



KENNEL CLUB / FORESTRY COMMISSION ACTIVE WOODS: DESIGN GUIDANCE DOG AND HUMAN ACTIVITY TRAIL



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INDEX

1	ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	3
2	DESIGN CONCEPT	4
2.1	Aims and objectives	4
3	CHECKLIST: ACTIVITY TRAIL TOP TIPS.....	5
4	TRAIL LOCATION AND FACILITIES.....	6
4.1	Car parking	6
4.2	User information at trailhead	7
4.3	User information along the trail	8
4.4	General design principles for each element.....	8
4.5	Design and facilities around each activity element.....	9
5	PILOT TRAIL INFORMATION	10
5.1	Background	10
5.2	Evaluation summary	14
6	INDIVIDUAL ELEMENT DESIGNS.....	16
6.1	Tunnel time	17
6.2	Logwalk	19
6.3	Jump in the box – with variant “jump around”	21
6.4	Table tops	24
6.5	Woody weaves	26
6.6	Over and under	28
6.7	Water splash	30
7	APPENDIX 1: PILOT TRAIL EVALUATION RESULTS.....	31

1 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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For more information contact:

Forestry Commission England
t: 0117 906 6000
www.forestry.gov.uk/england-dogs

The Kennel Club
t: 0207 518 1020
www.thekennelclub.org.uk

Author's thanks

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Credit finally to Jess, Oliver and Piper the dogs for valiantly test driving the pilot trail and patiently posing for the photographs herein.

Stephen Jenkinson

Stephen Jenkinson is a consultant specialising in dogs and access management issues.

All images Stephen Jenkinson 2008, except Nigel Whitfield / Forestry Commission cover and page 18 bottom.

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2 DESIGN CONCEPT

2.1 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

This document outlines the initial concept for a dog and human activity trail, along with information on the construction, use and evaluation of the pilot trail, built in March 2008 at Coatham Community Woodland, near Yarm, Teesside.

The trail concept aims to:

“Enhance opportunities for people to experience and enjoy responsible, healthy exercise and interaction with their dogs.”

This guidance aims to encourage others to plan and construct further trails that:

- Act as a focal point for delivering messages to owners about responsible behaviour, alongside other site management issues.
- Present worthwhile and interesting challenges, that may lead onto further activity and/or competition.
- Utilise locally available materials and existing construction skills.
- Minimise maintenance and inspection requirements.
- Address safety considerations regarding the physical design of activity elements and abilities of users.
- Minimise conflict with other site users.
- Accommodate dogs and humans of different sizes and abilities.
- Are safe for other site users who can be reasonably expected to interact with the facilities.
- Give dog owners a sense of being welcome visitors.
- Clarify to other site users that use of the route by dogs and their owners is intentional and welcomed.

3 CHECKLIST: ACTIVITY TRAIL TOP TIPS

- ✓ **Set aims:** have clear aims from the very start about what your trail is to achieve, as this will influence its construction, location and promotion. For example, is the trail for existing site users, or are you trying to attract people away from more sensitive sites?
- ✓ **Measure success:** identify and measure key parameters before and after the trail is built, so you can assess its success and get some good publicity: eg more exercise taken, change in desired / undesired owner behaviour.
- ✓ **Location:** ensure the trail's siting is relevant and accessible for dog owners. If it's in a poor location, it won't be successful.
- ✓ **Involve:** contact local dog walkers to find out where and how the trail can be best developed to meet your mutual needs.
- ✓ **Support:** actively foster some dog-owning advocates for the trail during its development. They are a great way to spread responsibility messages and report any safety or maintenance issues.
- ✓ **Funding:** the trail can attract resources from a wide range of funders, given its potential to enhance physical and mental health, and reduce social isolation and conflict between different site interests.
- ✓ **Share:** tell us your experiences, so we can share them with others and update this guidance.

For more information about dog owners and their needs
go to: www.forestry.gov.uk/england-dogs

4 TRAIL LOCATION AND FACILITIES

Considering the following factors will help your trail be as successful, accessible, safe and enjoyable as possible for dog owners and other site users.

4.1 CAR PARKING

Many - if not most - owners will arrive in cars. Their dogs are likely to be excited, especially if they enjoy using the trail, as well as needing to initially relieve themselves after a car journey. Car parking areas ideally need:

- Locating away from sensitive site locations, such as children's play areas, picnic tables, horseriders unloading trailers etc; equally, it should not be so secluded as to present security concerns or become a dog owners' ghetto.
- Adequate space so that dogs arriving and departing can avoid unintended direct contact.
- Sufficient shaded parking bays.
- A suitable initial fouling area, with disposal facilities and/or related information.
- Orientation information about the trail, relevant to local circumstances.
- Access to water for dogs to drink, cool off and wash paws.
- Physical separation from the trail or exercise area by fencing or other barrier, to minimise the chance of a loose, frightened or lost dog running directly into the car parking area.

Locating trails where they can be walked to from centres of population may be possible, and is the ideal approach in many cases. Even then, provision must be made to accommodate parking by dog owners arriving from further afield.

Making the trail accessible from public transport is again ideal in theory, although the practicalities of taking dogs on public transport mean few owners are likely to arrive in this way.

4.2 USER INFORMATION AT TRAILHEAD

Information needs to be interesting, accessible and positive, enabling dogs and their owners to enjoy using the trail safely. It is recommended guidance be given regarding:

- Trail length and activities along it.
- Considering their own health and that of their dog(s) before attempting new activities, and seeking their doctor's/vet's advice if unsure.
- Taking particular care with older dogs, puppies and any animals recovering from illness/injury.
- Children being supervised by an adult when using the trail, and always asking before touching or approaching a dog they do not know.
- Dogs wearing a collar bearing owner contact details, and of a design which will not cause injury or restrict breathing if snagged on trail equipment (and so avoid check chains, pinch collars, slip leads).
- Contact number of local vet: daytime and out of hours.
- Contact number for dog warden: daytime and out of hours.
- A clear "pick up" or "flick away" policy for any fouling on/around trail.
- Emergency number of local site manager.
- Being aware of other site users' activities.
- Ensuring dogs are always under control, and not a nuisance to others.
- Ensuring dogs have an annual veterinary check up and appropriate vaccinations.
- Contact details of local dog clubs and trainers.

