



# How to Visit Cougar Country



### Protect your pets

Always keep dogs under control, and preferably on a leash no longer than 6-feet in cougar country. Do not let dogs chase or harass wildlife.

### Practice cougar friendly recreation



- Hike in groups when possible, and keep small children and pets close to people.
- Avoid using headphones, they prevent you from being aware of your surroundings.
- Hike during daytime hours when pumas are less active.
- Do not approach wildlife, including carcasses.
- When biking, ride in groups when possible, and use a bell or a sound making device to alert wildlife of your approach.



### Carry an airhorn or bear spray (and know how to use it)

Airhorns and bear spray can deter an approaching puma. Keep these items easily accessible on a strap or belt rather than tucked inside a bag. Know how to use bear spray before carrying it out on a hike, and store bear spray correctly when not in use. These tools can be helpful for interactions with other wildlife as well like bears, moose, wild pigs, etc.



### Know how to handle puma encounters

If you encounter a puma, make sure to stay facing the puma, and do not run. Slowly remove yourself from the area while keeping an eye on the puma. Maintain a safe and quick escape route for the puma to leave the area, and create as much space as possible between you and the puma. If the puma approaches, make yourself big and shout at the animal to scare it off. If you have a bike or walking stick, place these items between you and the puma. It is exceedingly rare that pumas make physical contact with people. If a puma continues to approach you, use rocks, sticks or other items to discourage the puma from coming closer or to defend yourself if necessary. Puma attacks are VERY rare, and the vast majority of puma encounters end with only the excitement of seeing such an elusive animal.



### Puma sightings are rare, and encounters are even less common

Even so, it's a good idea to know how to respond in the unlikely event that you do see a puma. Alert local wildlife authorities about your puma sighting so they can record it for both monitoring and safety purposes, and if you have questions or concerns regarding your sighting. We can coexist with pumas and keep people and pumas safe.