

America's Best Dog Parks of 2005

Houston wins top spot in DOG FANCY's dog park contest.

My, how far we've come!

Cutting-edge amenities such as manmade lakes, walking trails, seminars, and low-cost training now define the 21st century dog park. Here, we honor the country's 10 best. The Top 5 parks will each receive a \$10,000 grant for park improvements as part of Novartis Animal Health US Inc.'s "Play More" campaign to encourage canine exercise.

The top park in the nation, nominated by DOG FANCY readers, is Millie Bush Bark Park at 16756 Westheimer Parkway in Houston.

Never-say-die supporters waged a five-year campaign to open Millie Bush, Houston's first dog park, inside George Bush (Sr.) Park. And was this Texas-sized jewel ever worth the wait!

The 15-acre park, the largest to make our list, boasts three manmade ponds (one just for dogs under 20 pounds), ribbons of paved walkways, faux fire hydrants, covered benches, and a shower with foot controls for cleaning muddy, happy dogs before heading home. A clever website reports the park's ground conditions and gives an extended weather forecast so visitors can better plan their trips.

The park, named for the former first dog, is such a hit with residents that two other dog parks opened recently and additional ones are in the works. To find out more, visit www.houstondogpark.org.

Also winning grants are:

Fort Woof Dog Park
750 Beach St.

Fort Worth, Texas

Inside Gateway Park

www.fortworthdogpark.org

Popular amenities and a lively social calendar (the Barktoberfest singles' event sounds especially fun) earn this park the nod.

Alimagnet Dog Park
1200 Alimagnet Pkwy.

Burnsville, Minn.

Inside Alimagnet Park

www.alimagnetdogpark.org

This park's six lakeside acres play host to a summer festival that includes herding demonstrations, games, and a low-cost microchipping clinic.

Tompkins Square Dog Run (aka First Run)

Avenue A between 10th and 7th streets

New York, N.Y.

Inside Tompkins Square Park

www.firstrunfriends.org

Besides the chance for city dogs to romp on real earth, First Run offers low-cost obedience training plus a summer seminar series that features some of the country's foremost dog experts.

University City Dog Play Area

Corner of Vernon and Pennsylvania avenues

University City, Mo.

www.stldogparks.org

Holiday celebrations at this St. Louis-area dog park include photos with Santa Claus and a doggie Easter egg hunt.

Other great parks nominated by readers and making DOG FANCY's Top 10 list include:



Piedmont Dog Park,
400 Park Drive, Atlanta; inside Piedmont Park; www.piedmontpark.org

Wiggly Field,
2645 N. Sheffield St., Chicago; inside Noethling Park; www.wrightwoodneighbors.org/wiggly.htm

Chew Chew Canine Park,
1800 block of Carter Street, Chattanooga, Tenn.; behind First Tennessee Pavilion; www.focasinfo.org

Hazeldale Dog Park,
corner of 192nd Avenue and Farmington Road, Aloha, Ore.; inside Hazeldale Park; www.thprd.org

Best Friend Dog Park,
Edwards Street at Inlet Drive, Huntington Beach, Calif.; inside Huntington Central Park; www.surfcity-hb.org

For this year's winners, pick up the June 2007 issue of DOG FANCY.