

# City reminds citizens 'There is no poop fairy'

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**SANTA CRUZ »** Puppies are going to be disappointed: There's no such thing as the poop fairy. At least, that's what signs along West Cliff Drive and throughout Santa Cruz are declaring. "There is no poop fairy. Please clean up after your dog," the sign reads. Behind the words is a fairy, pooper scooper in hand, swooping down on several brown nuggets with a smile on her face and a clothespin clamped to her nose. "At first I was with a friend and we thought somebody had put it up as a joke," said Mary Bannion, 44, a dog owner and frequent walker along West Cliff Drive. **DOGS » PAGE 4**

32114

## Dogs

FROM PAGE 1

Cliff. "But then we walked by again and said, 'No, that's a city sign.'"

The signs are part of the city's latest efforts to combat feces in the streets and on sidewalks, said Mauro Garcia, superintendent for Parks and Recreation.

Ideas for alternative signs came up several months ago when the city was planning to replace older signs that reminded owners to clean up after their dogs. After researching what other cities did, officials found humor was an effective way to encourage people, Garcia said.

"We looked at several agencies and most of the ones we looked at kind of had a humorous theme behind them but pointed out that people needed to take care of what their dogs leave behind," Garcia said.

They found an image from a campaign by the Jefferson County Sheriff's Office in Colorado and were able to reproduce it, Garcia said. So far, feedback has been good with people praising the tongue-in-cheek sign, he said.

There are about six signs along West Cliff, with plans to distribute more signs — 30 in total — throughout the city where dog piles have been a problem, Garcia said. Another prominent place where patrons will be reminded the poop fairy doesn't exist is along Pacific Avenue, where dogs have been allowed since 2011.

Bannion likes the new signs and the attention they will bring to the issue.

"It's just really bad etiquette, especially for this walk," Bannion said. "It's heavily populated and we have tourists that come in from out of town who walk along here."

There is one way the fairy sign might be improved, Bannion said.

"Maybe she could look a little more disgruntled," she said.

Peter Loftus, 65, was amused by the sign, saying, "I think this is a fun way to raise awareness to the fact that we all have the responsibility to clean up after our dogs."



PHOTOS BY DAN COYRO — SANTA CRUZ SENTINEL

Anita Strong and Karen Attema notice one of the new 'poop fairy' signs along West Cliff Drive on Thursday morning as they walk their dogs.

**"At first I was with a friend and we thought somebody had put it up as a joke. But then we walked by again and said, 'No, that's a city sign.'"**

— Mary Bannion

Gesturing to his two border collies, Siobhan and Aero, he added, "I don't want people to look at a spot on the ground and think that it was these guys."

Jack Varnum, 65, thinks the signs are entertaining but aren't warranted along West Cliff, saying in the 20 years he has walked along the path, he has yet to step in anything unwanted.

"When I step, I look," he said. "But I think dog owners clean up after their animals."



Signs encouraging people to clean up after their dogs include a picture of a fairy wearing a clothespin on her nose.