The trailhead signage used on the pilot trail is shown in section 5.1.

4.3 USER INFORMATION ALONG THE TRAIL

Information provision along the trail should be considered to:

- Help new users follow the trail.
- Know how far they have travelled.
- Indicate to other users that the trail and activity elements are designed for dogs.

Alternatively, a leaflet/map could be produced.

A sample panel provided on the pilot trail is shown in section 5.1.

Any waymarking should allow users to find their way in both directions.

4.4 GENERAL DESIGN PRINCIPLES FOR EACH ELEMENT

Outline designs are given in section 6 for each of the seven initial activity elements.

Common design and construction considerations for all elements are:

- Sufficient strength and clearances to minimise the risk to adults, children or dogs, of injury or getting stuck when sitting, climbing or playing on the activity elements.
- Having regard to the general design, construction and maintenance standards for play equipment for children.
- The potential for other visitors using the elements, for example, mountain bikers trying out logs and ramps.

Placement and spacing between elements can be used to influence degrees of awareness, participation and exertion; this needs to be considered on a site by site basis.

4.5 DESIGN AND FACILITIES AROUND EACH ACTIVITY ELEMENT

The location and surroundings of each activity element also need careful thought, with particular regard to:

- Planning the overall trail to avoid sensitive areas for wildlife and minimise potential conflict with grazing animals, horse riders, cyclists and all other site users and operations etc.
- All activity elements should be sited sufficiently away from roads and other potential hazards, so that any off-lead dogs that may become startled or lost are not exposed to an immediate danger.
- Locating elements at the side of paths, in areas that are ideally both open enough to not feel too enclosed or unsafe, and provide some shade so dogs do not get too hot in summer.
- A firm, free-draining surface all round the activity element, to a distance of at least 1.2 metres, with particular attention paid to high impact areas, such as tunnel and ramp ends and jump landing areas. Depending on the soil type and drainage, the existing natural surface may be suitable. Woodchip or mulch may also be suitable, if free of contamination that could injure dog or owner.
- Sufficient clearances to allow a dog owner with a motorised electric scooter to get around all sides of the activity elements.
- A sequential number indicating where users are on the trail, and to aid reporting of any defects/incidents.
- A visible name for each activity, which ideally will relate to the local environment - eg Willow Weaves, Oak Tree Tunnel.
- Suggestions on ways to interact with the activity element, and some additional interpretive information.
- Contact numbers for the site manager and local vet.
- A simple seat so people can sit, rest and observe.
- A post or other structure / hook for owners to tether one dog, whilst another is using the activity.
- Informal water points (such as streams and pools) along the route, as well as at the end.
- Sufficient emergency access points.

5 PILOT TRAIL INFORMATION

5.1 BACKGROUND

The first activity trail was constructed in March 2008 at Coatham Community Woodland, Long Newton Lane, Long Newton. Grid reference NZ395153 – nearest postcode is Eastgate Farm TS16 0QQ.

The woodland was established in 1999 on former arable land. It soon became very popular with dog owners, who are the primary users of this urban fringe site.

Visitor facilities are limited to a car park immediately adjacent to an open area, with the now established woodland starting 150m beyond.

A general information panel about the trail was provided in the car park (see below), along with a notice board where the local ranger and users could place site management information, details of canine services and events.



**Information panel and notice board, Coatham Woodland car park
(prior to installation of content and local notices)**

Dog Activity Trail

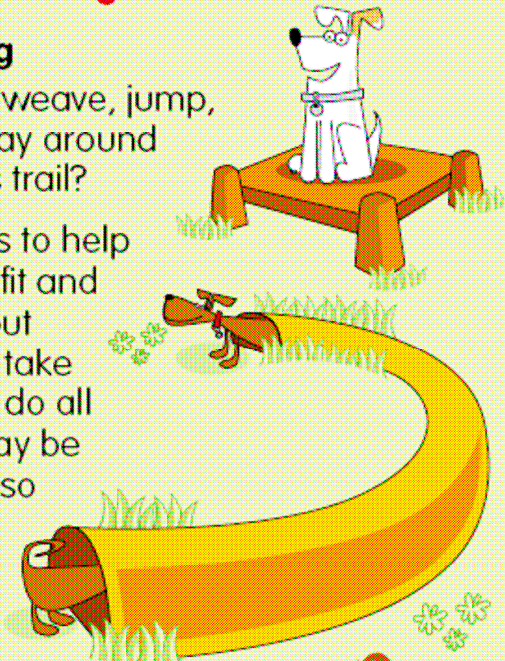
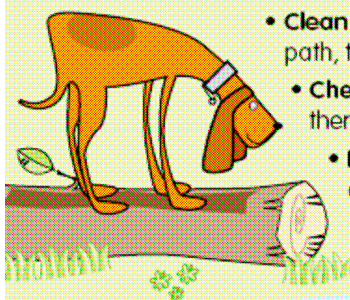
Fun and fitness for you and your dog

Can you and your dog tunnel, weave, jump, balance and splash your way around the seven activities on this trail?

Try these new challenges to help keep you and your dog fit and healthy. This trail is about 2.5km km long and will take about 40 minutes if you do all the activities. The trail may be wet and muddy at times so we recommend wellies or stout boots.

Look after yourself and your dog!

