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Park welcomes all pounding paws

Anderson offers dog recreation area on Round Bottom Road

By Linda Cagnetti
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In a neighborhood lauded for great parks, the newest meeting place is for dogs and dog lovers. A dog park has opened at Riverside Park on Round Bottom Road until a permanent 4-acre dog park at Kellogg Park is completed in June.

In less than three months, the temporary park is already a hit, judging by weekend gatherings and the calls and letters to the Anderson Twp. Park District.

"We've met some beautiful dogs and some wonderful people here," said Barbara Kubik, who shows up on weekends with Dickens and Bijou, two large lovable dogs of mixed-breed, along with her husband, Marty. "Everyone we meet is pleased with the space and if the dogs could talk, I'm sure they'd say they love it, too."

A dog park is a place dogs, supervised by their owners, can legally run off the leash in a safe, secure place. Both dogs and the people with them can exercise and socialize.

Any day at Anderson's dog park, you can find pooches - all sizes and breeds - running about the fenced ball field area.

They're cha

sing balls and Frisbees, sniffing everything in sight and occasionally sharing an oversized bowl or tub of water provided by one dog owner for any canine who shows up. Of course, trading dog stories is prime entertainment for the humans.

"We've met a whole new group of people at the dog park," said Kubik, one of the longtime Anderson residents who pushed for the dog park and is helping to raise money to pay for it.



Adam and Tracy Custer, of Milford, spend special time with their dogs Dingo (left) and Bear (center) at Riverside Park in Anderson Township. For now, the dog park is operating as a temporary site.



Dingo joins the pack at Anderson Township's dog park where all breeds and sizes abound.

The park is the result of tremendous interest and involvement of Anderson residents. Last year, a resident-driven committee asked the Anderson Board of Park Commissioners to build a dog park, but there was no money budgeted for it. The district could provide space, but "we told the residents they'd have to raise building and maintenance money on their own," said Amy Mollette, park district communication director..

The temporary park came as a result of a better-than-expected community involvement to raise the \$12,000 needed, said Mollette. By year's end, the volunteer dog park committee had raised more than \$8,000. More fund-raising is under way.

The money will be used to clear, prepare and fence the space at the permanent Kellogg Avenue dog park. Then, the group will need to raise about \$12,000 a year for operations and maintenance.

Until the new park opens, the temporary park remains open in one of the ball diamond areas at Riverside Park. Plans are to relocate the site to another area of Riverside Park when the spring sports season starts.

"The exact date for the move is undetermined," said Mollette, "but there will be signs within Riverside directing patrons and their dogs to the temporary location. There's room for everybody."

Anderson is the latest in a growing number of Greater Cincinnati communities with dog parks. Mount Airy and Mason have dog parks; "Wiggly Field" opened last fall in Butler County's West Chester Township; and a new parks are planned for Symmes Township, Fort Thomas and Kenton County. Boone County is considering one.

Meanwhile, Anderson's volunteer dog park committee is selling imprinted T-shirts, banner advertising and promoting a "wooden nickel" shopping project with Wild Oats Market. It's seeking donations from individuals and businesses, as well as grants from corporations and foundations.

This month members will start selling "memorial pavers" or commemorative bricks at \$50 each for the new permanent park.

For more information, visit the Anderson Park District Web site at www.andersonparks.com or phone Nancy Pennington, (513) 474-0003, ext. 5083, or e-mail her at npennington@andersonparks.com.

MORE INFORMATION

If you go

What: Temporary dog park

When: Dawn to dusk, daily. The park may be closed during bad weather, so call the Anderson Park District hot line at 357-6629 before you go.

Where: Riverside Park, 3969 Round Bottom Road, near Newtown. Signs are posted about which area to use.

Fee: User fee waived for now.

Rules: Dogs must be licensed, vaccinated and wear a collar with current tags. Female dogs in season and puppies under 4 months are not permitted. Owners must carry a leash, keep their dogs in view at all times and clean up after them.