

Protect Cromwell's Only Safe Off-Leash Dog Exercise Areas

Sandflat Road Pines: 600+ community signatures

Presented to: Central Otago District Council (CODC)

Presenter: [Lisa Telle & Edward Raffles / Zoomies Dog Training & Adventures]

What's happening

- Cromwell is at risk of losing its two off-leash exercise areas on Sandflat Road (Pines) due to upcoming forestry harvest + potential solar development.
- Without a like-for-like replacement, Cromwell residents will be left without a safe, local off-leash space.

Key message: Do not remove the existing areas before a safe local alternative exists.

Why Sandflat Road matters

- It is the only practical, safe off-leash option for many Cromwell residents.
- Supports dog welfare: movement, sniffing, decompression, socialisation, training.
- Supports public safety: dogs can exercise away from roads, playgrounds and high conflict areas.
- Loss will push dogs into unsuitable spaces (roadsides, playground reserves, trails).

Off-leash space isn't a luxury. It's preventive safety + wellbeing infrastructure.

**both maps are to scale for comparison*

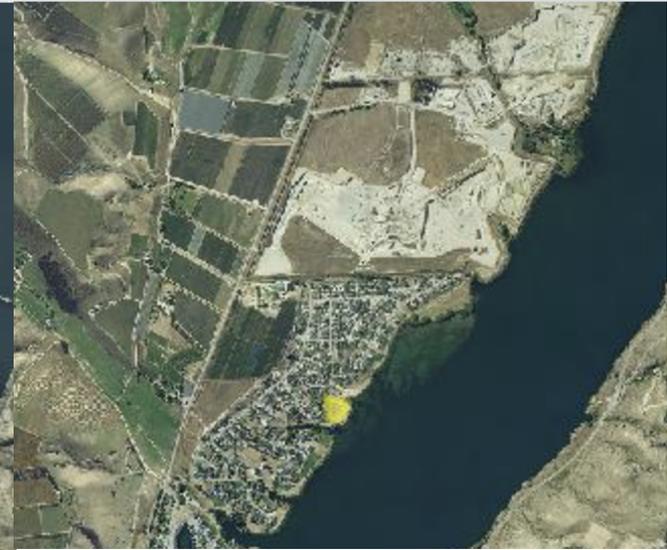
Navigation icons: Home, Scale bar, North arrow, INFO

Zoom: 11988 m X: 1300522 m Go

Scale: 1: 37321 Y: 5004467 m VIEW

Zoom: 11988 m X: 1303770 m Go

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What are we losing?

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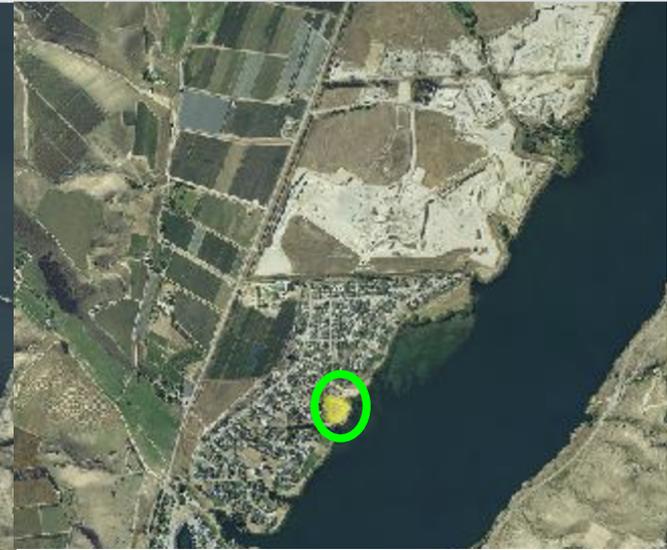
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What are we losing?

Using the council's GIS tools

<https://maps.codc.govt.nz/intramaps90/default.htm?project=Public&module=Recreation>



Plantation area, between Sandflat Road and Bannockburn Road

503891.7sqm



Plantation area adjacent to transfer station, Bannockburn Road

Minus 332.178sqm internal block

222167.422sqm

This leaves dogs with these spaces



Alpha Street Reserve
between Ortive Street
and Ray Street

9849.9sqm

Cromwell

- Alpha Street Reserve between Ortive Street and Ray Street
- Plantation area adjacent to transfer station, Bannockburn Road
- Plantation area, between Sandflat Road and Bannockburn Road

Pisa Moorings

- Dustin Park, Pisa Moorings south of the playground



Dustin Park, Pisa
Moorings south of the
playground

7760.9sqm

The numbers

By removing 726,000sqm of space, you aren't removing the dogs. You are forcing hundreds of owners into two tiny pockets of land (Alpha St and Dustin Park)