- **Don't overdo it.** If you or your dog get out of breath, take a rest. If you do not take regular exercise, consult your vet and doctor before trying this trail. Take it easy if your dog is recovering from an illness or injury.
- **Watch out for snagging collars,** avoid check chains, pinch collars and slip leads when using the trail.
- **Clean up after your dog.** Flick dog poo away from the path, trail and activities - or pick it up and take it home.
- **Check the activities before you use them.** Make sure there is no glass or sharp objects that could hurt your dog.
- **Be aware:** keep an eye open for other people and any warning signs or other information as you go round the trail.
- **Make sure your dog is always under control.**



Local Office Contact - North York Moors Forest Office: 01751 472771
 Local Vet - D.W.M McCabe, Yarm: 01642 781844

Trailhead information panel, Coatham Woodland car park



Dog Activity Trail

Woody Weaves

Can you guide your dog through the wood weaves? Try jogging along beside your dog or weave in and out yourself beside them or on the parallel course.

How fast can you go?



Now you have completed the second activity of the trail, can you find the third one 'jump around'?

Did you know?

In agility competitions, dogs have to enter the weaves with the first pole on their left, irrespective of which side the handler is on.

Local Office Contact - North York Moors Forest Office: 01751 472771
Local Vet - D.W.M McCabe, Yarm: 01642 781844



activewoods
naturally good for you

www.forestry.gov.uk

Sample activity element information panel, Coatham Woodland

The trail was developed along existing paths, to form a 2.5km circular route.

On evaluation, 51% of users did not think the route should be made longer; 24% felt it should be longer and 22% had no opinion. Activity elements were placed approximately 6 metres to the side of existing paths.

The spacing and sequence of the elements was as follows:

Element	Distance from previous element	Notes
Car park	0 metres	
Tunnel time / over and under	150 metres	Intentionally close to and visible from car park
Woody weaves	217 metres	
Jump around	480 metres	
Log walk	280 metres	
Table tops	260 metres	
Water splash	160 metres	
Jump in the box	270 metres	
Car park	670 metres	
Total distance	2.48 km 1.55 miles	

It was decided not to waymark the pilot trail, to encourage self-discovery of the elements. When evaluated after 7 months usage, 44% of dog owners thought the trail should be waymarked; 40% thought waymarking was not required and 13% had no opinion.

The material costs for the pilot were:

Item	Total inc VAT
Pipes: 2 off 6m x 750mm twinwall	£549
Soil to cover pipes	£200
Turf	£14
Signage header boards	£1,579
Marine ply	£293
Sand and varnish	£28
TOTAL	£2,663

The above figures do not include staff costs; the trail was constructed by the Forestry Commission's in-house team.

A year after construction, the trail was found to be robust enough to not require any routine maintenance at that time.

Safety checks were carried out frequently in the first few months after construction. Under the FC's risk-based policy, the trail now has 6 visual inspections and 3 recorded inspections each year. The site ranger's rapport with the local community also ensures any defects or dangers are usually reported promptly.

5.2 EVALUATION SUMMARY

Seven months after the pilot trail was constructed, 45 dog owners were randomly selected for a structured face-to face interview in the car park as they completed their visit.

Of the 45 trail users interviewed:

- Most had one or two dogs, lived near the site, came for one hour each day, arriving by car after an 8 minute drive. None were professionally involved with dogs.
- There was no specific bias regarding gender or age; 91% were of a white ethnic background and 11% had a long-standing illness or disability.
- All sizes of dog used the trail – most frequently, medium-sized
- Unprompted, many owners said how extremely valuable it was to have the trail, and an area in general, where they could exercise their dogs, without feeling they were unwelcome or disturbing livestock or wildlife.

Because of the trail:

- 60% of interviewees were now more active when walking their dog.
- 36% said their dog had become healthier/lost weight.
- 22% came to the site more frequently; 89% recommended the site to a current non-visitor.
- 22% were likely to become more involved in dog training / competitions / sports.
- Interviewees most frequently felt the trail had made the site more welcoming and enjoyable, and made them more sociable with other dog walkers.
- Interviewees most frequently felt the trail had not resulted in more dog poo being left on paths, nor made their dog less obedient, nor made them come to the site more frequently.
- Users now stayed for 5% longer on the site (approx 3 mins), compared to before the trail was built.

Interviewees generally felt the trail design:

- Was safe and usable by most sizes of dog.
- Had sufficient information at the start and along the trail, although 44% felt the routes between elements should be waymarked.
- Should not be made more difficult or longer, although more activities would be welcomed.

Whilst the tunnel element was liked the most, and the weaves liked the least, none of the elements was found to be significantly avoided or unused. Opinions appeared to be greatly influenced by pre-existing preferences regarding: jumping, getting wet and training/control ability.

Some owners commented about not understanding some elements or not being able to do them “right”. Encouragement that any interaction or a “freestyle” approach is fine, may be helpful to dispel any feelings of right or wrong ways to use the trail.

Full evaluation results appear in appendix 1.

In light of this, the initial designs were seen as successful and needing little modification, although some minor changes have been incorporated into this revised design guidance.

The Forestry Commission’s artwork and panels from the pilot trail are reproduced above in reduced resolution. The FC is happy for these to be developed and adapted for use elsewhere with appropriate recognition.

For more information and details of all the high resolution artwork, contact FC England on 0117 906 6000 or www.forestry.gov.uk/england-dogs

6 INDIVIDUAL ELEMENT DESIGNS

Key concepts and dimensions are given here.

The elements have been adapted from standard Kennel Club agility obstacles, to accommodate as wide a range of dogs and abilities as possible, and to minimise the risk of injury to dogs and handlers who are trying these activities for the first time without supervision.

These elements are not designed as competition-standard agility obstacles.

