

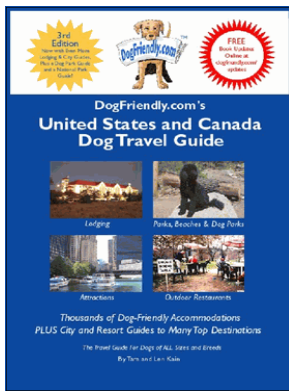
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



- ◆ First and foremost, dog parks are for people. They are places where dog owners and dog lovers can enjoy recreation with their pets.
- ◆ Friends of Belfast Parks is willing to spearhead a fund-raising effort to build a well-appointed, intelligently designed dog park in Belfast with no cost to city taxpayers; Friends of Belfast Parks will also provide 100 volunteer hours annually toward the maintenance of the dog park.



- ◆ More than 630 dogs live in Belfast, which means that approximately one in ten people around the city owns a dog; currently dog owners have no place in Belfast where they can safely allow their dogs to exercise off leash.
- ◆ Dogs by their physiology need to run; it's how they burn off excess energy and develop strength, stamina, and coordination. Many trainers rank exercise as more important than discipline or affection.



- ◆ Dog parks foster a culture of responsible dog ownership by providing a place where pet owners meet, talk, and reinforce sensible behavior.
- ◆ Many dog owners throughout the city and surrounding area have indicated their support for a secure area where their dogs could run safely, and their interest is endorsed by the growing number of dog-friendly businesses in the community.
- ◆ A well-run dog park could be another bona fide asset for the greater Belfast community — as inviting as other recreational outlets such as tennis courts, hiking trails, and senior college.



- ◆ A dog park would be attractive to the increasing number of tourists who travel with their pets — Belfast already has several dog-friendly motels, store, and galleries. With a dog park, Belfast would appear in state and national travel guides as a dog-friendly town.
- ◆ The city of Belfast would bear no liability for activity at a free, public dog park; liability for dog behavior would reside with individual dog owners, as it does currently.



- ◆ As of August 2007, the City of Belfast is in the process of acquiring the Walsh Field Recreation Area on Route 52 near the junction with Route 1, in which exists a 1.5-acre undeveloped area that appears to be the city's most suitable site for the establishment of a successful off-leash recreational area, otherwise known as a dog park.