



When dogs go off-leash to play in the best U.S. dog parks, they can expect no less than water fountains, swimming pools, double gates and exercise equipment. That is according to a new list of the top 10 dog parks announced as part of the *Play More* program sponsored by canine arthritis medication Deramaxx® (deracoxib). The Play More program encourages more exercise and active playtime by dogs, especially those with osteoarthritis.

The editors of Dog Fancy partnered with Deramaxx to conduct a first-of-its-kind review of U.S. dog parks based on a range of criteria from safety considerations to owner educational resources. With more than 700 dog parks across the country, their list recognizes the best parks for dogs in the United States today:

The Deramaxx Top 10 U.S. Dog Parks

1. Millie Bush Bark Park — Houston, Texas
2. Fort Woof Dog Park — Fort Worth, Texas
3. Alimagnet Dog Park — Burnsville, Minnesota (Minneapolis/St. Paul)
4. Tompkins Square Dog Run — New York City, New York
5. University City Dog Play Area — St. Louis, Missouri
6. Piedmont Dog Park — Atlanta, Georgia
7. Wiggly Field — Chicago, Illinois
8. Chattanooga Chew Chew Canine Park — Chattanooga, Tennessee
9. Best Friend Dog Park — Huntington Beach, California (Los Angeles)
10. Hazeldale Dog Park — Aloha, Oregon (Portland)

These parks will receive grants from Novartis Animal Health US,

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Inc., maker of Deramaxx, to augment accessibility for senior dogs and dogs that are disabled by the pain of arthritis.

With an estimated 10 million dogs afflicted with the disease and many more that are considered senior at 6 years old and older, accessibility at dog parks is a concern for nearly half the U.S. dog population. As the most common form of chronic pain in dogs, arthritis sidelines dogs of all breeds and ages.

For some parks, helping dogs disabled with arthritis could mean adding special exercise equipment designed to maintain or improve freedom of movement. Parks could also create roughhousing-free zones for senior and arthritic dogs, add steps or gradual slopes to existing water play areas or renovate walking paths with materials to ensure even, soft footing.

The Best Bark Parks

The 10 best U.S. dog parks go beyond these basics, however, providing a wide range of amenities and resources.

1. The Millie Bush Bark Park (www.houstondogpark.org) in Houston earned the top spot in part because of its unparalleled amenities that includes three manmade ponds built with steps and slowly sloping slides to accommodate senior dogs. Named after the late first dog of former President George H.W. Bush and Barbara Bush, the park boasts 15 acres with separate enclosures for large dogs and small dogs, water fountains for people and dogs, overhead canopies to provide shade from the sun and a shower to wash off dogs before heading home.

2. The Fort Woof Dog Park (www.fortworthdogpark.org) in Fort Worth, Texas, is a model for civic and community partnerships, built using donations from the community. The park has five acres of open space, water play areas, drinking fountains for people and dogs and a drainage system that keeps the grounds from becoming too wet and lights to keep the park open after dark.

3. The Minneapolis/St. Paul area Alimagnet Dog Park (www.alimagnetdogpark.org) in Burnsville, Minn., is honored as the third-best dog park in the country. Named after a nearby lake, the wooded park features seven acres of newly upgraded fenced area, including open grass areas, a swimming pond, double-gated entry and a nearby washing station. The park has numerous workshops and events, including the annual Dog Days of Summer festival.

4. The Tompkins Square Dog Run (www.firstrunfriends.org) in New York City is known by regulars as First Run. Located in the

East Village, the park has a large and small-dog area which provides the only non-pavement location in the city where dogs are legally allowed off-leash. First Run is undertaking a massive renovation to improve on the already impressive 18,000–square foot park by upgrading the surface of the run, water fountains and entrance areas to make them wheelchair accessible.

5. The University City Dog Play Area (www.stldogparks.org) is in St. Louis, Mo. suburb University City. Since its opening more than two years ago, the park has already become a model for dog park development by park and recreation boards statewide because of its sectioned areas for active dogs and less active dogs, lighting, running water, shaded areas, and benches, all financed by private contributions. With hundreds of regulars from all around the St. Louis metro area, the park raises contributions with fun events such as the annual Puppy Pool Party dog swim.

6. Piedmont Dog Park (www.piedmontpark.org) is located in the Midtown neighborhood of Atlanta and is one of the few public areas in the city where dogs are allowed to run off-leash.

7. Cleverly named after Chicago's famed Wrigley Field, Wiggly Field (www.wrightwoodneighbors.org) is the first official dog play and exercise area in Chicago and remains one of the most popular social gathering spots for dogs and dog owners in the city.

8. Located on prime real estate in downtown Chattanooga, Tenn., the Chattanooga Chew Chew Canine Park (www.focasinfo.org) opened in 2004 with all the amenities of a top 10 dog park, including water fountains, waste removal and agility equipment.

9. Best Friend Dog Park in Los Angeles–area Huntington Beach, Calif., provides a safe environment for active dogs or arthritic dogs alike, with large sectioned play areas for both. And the park's "Doggy Walk of Fame" features paw prints cast in stone of the local canine citizens.

10. The top 10 list is capped by the Hazeldale Dog Park (www.thprd.com) in Aloha, Ore., a community near Portland. Already fashionable among Portland's dog owner trendsetters, the area's parks and recreation board is working to build similar parks throughout the region.

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