

Independence Day



Monday

Sunny skies. Few clouds; warm temperatures **C8**



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Port Angeles-Sequim-West End

50 cents

Sequim park pleases dogs, owners alike

By **JEFF CHEW**
PENINSULA DAILY NEWS

SEQUIM — If members of Sequim Dog Park Pals had tails, they'd likely be wagging more these days.

The off-leash dog park, slightly more than four years old, has hundreds of dogs come and go each week.

Built in April 2007, the dog park, broken up into three off-leash sections, covers almost 2 acres at Carrie Blake Park today.

At any time during the day, up to 25 dogs of different sizes and breeds can be seen sniffing each other, roaming, slurping

water at the fountain, and that all-time favorite — chasing tennis balls.

"We are constantly looking for more members and active volunteers," said David Hannon, Sequim Dog Park Pals president.

An asset

Hannon uses the park himself and helps police the poop patrol, a detail that members agreed to when Sequim city leaders approved leasing the park, and still take seriously.

"It's definitely one of the best assets for the people of Sequim," Hannon added.

TURN TO **PARK/A6**

Park: Strict rules regulate use by owners, pets

CONTINUED FROM A1

Ruth Marcus and a handful of other Sequim residents worked with the city to start the park in the mid-2000s, seeking to give their pets an alternative to on-leash walks.

The park runs by strict rules, leaflets of which are available at the gates, which are designed with enclosures to allow owners to unleash their animals safely before they are released.

"Leash up and leave if your dog is acting aggressively or having a bad day," one of the rules says.

Popular park

Dog Park Pals board member John D'Urso said he was surprised by the park's popularity. It draws visitors and their dogs from even off the North Olympic Peninsula.

"Surprisingly, if people are visiting and they come here, they leave a donation," D'Urso said at the park.

D'Urso said 142 people on the Dog Park Pals email list get regular announcements.

Free email subscriptions are available at the group's site, www.sequimdogparks.org.

The site has dog-loving sponsors and even posts links to dog-friendly lodging establishments in the area.

"We even put out lost dog notices," D'Urso said.

Recreational-vehicle

tourist Jerry May of Tula-tin, Ore., was one of many who visited the park recently.

He was there with his wife, Marda, and their black Labrador, Brandi.

"This is nice," he said, looking over the park. "There are two big fields here to keep the wear down and that's a nice idea."

May said he would be taking the idea home to his town's dog park.

In the small dog section of the park, Norm Forney was keeping a close eye on his energetic Yorkie-dachshund mix, Lexi, which he takes there three times a week.

Exercise, social time

"It gives the dog exercise and a chance to interact with other dogs," he said.

On the other end of the dog-size spectrum, Faye Willkom of Carlsborg brought her 180-pound Great Dane mix, Eli, a gentle giant of a black-and-white animal.

"He comes here to meet and greet other dogs," Willkom said with a smile.

The park's popularity has spread to other Peninsula communities.

"We get a lot of people from Port Angeles," Hannon said.

"We support the idea for a dog park for Port Angeles."

A dog park fundraising group started by Richard Bonine, Port Angeles recre-



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Sequim resident Matt Sagen and his sheltie, Buddy, enjoy a day at the Sequim Dog Park recently.

ation services manager, and Port Angeles' two Rotary Clubs — the Port Angeles Rotary Club and the Nor'wester Rotary Club — aims to raise between \$40,000 and \$45,000 to build a three-quarter-acre dog park east of the BMX track at Linclon Park and cover maintenance costs for three years, as required by the city.

Bonine said donations would be returned if the dog

park doesn't come to fruition.

Jeff Edwards, Sequim city parks manager, said if it weren't for the dog waste problem, things would be perfect at the park.

"They try real hard, helping with fencing, putting up gates and helping with maintenance," Edwards said of the Dog Park Pals.

"The only problem is people are not picking up poop and need to do so."

He does not blame the Park Pals but other visitors who fail to pick up after their dogs.

Maintenance is not cheap either, he said, with poop bags alone costing \$5,000 a year. Other maintenance to the dog park costs about \$15,000 a year, which includes regular mowing.

"To me it was a very good thing that we did," Edwards said. "I'm glad that the park was built."

For more information about the Sequim dog park, see the group's website.

Donations for the Port Angeles dog park can be made to the Nor'wester Rotary Club at P.O. Box 176, Port Angeles, WA 98362. For more information, phone Bonine at 360-417-4551.

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