

# Pet waste a major pollutant outdoors and at home



Vancouver, B.C., uses humor to get people to pick up after pets. Photo/LTN

## By Wes Siler, Outside

In the United States, pet dogs produce 21.2 billion pounds of poop each year. All that poop is polluting water sources, both in urban areas and the backcountry, largely because dog owners aren't doing a good enough job picking it up. Let's look at the reasons why dog poop has become such a problem, and examine what we can do about it.

Two reasons: There's too much of it and it's full of bacteria and parasites.

To study the issue, the Leave No Trace Center for Outdoor Ethics tracked "canine defecation events" on Boulder, Colorado's Open Space and Mountain Parks lands for a little over a month last summer. Those 45,000 acres see 5.3 million

human visits each year, and many of those visitors bring their dogs along, resulting in 60,000 pounds of left-behind dog poop each year.

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