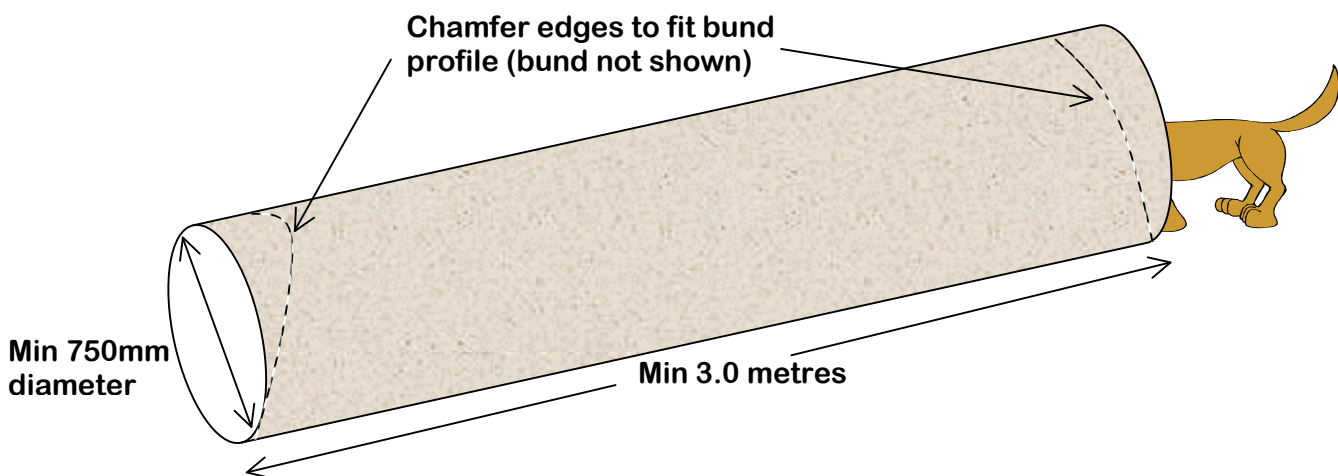
6.1 TUNNEL TIME

Activity: Dogs go through tunnel

Key design points:

- Plastic pipe internal diameter 750mm; minimum overall length 3 metres.
- Ensure ends of tunnel match profile of earth bund to avoid protruding edges.
- Pipe to have a smooth internal surface to aid cleaning and observation of any debris left inside (eg glass).
- Pipe to be installed with a gentle slope to prevent internal pooling of water.
- Pipe to be covered by earth bund or other materials to appear more natural, prevent dogs or people walking on pipe surface, and to avoid pipe movement/rolling.
- Multiple tunnels can be constructed to give variety and interest. A ramp can also be added – see over and under 6.6.
- Evaluation showed tunnels were the most liked element of the pilot trail.

ORIGINAL DESIGN CONCEPT



TUNNELS UNDER CONSTRUCTION



TUNNEL IN USE



Notes:

- An “over and under” ramp has been added to this tunnel – see 6.6.
- Very dry weather and turf depth caused the grass not to establish over the tunnel ends. Increasing the soil depth should help avoid this in the future.

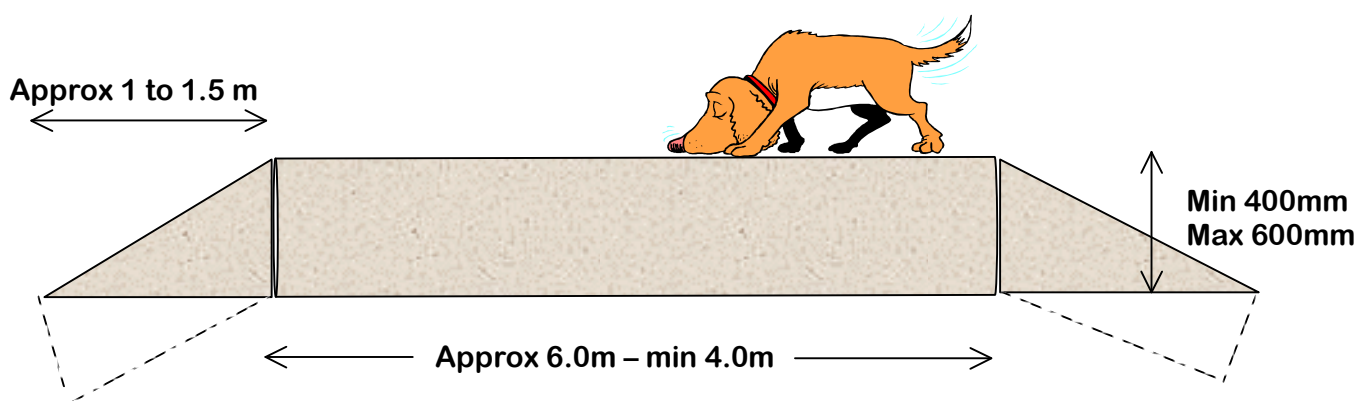
6.2 LOGWALK

Activity: Dogs walk along log

Key design points:

- Diameter of centre and end logs to provide an effective, even surface walking area of 500mm wide, if slightly curved. Minimum overall centre log length 4.0 metres. Height to top of centre log surface from ground minimum 400mm, maximum 600mm.
- Two end ramp logs between 1.0 and 1.5 metres long, of same profile as main centre log, chamfered to butt up to centre log and set into the ground.
- All log sections to have a non-slip surface – ideally natural tree bark if suitable or, if needed, eg, a cut surface with ridges and slots.
- All log sections secured into the ground by being partly buried and/or using driven posts or other secure method. Centre log and end ramps may be banded to half their height at the sides.
- As in the pilot, this design can be adapted and built out of cut timber, if a suitable log is not available locally.

