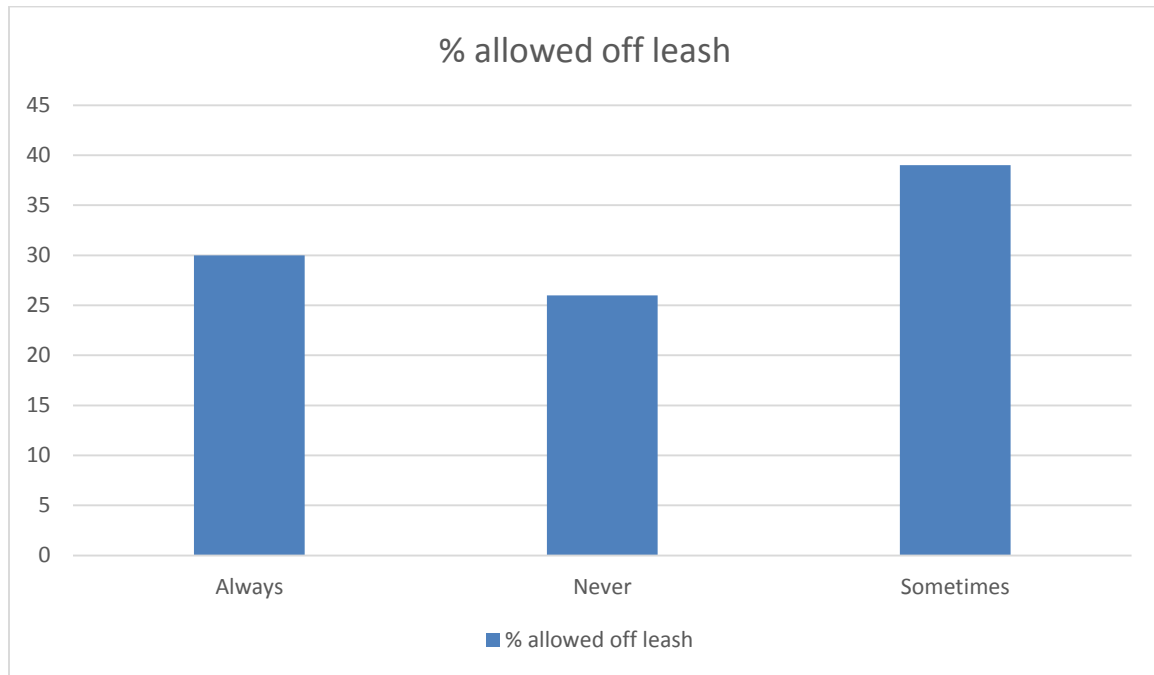
95% of dog owners visiting Walton Rocks say they pick up their dog waste. (n=21)

87% indicated that there is an adequate supply of disposal bags available for dog waste.

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When asked how often dog owners let their dog off the leash at Walton Rocks Beach (n=23)

- 30% Always off the leash
- 26% Never off the leash
- 39% Sometimes off the leash



Is there anything that can be done to improve Walton Rocks Beach to help beachgoers comply with dog etiquette requirements?

- Provide more dog poo bags
- No. I think the beach is perfect for dogs and human friends
- Just about everyone complies. It's a wonderful beach for the dogs and their owners as well. We love this beach!
- Bigger signs, display helpful tips. Great beach! We come here for 6 months a year specifically to be able to come to the beach with dog. 6 years now. Best thing in Port St Lucie. We love it.
- Just about everyone complies. It's a wonderful beach for the dogs and their owners as well.
- We're glad it here!
- No. Love it here!
- Enforcement of picking up disposal bags. Most of the time, owners leave them on the beach.
- Other than putting a lifeguard there to enforce rules, no.
- Additional water stations. Shade area. Sign: "Please understand: Dogs will be dogs."

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- More water sites for dogs to drink and other dog owners to understand “dogs will be dogs” please be tolerant of others.”
- TV Information (local channels)
- Bigger signs about letting dogs off leash.
- More dog friendly needed

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