

# Leash laws to be enforced at Lighthouse Field State Beach

*Lighthouse Field*  
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**SANTA CRUZ** Dog owners fighting to keep off-leash freedoms at Lighthouse Field State Beach were handed a defeat Monday when a judge denied their request for a restraining order against the state.

Friends of Lighthouse Field, a group of hundreds of dog enthusiasts across the county, filed the restraining order in Santa Cruz County Superior Court to prevent state park rangers from enforcing the leash rules at Lighthouse Field State Beach.

Judge Robert Attack handed the decision to his clerk without discussing the matter publicly.

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ROY STEARNS, STATE PARKS DEPARTMENT SPOKESMAN

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"The court doesn't have the power to grant an injunction on what's already an enforceable law," Roy Stearns, spokesman for the state Parks Department said. "Friends of Lighthouse Field had to establish that the leash laws cause irreparable injury."

The 37-acre park on West Cliff Drive returned to state control last week after a 30-year management contract with the

city expired, bringing an end to off-leash hours started by the city in 1993.

The city would have been required to enforce the state's leash laws if the contract had continued. Instead, the management deal was axed.

City leaders, faced with heavy pressure from dog owners, are trying to buy the property.

State parks officials have agreed to

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sell, and are negotiating a price with Santa Cruz officials. An initial offer of \$1 million from the city in September was rejected.

The state has agreed to take it easy on dog owners who still visit the park with their dogs during the next four months. No tickets will be given for dogs not on a leash, which owners say is the next best thing to having the restraining order.

"In essence, they're inviting people to keep going there," said Mike Tilson, a Westside resident and regular at Lighthouse Field. "We didn't get everything we want, but we can live with it for now."

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