ORIGINAL DESIGN CONCEPT



LOG WALK AS CONSTRUCTED



LOGWALK AFTER 4 MONTHS USE



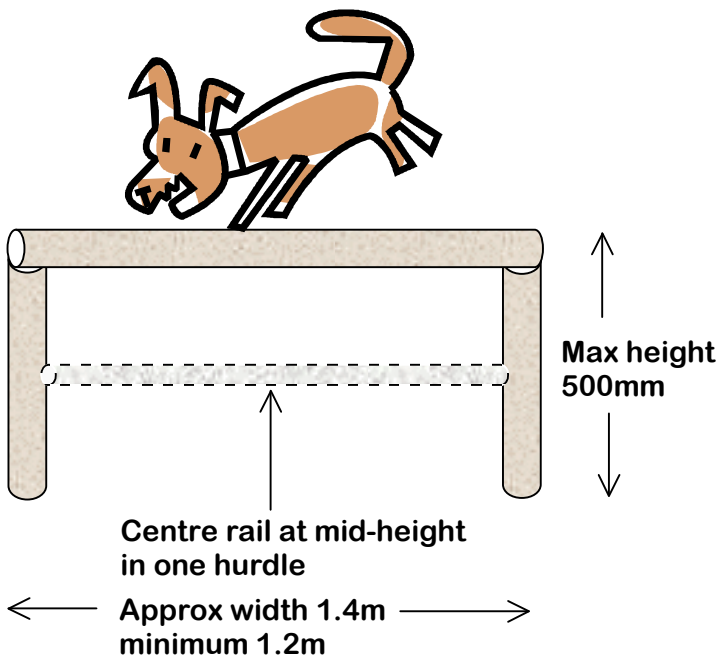
6.3 JUMP IN THE BOX – WITH VARIANT “JUMP AROUND”

Activity: Dogs jump over hurdles in various combinations

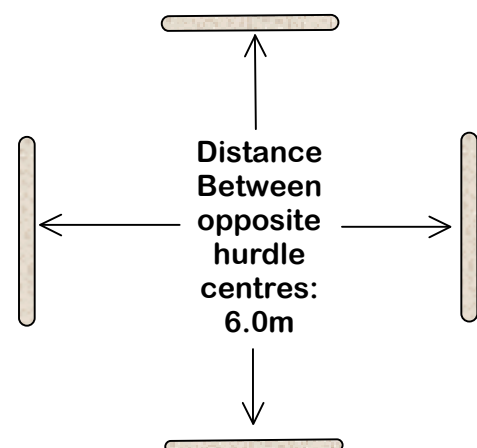
Key design points:

- Height to top of hurdle is 500mm. Width of hurdle approximately 1.4 metres (min 1.2 metres). Including at least one lower hurdle of min 250mm, max 350mm, will help usability by owners with smaller dogs.
- Distance between centres of opposite jumps: 6.0 metres.
- All but one hurdle to be open underneath. One hurdle to have a centre rail (for training dogs not to run underneath).
- Top rail of hurdles to have a smooth surface.
- Hurdles to be sufficiently strong to withstand a human sitting on them.
- **VARIANT:** “Jump around” uses the same hurdle design, with jumps positioned like spokes leading out from a central point, with minimum 5 metres between centres of each hurdle.

ORIGINAL DESIGN CONCEPT



Individual hurdle



Plan view of 4-hurdle layout

JUMP IN THE BOX AS CONSTRUCTED



JUMP IN THE BOX AFTER 4 MONTHS USE



JUMP AROUND AS CONSTRUCTED



JUMP AROUND AFTER 4 MONTHS USE



6.4 TABLE TOPS

Activity: Dogs jump up onto raised surfaces from different sides

Key design points:

- Top surface of each table block: 1.0 metre square
- Height of top of centre element: 700mm. Top height of two intermediate side elements: 350mm.
- Top of each table block to be a solid, free draining, non-slip surface.
- Sides of table blocks can be rough, eg log bark etc.
- Table blocks can be created from sawn sections through a 1.0 metre+ diameter felled tree. In the pilot, no such suitable timber was available locally, so table blocks were built from 20mm marine ply around an internal frame, made from 80mm square posts, driven into the ground and sawn off level to the 700mm top height.
- Surfaces may need treating to improve grip. In the pilot this was achieved by varnishing the surfaces and then applying sand whilst wet.

