

Pennsylvania Parks & Forests Foundation Fact Sheet for Friends Groups—Bark in the Park

When it comes to planning an event focused around our canine friends, it can be pretty overwhelming and you may not know where to start. Luckily, some of us here at PPF have hosted “Bark in the Park” events in the past, and have compiled this factsheet to help you get started too.

Location. Before you take another step in event planning, determine that your park is pet friendly! Not all parks are, so double check to make sure yours is. Coordinate with your park manager on the location, date and time best suited for a dog-centric day of fun and festivities. Typically, picnic areas or campgrounds may be a large enough space, but always check with your park manager first.

Promotion. In order to have a good turnout, you need to promote, promote, promote! Get the word out by creating and handing out flyers to local businesses, animal shelters and rescues, pet stores, community boards, and any other places you can think of where dog-loving people can easily spot them. Create a Facebook page, post on DCNR’s and PPF’s websites and reach out to local newspapers and radio stations. Some newspapers will post nonprofit events for free, so become familiar with your local media.

Sponsorship. Offering sponsorship and donation benefits can really help you get great dog-related businesses to participate in your event. Provide different monetary levels of participation for various organizations that choose to get involved. Offer things such as an ad in the program, name of the organization on the event T-shirt, a company’s logo featured on a banner, or a booth at the event for them at a discounted rate to promote their business. Remember to create a spreadsheet to keep



Doggie watching is part of the fun.
Photo: Pam Metzger

track of all of the people and organizations that donate or offer their services as a sponsor. You will need to track money received, plus it helps you reach out to them in the future. Don’t forget to thank everyone who participates!

Safety and Pet Etiquette.

Since there will be a lot of different breeds of dogs (and people) at the event, make sure you have signs (and plenty of them) posted and clearly visible to remind everyone to keep their dogs on leash. This is one of the most important items on your to-do list, so be sure every volunteer who works at the Welcome booth (may be a good idea to have one of those) knows to also verbally remind pet owners of this. Also, some dog owners may forget to bring their own waste bags, so be sure to provide waste bags and proper pet waste disposal units to keep the area clean and poo-free.



Well-behaved dogs on leashes are an event-organizer’s best friend
Photo: Pam Metzger

Plenty of water stations and shade for your canine visitors should also be provided. Having a first aid tent,



Agility demonstrations are among the most popular exhibits you can offer
Photo: Pam Metzger

for dogs and humans, is also a must in case of any injuries and accidents.

Exhibits, Demonstrations, and Workshops.

Here's where the fun comes in!

This is the part where you can get your creative juices flowing for

what kinds of workshops, contests, and exhibits you'd like to offer. Some pet clinics will provide discount vaccinations or microchips for a couple of hours, so that would be a nice idea to have available. You can reach out to your local ASPCA or Humane Society to ask if they'd like to participate with that. You can also have an adoption area, where local rescue groups can exhibit and provide information on how you can adopt a new furry friend! Sometimes these types of events can help those who haven't yet adopted a dog, and steer them in the right direction towards resources that will help them find the perfect addition to their family.

There are plenty of options available to you for what exhibits, workshops and contests you could provide, so here are a few ideas to help kick-start the brainstorming! Some of these activities and demonstrations have been tested out by PPF.

Workshops and Contests.

- Tie-dye your own pet bandana
- Doggie and Me nature hike
- "Pawprint" and finger painting (activities for kids to do with dogs)
- "Dogs in the Outdoors" photo contest
- Doggie "ice cream" eating contest
- Tail wagging contest
- Frisbee catching contest
- Doga (Dog yoga!)

Exhibits.

- Puppy play area (for the little guys who may not be ready to run with the big dogs)

- Alternative health and wellness, doggie massage
- Pet-friendly essential oils
- Wholesome, homemade dog foods and treats
- Animal rescue booths
- Service dog and/or therapy dog organizations (and demonstrations)
- ASPCA/Humane Society
- Vendors (retail, food for humans and dogs, pet sitters, pet spas, etc.)

Demonstrations.

- Agility course
- Service dog demos
- Hunting course

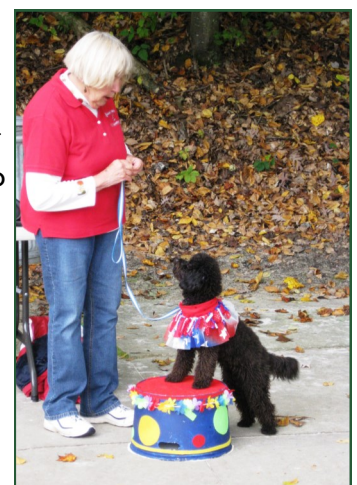
Resources. These links will direct you to resources that may help you in planning your own Bark in the Park.

- BDSRA's Dog Walk Planning Guide—www.bdsra.org/fundraising.html
- How to Organize a Dog Walk Fundraiser—http://www.ehow.com/how_7775106_organize-dog-walk-fundraiser.html
- Dog rescue groups, sorted by county, for Pennsylvania—<http://dog.rescueshelter.com/Pennsylvania>

Visit the PPF website for sample documents from our 2011 Bark in the Park at Colonel Denning that you may use for your event.

Reminders

- If you hold a raffle as a fundraiser, be sure to follow the *PPFF Policy for Fundraising Raffles* and to have your raffle permit in place before conducting the raffle.
- If you plan to have vendors on site selling their own goods, please be sure to obtain their sales tax identification numbers in accordance with the *Vendor List—Sales Tax ID Tracker*.



Look for unique demonstrations—the Steppin' Woofs dancing pooches were a hit at Colonel Denning!
Photo: Pam Metzger