

# West Arvada Dog Park

By Friends of West Arvada Dog Park, Photo by Lisa Padgett



In 1996, a small group of local dog owners met with Arvada Animal Management to discuss the idea of creating an off-leash dog park in Arvada. With a shared belief that dogs have an important role in our society as companions, stress relievers and exercise motivators, work began with city officials and the Parks Advisory Committee. The dog park's mission fit so closely with Jeffco Open Space Foundation's mission that West Arvada Dog Park was able to have 501(c)3 tax-exempt nonprofit organization status through association with the Foundation. The park is also fortunate to have the continued support of Arvada Animal Management to help enforce park rules and advise "Friends of West Arvada Dog Park," the core group of a dozen volunteers.

In 2002, the city of Arvada selected 20 acres just east of Arvada/Blunn Reservoir on 64th Parkway as the park site. The park was designated as a "special use" park, meaning:

- The City of Arvada owns the park land, but does not contribute tax-dollars towards improvements,
- It is operated by volunteers with assistance from city staff; and
- It is funded with donations.

Nine years after the initial planning and several community meetings, fundraisers and hours of physical labor, the first phase opened on June 18, 2005. It has 5.3 fenced acres, double-gate entrances and two smaller enclosed areas for small and shy dogs. The \$35,000 cost was funded with \$10,000 in donations from community members and \$25,000 from Apex Park and Recreation District. The benches were donated by friends and family of Paul Beattie and Arvada Parks Maintenance Department. Two trees were donated by Trees Across Arvada. Bag dispensers and a sponsor's brick area were built by Boy Scouts as Eagle Scout projects.

Phase two opened in May 2011 expanding the fencing around 5.8 more acres. Donations and fundraisers covered the \$24,000 cost. Animal Urgent Care donated two benches. The City of Arvada added more bag dispensers and a Port-O-Let in the parking area (they also provide regular trash and Port-O-Let service). Boy Scouts are currently working on lost and found boxes, a leash rack and a shade structure.

Phase three will add an additional 8.2 acres and is estimated to cost \$40,000 to fence and develop. Fundraising continues towards this goal and for maintaining the existing improvements.

The dog park hosts fundraising and community outreach events throughout the year. The main fundraiser, an annual concert and silent auction at the DNote in Arvada, happens in February. As opportunities arise, smaller fundraisers, classes and events to support local dog rescues and shelters are organized. The largest event of the year, Festival at the Dog Park and Fun Walk in late September, was attended by more than 550 people and their dogs last year. This year, Sunday, September 30th is the date for the event. Interested vendors, rescue groups and sponsors can find more information about this and other events at [www.westarvadadogpark.org](http://www.westarvadadogpark.org) or on Facebook at [www.facebook.com/WestArvadaDogPark](http://www.facebook.com/WestArvadaDogPark). A volunteer-published quarterly newsletter is also available on the website as well as at the park and a few local businesses.

The park's continued success depends on volunteer and donor support. The core group of a dozen volunteers meets monthly to plan special events and handle operational details. Many other volunteers pitch in for special events and to help take care of things (bring bags and water, pick up trash and dog poop, shovel snow so the gates can open, etc.) during each visit. Thanks to growing attendance at park clean up days in the spring and fall, cactus at the park has nearly been eliminated and the park gets a thorough checkup so that any issues can be addressed.

If you have never visited the park, you are invited to bring your dog(s) to enjoy unleashed freedom while you enjoy a beautiful view of the foothills. Before entering, be sure to take note of the posted rules that help keep the park safe and fun for everyone. The walking path around the entire fenced area is .6 miles if you go through gates between phases. The natural grasses and clover are not mowed because doing so weakens their ability to withstand foot and paw traffic. Park users bring their own water and help keep numerous bowls filled. Connecting to a city water line is not planned as it is cost prohibitive for a donation-funded park. Most users agree that high-end amenities are not necessary and that the most important part is that the community has a safe, fenced, clean and friendly place for dogs and their people to socialize and for the dogs to have unleashed fun.

West Arvada Dog Park is located at 17975 West 64th Parkway. For more information, please visit [www.westarvadadogpark.org](http://www.westarvadadogpark.org).