ORIGINAL DESIGN CONCEPT

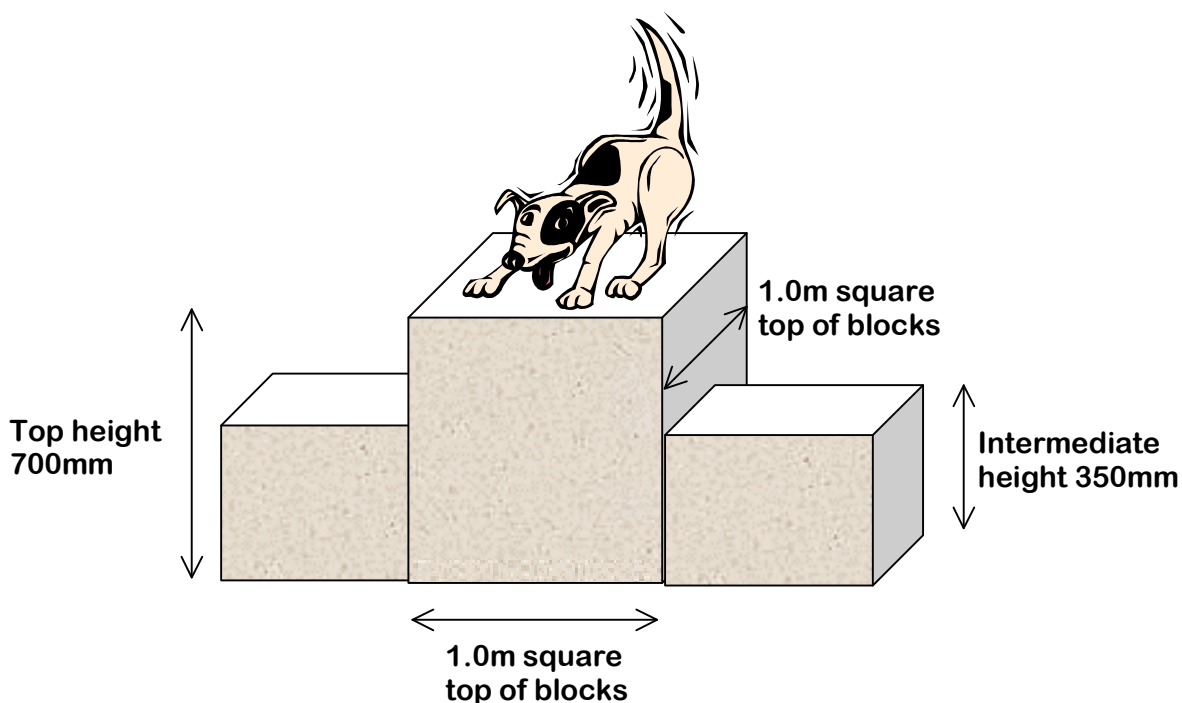


TABLE TOPS AS CONSTRUCTED



TABLE TOPS AFTER 4 MONTHS USE



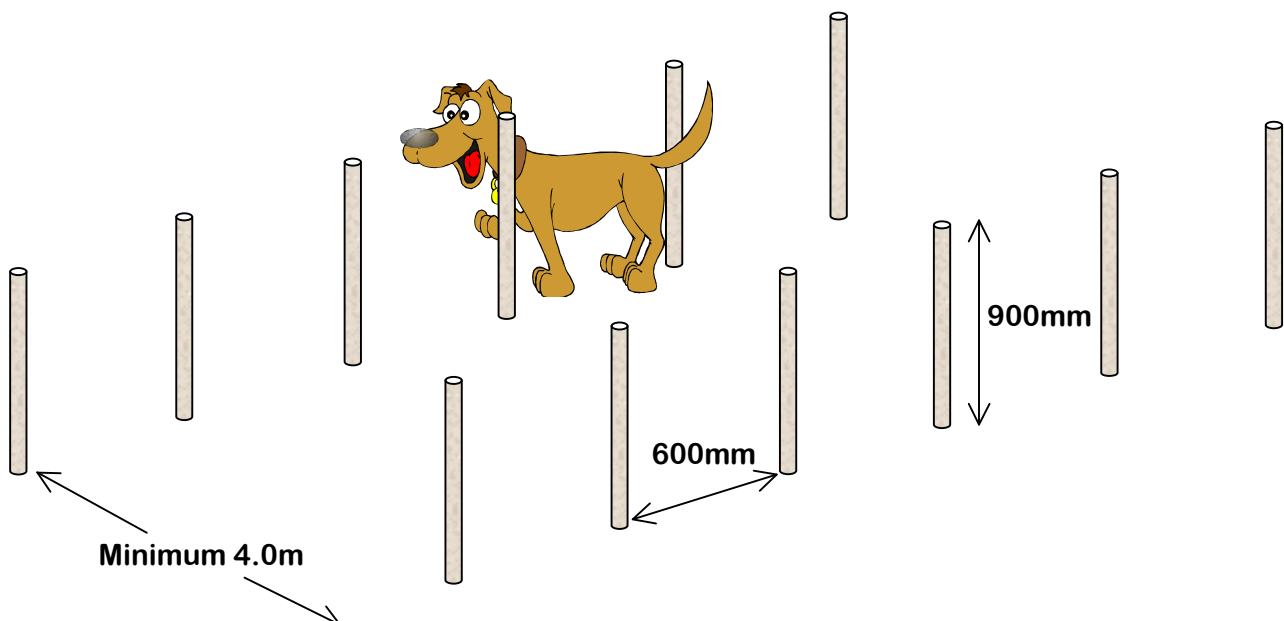
6.5 WOODY WEAVES

Activity: Dogs weave through poles

Key design points:

- Clearance width between outside edges of adjacent consecutive poles: 600mm. Pole height: 900mm.
- Poles to have a round smooth surface to avoid splinters or injury when dogs rub against them when weaving.
- Diameter of poles not critical – use the minimum diameter to give sufficient strength to be robust. In the pilot, 100mm diameter posts were used.
- Two sets of 6 weaves situated side by side, minimum 4.0 metres apart.
- As this element is also very easy to move, instead of improving the surrounding surface if it gets muddy, the activity can just be moved to a new location.
- Whilst evaluation showed weaves to be the least liked element, they were still well used, and had to be moved due to the area around them becoming muddy.

ORIGINAL DESIGN CONCEPT



WOODY WEAVES AS CONSTRUCTED



WOODY WEAVES AFTER 4 MONTHS USE



6.6 OVER AND UNDER

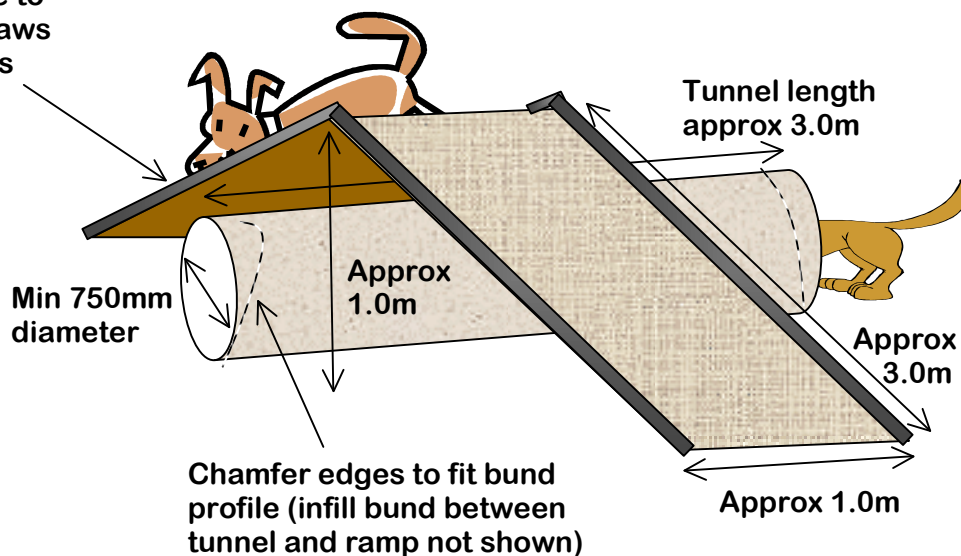
Activity: Dogs go over the ramp and through the tunnel

