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JUNE 2010

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MOST WIDELY READ
DOG MAGAZINE

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**PLUS CANINE
SHOWCASE**





Amusement America's Best Dog Park

**Check out the top 40
dog parks in the country
and the winner of
America's Best Dog Park.**



Twenty years ago, if you were shopping for a house, a typical question might be, “How are the neighborhood schools?” Now, if there’s a dog in the home, you will likely ask, “Where’s the nearest dog park?”

Oh, what a difference two decades make. Dog parks are flourishing from coast to coast, from big cities to rural towns. Although every dog park helps your pooch burn energy, some dog parks deserve to be dubbed the leaders of the pack.

So in honor of DOG FANCY’s 40th anniversary, we received your nominations and scoured the country to find the best dog parks for dogs and dog lovers.

We awarded extra points to dog parks with an active community group, because in our experience, passionate volunteers make not just the dog park, but the entire community a better place for dogs. We also gave high marks to parks that hold educational workshops or low-cost health clinics.

And in a hearty nod to fun, we sought out places that sport tail-wagging features — think splash pools and agility equipment — as well as ample opportunities for human users to connect, whether at fun events like social mixers or down-and-dirty cleanup days.

The result: 40 amazing dog parks that will delight and inspire you.

BY
MAUREEN
KOCHAN

1 Jackass Acres K-9 Korral

New River, Ariz.

www.anthempets.com

Highlights: Green dog park, complete with recycling program; separate obstacle equipment for small and large dogs; doggie shower; monthly educational events; lost-and-found-pet hotline; low-cost microchip and vaccine clinics held several times a year.

Their secret: Think outside the (dog park) box. When the foreclosure crisis hit Arizona several years ago, Jackass Acres K-9 Korral’s nonprofit community group, Anthem Pets, swung into action. Volunteers reached out to families in danger of losing their homes, offering free dog food or other help, including referrals to real estate agents who specialize in pet-friendly rentals.

“We do everything we can to keep the pet [and] family together,” says Barbara Windgassen, president of Anthem Pets. When that’s not



COURTESY, JUDY MARIANICH/JACKASS ACRES K-9 KORRAL, © 08/2011

possible, volunteers foster and rehome relinquished or abandoned pets. “We have not sent one animal to a shelter,” Windgassen says.

COURTESY LINDA AND STEVE KENNEDY/WOODF, P.A.C., PARK

2 Pilgrim Bark Park

Provincetown, Mass.

www.provincetowndogpark.org

Highlights: Whimsical benches, including one that looks like a miniature version of the Mayflower; memorial park; sponsored *War Dogs of the Pacific* movie at a film festival.

Their secret: Dream big. For dog parks like Pilgrim that receive no government dollars, fundraising is a big deal. Last year, Pilgrim took a chance and invited comedienne Lily Tomlin — a frequent visitor to the area — to perform pro bono at a fundraiser. She accepted, and the event, dubbed “The D Word,” drew almost 1,000 people — and raised critical funds for new shade structures at the park.



COURTESY COLO NOSE PHOTO

to throw a party; its Pictures with the Easter Bunny event draws big crowds. But the dog park also feels a duty to educate — not just entertain — visitors. Workshops like Meet the Vet and CPR for Dogs prove dog parks can be important avenues for public education.

4 Cosmo Dog Park

Gilbert, Ariz.

www.gilbertaz.gov/parks/cosmo

Highlights: Lake with dock for jumping; agility equipment; covered picnic areas.

Their secret: Move beyond chain link and boring concrete. Park planners decorated Cosmo Dog Park with dog lovers in mind: Pawprint designs appear everywhere — on the sidewalks and light posts — and there’s even a pawprint “bridge” that spans the lake. A striking brick memorial walkway, with some 1,400 inscribed bricks, allows residents to pay tribute to gone-but-not-forgotten pets.



COURTESY SCOTT MATTINGLY

3 Kenton Paw Park

Covington, Ky.

www.kentonpawpark.com

Highlights: Regular pool parties; agility equipment; Kenton Paw Park calendar and T-shirts.

Their secret: Harness the dog park’s power to educate. Sure, Kenton Paw Park knows how



COURTESY MARK BENNETT, COSMO DOG PARK



COURTESY JOHN LENT, PUPTOWN DOG PARK

5 Puptown Dog Park

Chicago

www.puptown.org

Highlights: Halloween costume contest; regular canine health seminars; quarterly meet-and-greets.

Their secret: Size doesn’t matter. Nestled in big-city Chicago, Puptown doesn’t occupy a Texas-sized space. But what the park lacks in land they make up for in big-time community spirit, from a rollicking Howl-o-ween celebration and costume contest to frequent meet-and-greets, canine health seminars, and park cleanup days.

6 W.O.O.F. P.A.C. Park

Santa Maria, Calif.

www.woofpac.org

Highlights: Coin-operated dog wash; boot scrapers; Woofstock festival with dog barking contest — for people!

Their secret: Remember humans, too. W.O.O.F. P.A.C. (Winners of Off-Leash Freedom Pooch Action Committee) pays attention to

both dog and human comfort: Strategically placed boot scrapers await muddy visitors, baskets corral items such as keys and dog leashes, and there’s even a coin-operated dog wash.



