

Still Feral and Looking for Poop

In Meeker Park

By Kitty Burton

I walk in the woods almost every day, year around. The only days my Jack Russell and I skip our walk are when the wind is so fierce that I can not remain vertical, or white outs. Even only half a mile into the forest, I can become disoriented and anxious in a white out snow. I carry a compass and a whistle on my walks.

On any given day, you can see me pause to contemplate wild scat. Deer, elk, moose, bear, mountain lion, coyote, and even rabbit; I like them all! Except domestic dog poop. I have said, "Oh, domestic dog poop, how fascinating," never. Domestic dog poop is a thing of feuds. Montague: "I doth chunk your dog's poop in your general direction." Capulet: "Thou hast insulted my person too much! On guard!" As you know, this story does not end well. There are far too many people, and therefore, domestic dogs, to fail to scoop the poop. I venture to guess there are a greater number of domestic dogs than four legged wild creatures. Domestic dog poop washes into waterways and is polluting. It would be better if we all just pick the stuff up.

Wild scat, however, is fascinating. I often do field lab dissections of scat with a stick and my boot toe. Coyotes are omnivores. Their scat is full of seeds, berries, grass and animal fur, and is relative in size to German Shepherd poop. Mountain Lions are carnivores. Their scat is longer, twisted and chuck full of deer hair. Bears are omnivores and their scat can contain most anything, like coyotes. Bear scat is large and composed of a mixture of cow patty shapes and kielbasa sausages. Deer scat resembles dark chocolate covered almonds, but more rounded. Elk scat is more like packed chocolate peanut clusters, while moose scat resembles milk chocolate salted caramel truffles. Rabbit scat varies between dark chocolate covered currents to raisins, depending on the size of the rabbit. Now that you know scat identification, you too can contemplate scat in the forest!