Key design points:

- Ramp width: approx 1.0 metre. Ramp length: approx 3.0 metres.
- Ramp surface to be non-slip with grooves or slats if required. In the pilot this was achieved by varnishing the surfaces and then applying sand whilst wet.
- Pipe minimum internal diameter 750mm. Approx overall length 3 metres.
- Chamfer ends of pipe tunnel to match profile of earth bund (not shown) providing infill between ramp, tunnel and ground.
- Pipe to have a smooth internal surface to aid cleaning and observation of any debris left inside (eg glass).
- Pipe tunnel to be installed with a gentle slope to prevent internal pooling of water.
- Area underneath ramp and around pipe tunnel to be covered by earth bund or other material to support ramp, appear more natural, prevent dogs or people walking on pipe surface, and avoid unauthorised pipe movement/rolling.

ORIGINAL DESIGN CONCEPT

Rail or similar to give 50mm high edge to ramp to avoid paws slipping off sides



OVER AND UNDER BEING BUILT



OVER AND UNDER AFTER 4 MONTHS USE



6.7 WATER SPLASH

Activity: Dogs go for a swim / paddle

Key design points:

- Dog walkers will often seek out safe areas of water, providing their dogs like to play in it, and the owner doesn't mind them getting wet.
- By providing a specific water area, potential impacts on more sensitive areas of water can be reduced.
- The pilot water splash used an unmodified, existing pond. Its incorporation into the trail was achieved simply by signage.
- As some owners may not want their dogs to get wet, there should be an alternative path to avoid the water.
- A water feature's suitability (including depth, slope, banks, hidden hazards) should be locally risk assessed and appropriate judgements made.

WATER SPLASH AFTER 4 MONTHS USAGE



7 APPENDIX 1: PILOT TRAIL EVALUATION RESULTS

Most frequent responses underlined

Percentages do not always sum to 100% due to data rounding

Trail constructed: March 2008
Officially opened: 13 June 2008

Survey period: 10th (Friday) & 11th (Saturday) October 2008 with periods covering dawn and dusk, as well as daytime.

Interviewees: 45

Interviewee profile:

Age: 9% 16–24 18% 25–34 20% 35–44 27% 45–54 13% 55–64 13% 65+

Gender: 48% male 52% female

Any long standing illness, disability or infirmity:

11% - in only one case (2%) did this limit their activities in any way.

Cultural or ethnic background:

91% White 2% Mixed 2% Asian or Asian British 4% Black/Black British
 0% Chinese/other

Interviewee employment relating to dogs: None

Number of dogs being walked: 68 **Average:** 1.5 dogs/interviewee

Journey to trail: 98% came to the site from home – average 8 minute drive

Average time at site before activity trail: 65 minutes

Average time at site after activity trail: 68 minutes

Dog size:

Small: eg terrier / toy dog	15%	Medium: eg border collie / Labrador	<u>65%</u>	Large: golden retriever or larger	21%
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1. “Over the last week, how often have you walked with at least one dog anywhere?”

16% 14+ times/wk	40% 8-14 times/wk	<u>44%</u> 1-7 times/wk
0% 1 – 3 times/month	0% Less often	

2. “Over the last week, how often have you come to Coatham Woods with a dog(s)?”

0% 14+ times/wk	29% 8-14 times/wk	<u>71%</u> 1-7 times/wk
0% 1 – 3 times/month	0% Less often	

3. "How do you usually get here to walk your dog(s)?"

100% car 0% walk 0% public transport 0% other

Interviewee involvement with dogs over the last 12 months

	Regularly	Occasionally	Not at all
I own a dog(s) or have a dog(s) living in my household	<u>93%</u>	2%	4%
I look after or walk somebody else's dog	16%	22%	<u>62%</u>
I walk with other people accompanied by a dog(s)	22%	<u>53%</u>	24%

Perceived impact of the trail on interviewee and dog(s)

Because of the activity trail...	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree or disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
I come to Coatham Wood more frequently to walk my dog(s)	0%	<u>64%</u>	13%	20%	2%
I came to Coatham Wood for the first time	4%	<u>78%</u>	2%	11%	4%
I feel more welcome here as a dog walker	0%	16%	9%	<u>69%</u>	7%
My dog has become healthier/lost weight	0%	<u>36%</u>	29%	<u>36%</u>	0%
My dog is less obedient here	2%	<u>78%</u>	16%	2%	0%
I am more sociable with other dog walkers who come here	0%	20%	11%	<u>67%</u>	2%
I recommended Coatham Wood to someone who had not been here in the last 12 months	0%	9%	2%	<u>73%</u>	16%
I use the activity trail more than other parts of the wood.	2%	<u>56%</u>	24%	18%	0%
I am more active walking my dog here	0%	27%	13%	<u>58%</u>	2%
Coatham Wood is a more enjoyable place to visit	0%	11%	4%	<u>78%</u>	7%
I have become more likely to participate in dog agility or other forms of dog training / competition / sports	0%	<u>60%</u>	18%	22%	0%

Interviewees' assessment of the trail itself

The activity trail...	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree or disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
Should be marked with arrows to make it easier to find your way from one activity to another	0%	40%	13%	<u>44%</u>	0%
Is safe for my dog to use	0%	2%	0%	<u>89%</u>	7%
Signage boards along the trail do not give enough information	7%	<u>80%</u>	11%	0%	0%
Information in the car park is insufficient	4%	<u>73%</u>	13%	7%	0%
Has resulted in more dog poo left on paths	2%	<u>58%</u>	16%	22%	0%
Is designed to be usable by most sizes of dog	0%	2%	0%	<u>91%</u>	4%
Activities should be made more difficult	0%	<u>60%</u>	13%	24%	0%
Should have more activities	0%	29%	7%	<u>62%</u>	0%
Route should be made longer	0%	<u>51%</u>	22%	24%	0%

