

February 13, 2012

Editor

*Peninsula Beacon*

1621 Grand Ave., 2nd Floor, Ste C

San Diego, CA 92109

Dear Editor,

Martin Jones Westlin ("canine pollutants marring Dog Beach's illustrious exterior," *Peninsula Beacon*, Feb. 9, 2012, pg. 1) does a great disservice to the thousands of volunteers who help clean Dog Beach on a regular basis.

According to I Love A Clean San Diego, 80% of ocean pollution comes from inland areas. Sewer spills from Mission Valley and points east, and pollution from storm drain runoff all along the 52-mile San Diego River end up at Dog Beach. Recent DNA studies have shown that bird fecal contamination at Dog Beach is more than two and a half times that of dogs. Dog Beach must deal with sewer spills and all the pollution from upriver washed onto our beach via storm sewers.

The City's Park & Recreation Beach Maintenance crews do a great job of emptying trash and occasionally screening the sand at Dog Beach. In 2001, Greg Cox and the County Board of Supervisors, with the Ocean Beach Community Development Corporation, bought several poop pickup dispensers for Dog Beach. Since then, Dog Beach Dog Wash has donated five more, and continues to supply more than 600,000 poop pickup bags at Dog Beach each year without help from other agencies.

Thousands of volunteers with Surfrider Foundation, I Love A Clean San Diego, San Diego Coastkeeper, Sacred Heart Academy, San Diego River Park Foundation, Dog Beach Dog Wash, and Friends of Dog Beach conduct more than 16 cleanups a year at Dog Beach, to remove what less than 1% of the 10,000 dogs who visit Dog Beach each week with their guardians leave behind. The few scofflaws who don't pick up after their pets are usually people who visit after dark without a flashlight, or are too distracted by multiple dogs/children/beach paraphernalia to notice what their pets are doing. We rely on volunteers to help clean the beach, and if the police and lifeguards want to enforce the law and ticket offenders we support their efforts.

Dogs at Dog Beach are not the problem as Westlin, and city spokesperson Harris, would have you believe. They and all others who care about ending beach and water pollution are welcome to join Friends of Dog Beach at regular Dog Beach Cleanups every second Saturday from 9 to 11 a.m., and at Creek to Bay on April 28th, San Diego River Days on May 12th, and California Coastal Cleanup on September 15th. Dog Beach well deserves its A rating from Heal the Bay, and we hope it continues for generations of fun-loving dogs and devoted volunteers.

Best regards,

Jane Donley & Mindy Pellissier  
Co-owners, Dog Beach Dog Wash