



January Newsletter

Dear Park Users

Here we are in January already and hopefully we have all survived the holidays! We had a very busy and productive year in 2016 which included three major projects; installing a water line and faucet (\$15,000), a new shade structure in the south end (\$7000) and a new storage shed (\$2200). What a great year! I look forward to bigger and better things in the future. As your new Chair, I would like to take this time to share some of my thoughts on the Westgrove dog park and our Westgrove PACK activities. Our fall festival was a great success and raised about

\$5000 dollars toward new projects. We closed the south end of the park about mid December and will reopen it in the spring after the soil improvement, seeding and fertilizer routine is complete. During the winter we will occasionally open the south end, weather permitting, on weekends. I am pleased to say that Phase 1 of our improvements to the north end of the park appears to be mostly successful. The winter crop of grass along with filling in several low spots has improved the north end quite a bit but we still have work to do. Several areas are still too low and collected water during the rains we had recently. When we close the north end we will address these spots and begin working on Phase 2 which is a permanent fix to our drainage problem. We see this as the biggest challenge in 2017 as it involves working with several diverse groups to make the changes that have been recommended to us. In addition we have no idea what lies beneath the ground on the north end and will need to find out before any remedial work can begin. We will work closely with the FCPA to implement the changes but we know it will be a real uphill battle on the north end since the FCPA has threatened to turn it to stone dust.

Some other thoughts on our great park. From time to time we have noticed that two recurring problems have not gone away. The first is the issue of picking up after our dogs. While sometimes we, myself included, fail to see our dogs doing their business it there appears to be too many instances of poop that has not been picked up. One day I actually found seven separate "deposits" on my way to pick up Eli's. Others have complained about the amount in the park so we all need to be more diligent in picking up poop when we see it. A good habit to get into is to

point out a dog if the owner is not noticing the dog doing its business. People are not offended by this and most will thank you for pointing it out. Let's all try to be more considerate of our fellow park users.

Another issue that is even more sensitive is the presence of children in the park. The park authority rules do not allow children under the age of nine to be in the park even when accompanied by parents. There are two very good reasons for this rule. The first is the possibility of the child being knocked down by dogs being dogs and chasing each other. I saw this happen one day with a boy I thought was four or five and he had his legs knocked out from under him and his head hit the ground pretty hard. I went over to see if he was alright and his father was there with him. After we determined he was ok I tactfully pointed out that the rules of the park do not allow children under nine. He said he did not see the sign even though the PACK asked for, and FCPA provided, a larger stand alone sign with that rule on it. The second reason for the rule is that while most dogs tolerate or even like small children, some dogs do not. When we bring our dogs to the dog park we must remember that we, the owners, are responsible for what they do and we would hate for an incident to occur that is preventable. The members of the PACK and your officers cannot enforce the park rules. We can only point them out when appropriate and as tactfully as possible.

Hopefully through the holiday season when shopping on Amazon you were using Amazon Smile as this contributes a small amount to our PACK coffers. Please consider this in the future for purchases on Amazon. It is easy to do and I have set my account

up to always go to Amazon Smile.
(<https://smile.amazon.com/ch/46-3875990>)

Lastly but most importantly, the members of the board would like to ask you to attend our general meeting on January 23 at 7 pm at the Sherwood Hall library in the general meeting room on the first floor just past the checkout desk. Please consider attending this meeting as your board needs your input. Specific issues upcoming are deciding on priorities for 2017, discussing issues that arise from time to time and reports on our fiscal positions and ongoing maintenance and improvement activities. Our park users are the primary source of new ideas and suggestions to improve the park and the board values your opinions and your time.

Thanks again for your participation,

Barry Spangler
Chair - Westgrove PACK