

Park under development will be for four-legged users

Facility will have fenced-in areas for Rover to romp

By **ARTHUR HAHN**
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Brenham's newest park will be geared toward the "fur-wearing" set. Oh, and it'll help if you have four legs too.

Animal Friends of Washington County's new dog park is taking shape on the organization's spacious 43-acre tract on Highway 36 just north of Brenham. It's the first of its kind in the county.

It'll be located next door to Animal Friends' Connie Clinic, which provides low-cost spaying and neutering of pets, along with wellness care. More than 15,000 spay/neuter surgeries have been performed at the clinic since it opened in April 2008.

The dog park will be divided into two fenced-in sections — a six-acre one for dogs over 20 pounds and another for canines weighing less than 20 pounds.

Dogs will be free to romp around — without a leash — and can take a dip into a pond that will be located in each section.

The section for larger dogs will also have a separate fenced area for agility training.

Angela Knauss, president of

Animal Friends, said the purpose of the park is to provide "a setting for people and their pets to play and interact in a safe pleasant environment."

"Dogs are by nature social animals and benefit from interaction with other dogs and with a variety of people," Knauss said.

The park will provide a place for dog obedience classes, one of the main reasons that dogs end up in a shelter, said Knauss.

Construction of the two concrete-lined, bone-shaped ponds is complete, and plumbing has been installed for dog and people drinking fountains. There will also be a dog washing area, benches and covered seating areas.

Fencing is expected to be installed early this year, and the park has a target date of opening in early spring, said Knauss.

Knauss said Animal Friends wants the park to be "user friendly as much as we can," although details are still being worked out.

"We've been looking at some of the things other dog parks do," she said. "We want to be open from dawn to dusk, free and open to any one.

"It's for people who don't have dogs too. You can always go to a dog park and talk to somebody who has a dog."

Rules are expected to include no children below a certain age, and absolutely no food will be allowed. Dogs will have to be rabies vaccinated.

"It's all for the protection of people and animals," said Knauss. "The people (using the park) themselves will be the 'police.' If there's any sign of aggression (by a dog), they'll have to leave the park right away."

Funds to build the park have come from private contributions, with none from any local governmental entity.

So far, the park is coming in under-budget, said Knauss.

"We may not have the fanciest things, but everything we're doing is quality," she said.

Knauss that "many individuals" have contributed to the park,



Melissa McCaghren/Banner-Press

A bone-shaped pool is one of the amenities at a new dog park under construction at Animal Friends of Washington County's Connie Clinic off Highway 36. The new park will open sometime this spring.

with some local contractors offering extremely competitive fees.

She singled out Tom McKensie of Sun Pools, Danny Dahlquist of Dahlquist Plumbing, Danny Bil-

ski of Bilski's Tractor Work and Mark Wellman of K&W Dozer Service "for their extra efforts in sharpening their pencils on their bids."