Notice of the Final Oral Examination
for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

of

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MES (Lakehead University, 2006)
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“Influences of Social Norms, Habit and Ambivalence on Park Visitors’ Dog Leash Compliance for Protecting Wildlife”

Department of Geography

Tuesday, May 19, 2015
10:00 A.M.
David Turpin Building
Room A144

Supervisory Committee:
Dr. Peter Keller, Department of Geography, University of Victoria (Co-Supervisor)
Dr. Rick Rollins, Department of Geography, UVic (Co-Supervisor)
Dr. Robert Gifford, Department of Environmental Studies, UVic (Outside Member)

External Examiner:
Dr. Glen T. Hvenegaard, Environmental Science and Geography, University of Alberta

Chair of Oral Examination:
Dr. Gary MacGillivray, Department of Math, UVic

Dr. David Capson, Dean, Faculty of Graduate Studies
Non-compliance with visitor regulations in national parks can have an impact on park conservation and the experience of other park visitors. Park management in Pacific Rim National Park Reserve located on the west coast of British Columbia, Canada is challenged by visitors’ non-compliant behavior concerning regulation to keep dogs on the leash in the park. Dogs that run free (off-leash) on the beaches of the park disturb migratory shorebirds, and have the potential to habituate wolves to regard dogs as objects of prey. This study investigates why many visitors opt for non-compliance with regulations aimed at conservation. The goal of the study is to contribute new insights that may help park management find workable solutions to deliver the ‘dual mandate’ of managing protected areas both, for conservation and for nature-based tourism.

The study is grounded within the context of Lefebvre’s (1991) notions of the production of space, and recent work in animal geography that addresses the changing role of our canine companions in modern society. The methodology combines qualitative and quantitative research applying Fishbein and Ajzen’s (2010) theory of planned behavior (TPB). The research is presented using a journal format, which unavoidably implies some repetition of information but allows for the different sections to be read as stand-alone documents. The thesis starts with an introductory chapter. This is followed by a book chapter published in Domesticated Animals and Leisure (Carr, 2015 in press) that reports highlights from qualitative research exploring why park visitors appear reluctant to comply with on-leash rules. Results reveal the beach as a contested space, driven by a strong off-leash social norm. Chapter Three is a journal article format paper that reports on a quantitative survey based on the theory of planned behaviour (TPB) to identify beliefs that underlie visitor behaviour. Results indicate that habit, with respect to dog leashing when at home and on previous visits to the park, appear to impact the ability of the model to predict future behaviour. Chapter Four is a second journal article format paper where it is suggested that ambivalence influences the relation between behavioural beliefs and attitudes in the TPB, resulting in non-compliance behaviour. A concluding chapter summarizes how results presented in the three main chapters contribute to the body of knowledge on animal geography, compliance and research using the TPB, as well as suggesting techniques that park staff should consider for managing visitor behaviour under situations of apparent non-compliance.