



CONSERVANCY ADVISORY: Safe Recreation with Pets on Trails



Photo credit: Coyote, Serena Lasko; Mountain lion, SLC Wildlife Camera

On January 10th, 2021, two Preserve members were walking their small (~15lbs) dog on Cantera Run Trail (Quarry Trail) when the dog went missing. The dog was off leash and walking behind them. It is believed it was caught by a predator, a coyote or mountain lion, and there has been no further sign of the dog since. This terrible loss is highly unusual but a critical reminder of the importance of keeping your dogs on leash while enjoying the trails and roads of The Preserve. **We do not expect this to become a pattern.** We have also received recent reports of coyotes demonstrating early denning behavior of approaching and “escorting”, aka following hikers with dogs (on leash) out of their territory. While this is normal behavior for the coyotes it can be very disconcerting to hikers and their dogs and can feel very threatening.

It is normal for both species to be active day or night. Encounters with these two species require different responses:

COYOTE ON THE TRAIL	MOUNTAIN LION ON THE TRAIL
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Keep dogs on leash• If you encounter a coyote, stay calm and do not run. Make yourself big and make loud noises while slowly retreating from the area. Aggressive displays by coyotes are often misunderstood, this behavior is typically a defensive response to protect their territory and coyote pups and is intended to drive off intruders rather than cause harm.• Keep small children close when hiking and exploring around The Preserve, and to pick them up if possible if wildlife approaches.• Please report encounters promptly to the Conservancy.• Coyotes may follow you as you retreat, do not be alarmed – this is called “escorting” as they see you out of their territory.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Keep dogs on leash• Mountain lions do not normally consider people prey. To avoid being mistaken for something more interesting, it’s best to avoid walking or jogging alone at night, in low light or fog.• Keep small children close when in areas of natural cover.• Use the ‘buddy system’ esp. at dusk or early morning.• Carry a whistle and/or walking stick on long hikes.• <u>If You See a Lion – Stay Calm</u>• Never Run. Running may stimulate its instinct to chase.• <u>Keep Children Safe</u> Pick up small children so they don’t panic and run.

For coyotes demonstrating little fear it may be necessary to use proven hazing techniques including aggressively chasing them until they stop looking back at you and are out of sight. This requires commitment but works. Effective hazing requires the coyote recognizing you as a real threat, not just a source of commotion and noise. Please contact the Conservancy for more information on effective hazing, and only use hazing when you are able to commit to it. Partial or half-hearted hazing will teach the coyotes that you are not serious, and they can ignore you as a threat and do as they please. Hazing is not as effective in the breeding season (mid-Feb to mid-April) when adults are protecting their den.

Coyotes and mountain lions, the top predators present on The Preserve year round, are an essential part of the ecology of the Preserve -- a ‘keystone’ species that keeps our rodent and deer populations in check, respectively, and contribute to the natural beauty we all treasure. Living in harmony with these amazing creatures requires some understanding, techniques and respect for their wild natures.

Promptly report aggressive behavior to Security (620-6750). For questions or concerns, please contact Dr. Christy cwyckoff@slconservancy.org 831-402-2001