Trail elements least / most liked

Trail element	Liked most	Liked least	Interviewee comments
Tunnel time	<u>30%</u>	16%	"Easy for older dogs – no jump or climb required" "Dog doesn't like enclosed spaces"
Woody weaves	2%	<u>23%</u>	
Jump around	14%	7%	"Jumps a bit high for a small dog"
Log walk	18%	0%	"Easy for dogs to do and gives confidence"
Table tops	2%	14%	
Water splash	23%	14%	Disliked by owners who don't want dog to get wet / muddy
Jump in the box	9%	11%	
None	0%	16%	
All	2%	0%	

Interviewee comments during questioning:

- Unprompted, interviewees were very appreciative of Coatham Wood and the efforts of the Forestry Commission, as they felt there were few other places to go to exercise their dogs, without undue restrictions or worry.
- Views greatly influenced by general preferences of dog (eg likes/dislikes water / jumping), or owners – “don’t like him to get wet/muddy”.
- Ability to negotiate elements also influenced choice – more capable owners found the simpler elements (eg table tops) “boring”; owners who could not get their dogs to weave, disliked the woody weaves because they “could not do them”.
- Some owners made comments about not understanding some elements or not being able to do them “right”. Encouragement that any interaction or a “freestyle” approach is fine, may be helpful to dispel any feeling of right and wrong ways to use the trail.
- Interviewees with two dogs sometimes found difficulties doing activities with both dogs at the same time; lead hooks/tie-ups at each element would facilitate better training/interaction by one dog at a time.
- One interviewee thought the tunnel looked unsightly where the grass had not established.
- Only one interviewee reported not finding all 8 elements.

Questionnaire used for pilot trail evaluation interviews: page 1/3**Activity trail evaluation 2008**

Surveyor initials: ___ Survey date: ___ / ___ /08 Start time: ___:___ Sequence No: ___

If group, number in group of: adult male humans: ___ adult female humans: ___ Total No of dogs: _

STATE (approximately): *"I am doing a survey for the Forestry Commission about the activity trail, to help make these better for dog owners elsewhere – it takes about 10 mins. I also have some free biscuits for your dog, if you can spare the time to answer a few questions.*

ASK: *"Have you been interviewed before about this in the last 7 days?"* If Yes, thank & end.

NOTE: numbers and sizes of dogs present with interviewee: (put one tick per box per dog)

Small - eg
terrier/toy dog

Medium: eg border
collie / Labrador

Large: golden
retriever or larger

4. Over the week, how often have you walked with at least one dog anywhere:
14+ times/wk 8-14 times/wk 1-7 times/wk 1 – 3 times/month Less often

5. Over the last week, how often have you come to Coatham Woods with a dog(s):
14+ times/wk 8-14 times/wk 1-7 times/wk 1 – 3 times/month Less often

6. Over the last month, how many dogs have you usually walked here at one time? _____

7. How do you usually get here to walk your dog(s)? (circle one)

car walk public transport other _____

8. Do you usually come here from home? Yes / No If yes, how long does it take? ___ mins

9. Before the activity trail, how long was an average visit here with your dog: ___ hrs ___ mins

10. Since the activity trail, how long is an average visit here with your dog: ___ hrs ___ mins

11. About you (the interviewee): (circle answers)

Full postcode: _____ Age: 16–24 25–34 35–44 45–54 55–64 65+ Male Female

12. Do you have any long standing illness, disability or infirmity? By this I mean anything that has troubled you over a period of time or that is likely to affect you over a period of time.

Yes / No

IF YES: Does this limit your activities in any way?

Yes / No

13. SHOW CARD: Which of these terms best describes your cultural or ethnic background?

Questionnaire used for pilot trail evaluation interviews: page 2/3

14. Your involvement with dogs: these statements help us to understand the degree of involvement that you have with dogs over the last 12 months.

	Regularly	Occasionally	Not at all
I own a dog(s) or have a dog(s) living in my household	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I look after or walk somebody else's dog	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I walk with other people accompanied by a dog(s)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

15. Do you have a paid job related to dogs – eg vet, dog walker, trainer? Yes / No

If Yes, please state: _____

16. Impact of the trail on you and your dog (tick one option)

Because of the activity trail...	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree or disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
I come to Coatham Wood more frequently to walk my dog(s)					
I came to Coatham Wood for the first time					
I feel more welcome here as a dog walker					
My dog has become healthier/lost weight					
My dog is less obedient here					
I am more sociable with other dog walkers who come here					
I recommended Coatham Wood to someone who had not been here in the last 12 months					
I use the activity trail more than other parts of the wood.					
I am more active walking my dog here					
Coatham Wood is a more enjoyable place to visit					
I have become more likely to participate in dog agility or other forms of dog training / competition / sports					

Questionnaire used for pilot trail evaluation interviews: page 3/3**17. About the design of the trail itself**

The activity trail...	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree or disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
Should be marked with arrows to make it easier to find your way from one activity to another					
Is safe for my dog to use					
Signage boards along the trail do not give enough information					
Information in the car park is insufficient					
Has resulted in more dog poo left on paths					
Is designed to be usable by most sizes of dog					
Activities should be made more difficult					
Should have more activities					
Route should be made longer					

Clarification comments:**18. SHOW CARD: Here are some pictures of the activity trail elements. Which activity do you like the most and least, and why:** (use picture number of element to code most/least – or write “none” or “all”)

Liked most: Reason: _____

Liked least: Reason: _____

Thank interviewee.

Explain the findings will be used to improve trails for dog owners.

Give biscuits in poo bag