

S. Tahoe park touted for dogs, but people like it too

By Kathryn Reed

It's hard to know if the dog park in South Lake Tahoe is for the four-legged members of the family to socialize or if it's really for the adults to get out and meet new people.

A lot of both often take place every day at the 2-year-old dog park.



Abbey and AJ
play at the
Bijou Dog Park
in South
Tahoe.

Photos/Kathryn
Reed

Some stay close to mom or dad, others play a game of chase, some want to be petted by unfamiliar hands, others tromp off on their own to check out the new scenery.

Although the area is divided into little and big dog sections, it's up to the owners to decide which area to go into.

In the case of Phiona, she prefers the big dog area despite being a small brown Boston terrier.

"She thinks she is a big dog," her dad Ted Rann said. "She

lives with big dogs."

The unique spelling of the 3-year-old's name is because her parents are Phillies fans. Hopefully, Phiona won't be teased at the dog park.

For John Andrews and Jessica Pederson they like the socialization aspect of the dog park for their terrier mix, Abbey, who is less than a year old.

"It teaches her manners," Andrews said.

Devin Morales knows the effort that went into building the dog park because he was employed by the Parks and Recreation Department at the time. Now he brings 10-month-old Jax, a coonhound, to the park at least once a week.

Morales hasn't witnessed one bad incident at the park.

What he likes is the dogs can run off leash without running off. The entire area is fenced. Coming in from the parking lot is a small holding area of sorts so no dogs on either side of the park can get out.

Benches are on both sides of the park. People who lost a furry friend donated most. People are sitting, chatting about their dogs – who prefers the cold, who likes to catch some rays, and so on.

Fire hydrants add a comical, though well used attraction. Water is available, though the faucets are shutdown this time of year. People have left bottled water for the animals.

Many of the dogs dashing around on the woodchips (the small dog area has some grass) are a mix of breeds. A Whippet is by himself in the small dog area. Running up and down the fence line, the bigger dogs next door try to keep up with this slick creature.

Alex Steel, who brings his black golden retriever to the park

three or four times a week said he may be the only one there at first, but within 10 minutes the park is howling. It's as though people drive by on Al Tahoe Boulevard see someone else at the park and decide to venture in.

Everyone on this particular Friday using the dog park is friendly – as are the dogs. People are quick to clean up after their dog. A lesson people walking along Al Tahoe Boulevard should learn.

The canine facility at Bijou Community Park opened Aug. 18, 2008. The nearly 1-acre site cost \$35,000 to build. It's one thing the three outgoing members of the City Council started and finished.

Details:

Open year-round, dawn to dusk

Closed Mondays from 8-11am for cleaning

No cost

No treats inside the park

Dogs must be 6 months old

(530) 542.6056

Website

Directions:

From Stateline, go about 3 miles into California

Turn left on Al Tahoe Boulevard at Denny's

Bijou Park is on the left, about a mile up

Circle around the parking area to reach the dog park.

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