This represents Cromwell losing **97.6%** of its off leash dog walking areas

Location	Status	Area (m2)
Plantation Area (Sandflat/Bannockburn)	LOSING	503,891.7
Plantation Area (Transfer Station)	LOSING	222,167.4
Total Area Lost		726,059.1
Alpha Street Reserve	RETAINED	9,849.9
Dustin Park (Pisa Moorings)	RETAINED	7,760.9
Total Area Remaining		17,610.8

CODC suggested alternatives are not suitable

- Alpha Street (Cromwell): too small, unfenced, directly beside a busy road + high-speed cycle traffic.
- Dustin Park (Pisa Moorings): different township; family/ playground reserve; not designed for high off-leash use.

These are not safe replacements for a shaded, low-conflict forest area.

Alpha Street (Cromwell) – key risks

- Unfenced area next to fast-moving traffic = preventable accidents waiting to happen.
- High-speed bike traffic adds risk for dog/cyclist collisions and public fear.
- Too small to provide decompression; increases dog-to-dog conflict and stress.
- Not suitable for most dogs (prey drive, anxious, reactive).
- Next to playground: increases dog-to-child/people conflict and stress.
- **Space is not valued by CODC?** As dog off leash area: Allocated public parking during events such as the car show



Off-leash areas must be safe by design, not reliant on perfect behaviour.

Dustin Park (Pisa Moorings) – key risks

- Different township
- Family/playground reserve: increases dog-to-child/people conflict and stress.
- Too small to provide decompression; increases dog-to-dog conflict and stress.



Off-leash areas must be safe by design, not reliant on perfect behaviour.

But does Council really value these areas?

- *“...in the meantime Alpha Street Reserve and Dustin Park in Pisa Moorings remain available for dog exercise in Cromwell”*
- Quote from Garreth Robinson
- These areas are simply not adequate.

Central Otago heat: shade is non-negotiable & other summer hazards (ie barley grass)

- Sandflat Road Pines provide natural cooling and safe, shaded movement while all suggested locations lack natural shade and shelter.
- During extreme summer heat, dogs cannot safely exercise, rest or regulate temperature.
- Unshaded fields become unusable and increase the risk of heat stress and injury.
- Sandflat Road Pines have no dangerous barley grass in the forest area. It is difficult to avoid this major safety hazard for dogs elsewhere.

Dust & wind

- The trees along Sandflat Road were originally planted as a shelterbelt to reduce strong winds and wind-blown dust in an exposed, dry area.

Simply convenience?

It seems the Sand flat road pines are being felled due to convenience. We might as well fell these at the same time as the industrial area, *paraphrasing*.

We implore you to pause the felling of these trees until a suitable alternative is implemented.

What the community needs in a replacement space

Top requirements (survey results):

- Away from roads — 100%
- Shade & shelter — 100%
- Away from cycling routes — 93%
- Large enough for dogs to move freely (15ha preferred) — 93%
- Easy access for everyday Cromwell residents — 93%

Also strongly supported:

- Away from livestock — 86%
- Minimal conflict with playground/sports users 86%
- Ability to walk a path (not just a rectangle) — 86%
- Natural ground/space to decompress — 79%

If CODC replaces Sandflat, the replacement must meet these baseline requirements.

Community voices (selected quotes)

- “We walk our dogs daily there and honestly we will be at a loss if we lose this space and a similar space is not provided.”
- “The dog walking area is an essential part of my experience in Cromwell... the forest provides shade and shelter from the weather.”
- “Even the best trained dogs can be unpredictable... the natural chase urge could cause harm to all.”
- “It would be cruel and dangerous to confine them to such a small area like Alpha St.”

What we are asking CODC to do

- 1) Pause removal of Sandflat Road off-leash areas until a safe local alternative is confirmed.
- 2) Work collaboratively with residents to identify and deliver a suitable Cromwell location *or leave a section of the forest. The power poles will potentially be kept so could this + the trees next to it could be made into a reserve*
- 3) Ensure any replacement meets basic welfare + safety criteria.

Minimum criteria for a suitable space:

- At least 15 hectares for healthy movement.
- Away from roads / high-speed cycling routes.
- Away from livestock + wildlife-sensitive areas.
- Natural shade/shelter.
- Accessible for everyday Cromwell residents and safe for families.

Example of a great dog area:

1.) Jardine park- large 29 hectares space, near livestock but safely fenced, forestry keeps some of the area shaded

