

## America's Best Dog Parks of 2008

**The country's first "green" dog park takes top prize.**

*Maureen Kochan*

Photos courtesy Patti Snyder and Judy Mariahazy  
Solar-powered dog washing station? Check. Recycled artificial turf? Check. Happy dogs? Double check.

Looks like the greening of America's dog parks has begun. DOG FANCY's Best Dog Park for 2008 is Jackass Acres K-9 Korral, in New River, Ariz., the country's first "green" dog park, complete with solar-powered lights, security system, and water pumps.

"We wanted to be a banner for solar in a state that has so much sun," says Barbara Windgassen, president of Anthem Pets, the nonprofit community group that lobbied for and built the dog park named for the former ranch on which it stands.

Other green features at the two-acre dog park, which opened in November, include decorative metal flowers made from old cars, furniture crafted from fallen timber, and recycled artificial turf.

But the dog park's do-gooding doesn't end there. It also hosts a hotline to help reunite lost pets and their owners, regularly holds microchip clinics for both dogs and cats, runs an educational program for new dog owners, and once even trucked in snow for kids and dogs to romp in.

Members pay \$35 a year for one dog and \$50 for two or more to join the park, and must provide proof of vaccinations. So far, more than 800 dogs have been registered.

Windgassen couldn't be more pleased with the park's success. She says, "This project is a perfect example of what a bunch of determined people can do when they set their minds to it."

The runners-up

**Bow Wow Beach**  
Stow, Ohio

When Bow Wow Beach opened last year, even the Stow mayor attended the grand opening. And it's no wonder — this fenced dog park boasts acres of grassy knolls, a stunning sandy beach, and a three-acre swimming pond.

**Broemmelsiek Park Off-Leash Dog Area**  
St. Charles, Mo.

This dog park became so popular that the St. Charles County parks and recreation department had to recruit and train volunteer "Watch Dogs" to help enforce park rules and answer visitors' questions about animal health and safety.

**Frankfort Bark Park**  
Frankfort, Ill.

Frankfort Bark Park knows its park regulars are busy. That's why the park association set up a vaccination database to help remind members when to update their dogs' shots. Other popular offerings include the Spring Pooch-a-Palooza and regular workshops.

**Hammel Woods Forest Preserve Dog Park**  
Shorewood, Ill.

Hammel Woods Forest Preserve Dog Park is seven fenced acres of free-range bliss in the middle of Illinois' Hammel Woods, a 300-acre outdoor haven near the DuPage River that's popular with hikers, campers, and picnickers.

**MonDaug Bark Park**  
Fort Washington, Pa.

Nestled in Pennsylvania's popular Mondauk Manor Park, this one-acre dog park sports separate areas for small and large

dogs, several double-entry gates, a stream, and nearby woods with dog-friendly walking trails.

**Paw OK Dog Park**  
Oklahoma City, Okla.

A duck pond and gravel beach where dogs can swim and play are the centerpieces of Paw OK. More than 40 trees, several park benches, and watering stations make the park a favorite among human visitors, too.

**South Brohard Beach Paw Park**  
Venice, Fla.

This one-acre fenced dog park features the only beach in the county that allows dogs. Other amenities include picnic tables, benches, and drinking fountains for dogs and humans.

**Wantage Dog Park**  
Wantage, N.J.

At eight acres, New Jersey's largest dog park attracts more than 1,000 dogs and owners a week. Regulars enjoy the park's mix of workshops and events, which include a popular Halloween costume parade and dog-owner dinner-dance.

**Woof Pac Park**  
Santa Maria, Calif.

Woof Pac Park rests on three acres in Santa Barbara County's Waller Park and hosts several popular events, including the Dog Days of Summer, with a human barking competition, working-dog demos, and paw "reading."

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