

eye on the eastside

Poop bags' cost surprises park member

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By Lisa Wakeland • lwakeland@communitypress.com

The Anderson Township Park District spends a lot of money trying to get people to pick up after their pets, but it doesn't always work.

Park Commissioner Josh Gerth was surprised by a how much Mutt Mitts – the degradable bags provided for dog owners to put on their hand to pick up their dog's excrement – cost while reviewing financial reports at a recent Board of Park Commissioners meeting.



Mutt Mitts are available at many Anderson Township parks. (File Photo)

"We go through about \$7,000 worth of Mutt Mitts per year," Park District Executive Director Ken Kushner said. "They cost three to four cents per bag and some people still don't pick up after their pets."

Kushner said they often receive complaints about park users not picking up after the dogs.

He talked about a recent incident at Laverty Park where an owner let a dog excrete its feces in the new playground area, even though Mutt Mitts are available at that park.

"It's really disheartening to build a new playground and see that," Kushner said. "It comes down to the owners."

Dogs are allowed in all of the Anderson Township parks, but must be on a leash and owners are required to pick up after their pets.

The only off-leash area is at the Kellogg Park dog field and a permit is required.



Dogs are allowed off-leash at Kellogg Park, 6701 Kellogg Ave

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Eric Spangler
espangler@communitypress.com
513-576-8251



Lisa Wakeland
lwakeland@communitypress.com
513-248-7139



Forrest Sellers
fsellers@communitypress.com
513-248-7680



Rob Dowdy
rdowdy@communitypress.com
513-248-7574

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Park Commissioner Nadine Gelter said it can be difficult for responsible dog owners to see other park users breaking rules, even when they're posted around the parks.

There are signs alerting users that they can be cited for having dogs off-leash or for not picking up after the pets, but many people ignore them, said Emily Armstrong, assistant director for the park district.

"There are some people who really don't want dogs in the park because (of that)," she said.

Gerth noted that even though some residents do not pick up after their pets, many park users expect to see Mutt Mitts.

Park Commissioner Dale Bartholomew said the parks would be much worse if the degradable waste bags were not provided.

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