

The Pond within Alimagnet Dog Park

The Pond's Purpose

The primary purpose of the pond within the Alimagnet Dog Park is to serve as a stormwater pond that collects rainwater and snowmelt runoff. While dogs are allowed to swim in the pond, this is a secondary benefit and does not influence the management of the pond as a stormpond.

With no chemical manipulation, the pond exists naturally with varying levels of algae and aquatic vegetation such as pondweed, cattails and duckweed. Another characteristic typical of stormponds is a mucky bottom with decaying organic debris. When the muck at bottom of the pond is stirred up by dog activity, it releases an odor caused by the decomposition process. Unfortunately the strong odor of the muck, while not harmful to dogs, can be difficult to remove without repeated washings.

Dog Safety

The City has consulted with a veterinarian regarding the stormpond within Alimagnet Dog Park, and the conclusion was that the pond is generally safe for a healthy adult dog. Owners of young, elderly, or other dogs with compromised immune systems should use caution when visiting any pond. Ultimately, dog owners should confer with their own veterinarian regarding specific concerns that they have about their dogs and the potential risks involved with swimming in stormponds.

Dog owners should also be aware that any natural pond may harbor microscopic organisms such as parasites that can cause illness in dogs. In addition, most ponds naturally contain cyanobacteria, also known as blue-green algae. When water conditions are right, blue-green algae grow very quickly and produce high levels of toxins, which pose a poison risk to dogs.

E. coli Levels

During periods of heavy rain, *E. coli* bacteria levels in the water typically increase because of high runoff from the surrounding landscape. During June, July, and August, the City tests the pond weekly for *E. coli* levels. Most *E. coli* bacteria are harmless but high levels indicate that the water may have been contaminated by feces from animals such as dogs, ducks and geese. Since feces may contain pathogens, public swimming beaches are closed when *E. coli* levels reach an established level that poses a risk to humans. Since there is no *E. coli* risk threshold established for dogs, the pond within the dog park is not closed because of high *E. coli* levels. However, notifications about high levels are posted at the dog park so that visitors can make their own decision whether or not to allow their dogs in the pond.