



## **Safety Alert Issued After Dog Bite Incident on Blackmer Trail**

Community Urged to Leash Dogs as Laws Exist To Protect People And Pets

**Steamboat Springs, Colorado-February 5, 2026**-The Steamboat Springs Police Department is issuing an urgent community safety message following a dog bite incident on Blackmer Trail and the adjacent ski area at Howelsen Hill. The incident occurred on January 21, 2026, and involved a single off-leash dog that bit five individuals in separate encounters.

“We are asking for the community’s help,” said Police Chief Mark Beckett. “Leashing dogs is not just a rule—it is a shared responsibility that protects your pet, protects other trail users, and helps ensure everyone can safely enjoy Steamboat Springs’ outdoor spaces.”

When officers arrived on scene, Blackmer Trail was heavily congested with skiers, sledders, bikers, hikers, and numerous off-leash dogs moving throughout the area. Officers were required to prioritize locating and securing the dog believed to be responsible for the bites while ensuring the safety of all trail users. The dog’s owner has since been identified and cited.

This incident is not isolated. Steamboat Springs Police, Parks & Recreation staff, and Howelsen Hill Ski Patrol have consistently observed dogs off leash in areas where leashes are required. Ski Patrol has also reported ongoing issues with dogs accessing ski-only trails at Howelsen Hill, where dogs are not permitted. These behaviors create preventable conflicts between users and significantly complicate enforcement and emergency response efforts.

Leash laws exist to protect both people and pets. On a heavily used, multi-use trail like Blackmer—where skiers, cyclists, hikers, children, dogs, and wildlife all share a narrow corridor—even well-behaved off-leash dogs can create dangerous situations. A dog approaching a skier can cause a serious fall. A startled child can be knocked over. Dogs can provoke defensive reactions from other animals. In emergency situations, such as this recent bite incident, off-leash dogs make it far more difficult for first responders to safely manage the scene.

“Our goal is a clear, consistent message focused on community safety,” continued Beckett. “Blackmer Trail is a valued and heavily used community asset, and with cooperation from all users, it can remain safe and accessible for everyone.”

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### **Contact**

[Email Mark Beckett](#), Police Chief, or call 970-879-4344

[Email Angela Cosby](#), Parks & Recreation Director, or call 970-871-7017

[Email Michael Lane](#), Marketing & Communications Manager, or call 970-871-8220