COURTESY WENDI RISER, HERMON DOG PARK

7 Hermon Dog Park

Los Angeles

www.hermondogpark.com

Highlights: Monthly Yappy Hour with vet-care specialist; dog adoption drives; Halloween party features a Peanut Butter Lick-Off contest.

Their secret: Embrace social networking. Hermon Dog Park understands that dog parks are important not just to dogs, but also to people. Popular park events include monthly Yappy Hour parties, and the park’s Santa Paws Squad appearance in a local Christmas parade draws fans. But the park is also great at organizing dog lovers online via a regularly updated website and Facebook page.

8 Prairie Pastures Dog Park

Clinton, Iowa

www.soaringeagle.20m.com



COURTESY ANITA SWEARINGEN



Highlights: Play equipment includes pools in summer; annual ice cream social; Easter biscuit hunt.

Their secret: Reuse, recycle, repurpose. Prairie Pastures sits on the site of a former zoo, which has been reborn as a doggie wonderland: A former monkey cage lives on as Splashy Waters, an area for wading pools in warmer months, and a former petting-zoo barn serves as a covered venue for educational and other events.

9 Wantage Dog Park

Wantage, N.J.

www.wantedogpark.com

Highlights: Spring Lab Fest event; special no-freeze doggie water fountain; agility equipment.

Their secret: Practice tried-and-true fundraising. Wantage Dog Park — New Jersey's largest — doesn't receive any government money and raises funds the old-fashioned way, via a yearly giant garage sale and three low-tech but effective

donation boxes. Since opening three years ago, the dog park has raised over \$100,000.

10 Bow Wow Beach Dog Park

Stow, Ohio

www.stow.oh.us

Highlights: Lake; beach; Bow Wow Beach Birthday Bash.



Their secret: Make it fun, and they will come. Bow Wow Beach attracts people and dogs from far and wide to its sandy dog beach and 3-acre spring-fed lake. Other popular draws include the annual Bow Wow Beach Birthday Bash, while park fans consider Bow Wow Beach T-shirts a fun and fashionable must-have.



THE REST OF THE BEST



11. Alum Creek Dog Park
Lewis Center, Ohio
www.alumcreekdogpark.com

12. Millbrook Dog Park
Raleigh, N.C.
www.millbrook-dog-park.com

13. Oklahoma City Paw Park
Oklahoma City
www.pawok.com

14. Fort Woof Dog Park
Fort Worth, Texas
www.fortwoof.com

15. Paw Park of Historic Sanford
Sanford, Fla.
www.pawparksanford.org

16. Brookdale Dog Park
Bloomfield and Montclair, N.J.
www.brookdaledogpark.org

17. Friends Forever Dog Park
Freeport, Ill.
www.petfinder.com/~IL124/dogpark/index.html

18. Freedom Bark Park
Lowell, Ind.
www.freedombarkpark.org

19. Hondo Dog Park
Hillsboro, Ore.
www.hillsborodogs.com

20. Canine Meadows Off-Leash Dog Area at John Rudy County Park
York, Pa.
www.yorkcountyparks.org/park/pages/caninemeadows.htm

21. Tompkins Square Park Dog Run
New York, N.Y.
www.firstrunfriends.org

22. Congressman Bill Archer Bark Park
Houston
www.houstondogpark.org

23. Millie Bush Bark Park
Houston
www.houstondogpark.org

24. Biscuit Acres Bark Park
Tulsa, Okla.
www.tulsasouthsiderotary.org

25. Marymoor Park Dog Area
Redmond, Wash.
www.soda.org

26. Akron Dog Park
Akron, Ohio
www.akrondogpark.org

27. Point Isabel Regional Shoreline
Richmond, Calif.
www.pido.org

28. Howard & Erna Soldan Dog Park
Lansing, Mich.
www.lansingdogparks.com

29. Fort de Soto Park Paw Playground
Tierra Verde, Fla.
www.fortdesoto.com/pawplayground.php

30. Quiet Waters Park Dog Park and Dog Beach
Annapolis, Md.
www.friendsofquietwaterspark.org/dog.html

31. Waggin' Tails Dog Park at Centennial Park
North Platte, Neb.
www.ci.north-platte.ne.us

32. Doctors' Dog Park
Apopka, Fla.
www.apopka.net

33. LaPorte County Small Animal Shelter Dog Park
La Porte, Ind.
www.laportecountyparks.org/bark.html

34. Jefferson County Dog Park
Jefferson, Wis.
www.jeffersoncountywi.gov

35. Dog Fancier's Park
Las Vegas
www.accessclarkcounty.com

36. Tails 'N Trails Dog Park
Arlington, Texas
www.arlingtontx.gov/park/tailsandtrails.html

37. Ohlone Dog Park
Berkeley, Calif.
www.ohlonepark.org

38. Derry Dog Park
Derry, N.H.
www.derry.nh.us

39. Spencer Dog Park
Sioux Falls, S.D.
www.siouxfallsparks.org

40. Pooch Pines at Okeeheelee Park
West Palm Beach, Fla.
www.co.palmbeach.fl.us/parks/dogparks/poochpines **DF**

Maureen Kochan, the former editor of DOG FANCY, is a freelance writer and editor who lives in Southern California. She can be found most weekends at her dogs' favorite dog park, Oceanside Dog Park in Oceanside, Calif.

Want to find a dog park in your area? Visit our dog park locator at DogChannel.com/extras