

Dogs' owners ask for leniency on Shell Island
News Herald Viewpoints

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I have been taking my dog to Shell Island for more than 16 years and I have never encountered any problems with having a dog on the island. Suddenly — without warning — we are getting tickets for dogs on the island.

Capt. David King states in Tuesday's paper ("Officers shell out citations on island") that they are writing a lot of warnings versus citations. Well, all the people I have talked to have received tickets and court appearances. I have never seen a park ranger on the island for all these years. No warnings for dogs or bottles and suddenly — BOOM — you have a ticket.

This activity has been going on for a few weeks and I don't feel that it is fair that Capt. King and his patrol can just ticket without first notifying the public.

The Department of Environmental Protection speaks about dogs destroying nests. Well, the fourwheelers cannot be good for our dune renourishment, let alone the nests. Trust me, our four-legged friends do not do as much damage as a four-wheeler.

If they want to treat Shell Island as a state park, where are the public facilities such as showers, restrooms and picnic areas? There is no one out there maintaining the island and cleaning it up.

Capt. King and his patrol are out of control and on a mission. They are chasing away the locals and tourist with dogs. At least they could offer an alternative and give us a part of the island to take our pets to. Or, we are willing to leash our pets.

We are willing to work work with the DEP to make Shell Island a family place for all. We do not want to destroy the island any more than the biologists, but we need DEP to work with us.

After all, up until now it was OK for dogs, so let's work together on this and come up with a solution.

Jody Wilson, Lynn Haven