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SEPTEMBER 2012

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Dogs Around the Bend

RESIDENTS OF THE WINNING OREGON CITY WORK, DINE, AND STAY FIT WITH THEIR DOGS.

BY LYNN M. HAYNER



Klondike, who belongs to Bend resident Laura Grayson, explores the outdoors in Bend.



Dog-friendly outdoor activities abound in Bend, Ore.

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Bend, OREGON

PEOPLE: 80,000
DOGS: 27,000

The city of Bend, Ore. — a place where dogs both work and play, ski and swim — claims the DogTown USA title for 2012.

Bend beckons dog owners with an abundance of pooch-included sports, activities, and events. “Winter recreation is a big deal here, and owners cross-country ski, skijor, snowshoe, and hike with their canine friends,” says Doug La Placa, CEO for Visit Bend, the city’s convention and visitors bureau. “New this year, our dog advocacy group, DogPAC, acquired a Sno-Cat — renamed “sno-dog” — to enhance trail grooming at Wanoga Sno-Park, resulting in a wonderful network of dog-friendly winter trails.” Area residents and winter visitors can watch

MAIN IMAGE: COURTESY LAURA GRAYSON; RIGHT: COURTESY DOGPAC



The late Bob Wenger, a prominent dog advocate in Bend, cycles with his dog Ryder near the city's Old Mill District.

Days event, featuring the recently launched Ruff Run 5K, crazy river retrieves, timed fetch, and the entertaining "hot dog on a spoon" race. And because canine fitness matters, the Humane Society of Central Oregon hosts a Healthy Hounds weight loss challenge, with a 3K walk.

Along with sports and play, owners and their dogs have the luxury of dining together at dozens of Bend restaurants that allow dogs in patio areas. The Bend Ale Trail is a network of 10 local breweries that blend into Bend's dog-friendly culture. "One of the newest breweries, GoodLife, opened last summer with a massive outdoor beer garden, where visitors are encouraged to bring dogs," La Placa says.

Tourists in Bend find many hotels enthusiastically welcome dog guests. The Oxford Hotel, for example, greets each canine with a personal bed proportional to his size, travel bowls, organic dog treats, and a map of walking trails and parks — for those in their party who can read, of course.

The business community in Bend caters to four-legged friends as well. "Bend is awash in businesses that produce dog-friendly products, allow dogs in the workplace, or welcome dogs with shoppers," La Placa says. "In Douglas Fine Jewelry, shoppers will be greeted by a friendly bully breed who's happy to lick their hands, and Sunnyside Sports and Eyes on Wall Street, a vision center, both have shop dogs on-site." Down the road, the Polka-Doodle Dog Bakery serves up healthy, fresh dog treats from original recipes designed over the course of 15 years.

While some Bend dogs watch over local shops, others help out with nature-oriented jobs. Mt. Bachelor Avalanche Rescue Dogs are skilled at locating victims under masses created by snow slides. They train on the mountain every day with their handlers to ensure the safety of both skiers and snowboarders. The dogs in the area's High Desert Search Dogs group focus on wilderness and urban tracking and trailing. Their motto: Lending a nose to help others.

Both dogs already in homes and dogs in search of homes find caring hands in Bend. The city estimates that about 75 percent of its dogs are licensed, and some 80 percent are voluntarily spayed or neutered. Of the approximately 2,000 dogs who came through the Humane Society of Central Oregon shelter last year — it covers a large region, including Bend — about 1,700 were re-homed, adopted, or returned to owners. Dogs are only euthanized for health or severe behavior cases, and fewer owners surrendered their dogs last year than the year before.

"What I love about Bend is the diversity of things to do: My dog and I can visit a traditional dog park, play fetch in the Deschutes River, or hike in the Three Sisters Wilderness, and then top any day off together at Cascade Lakes brewpub," Lindberg says. "It doesn't get much better than that!"

the stages of the AttaBoy 300 Sled Dog Race or take dog-sled rides at the Oregon Trail of Dreams.

In the summertime, Bend locals stand up paddleboard on the Deschutes River, often with their dogs riding on the front of the board. "Every day there's a new adventure in Bend with my dogs," says Laura Grayson, a Bend resident and board member for DogPAC. "Having access to amazing trails with my dogs tops my long list of reasons to love living here." Families can hike along the Deschutes River and play fetch off-leash with their dogs in the water. In fact, Bend boasts seven off-leash areas, along with miles of dog-friendly mountain biking trails in the national forest.

Resident Bob Wenger, a tireless advocate for dogs in Bend, worked to create and improve off-leash dog areas. "Bob's pride and joy was the Pine Nursery Off-Leash Dog Park, and it was there Bob died of a heart attack in January, with his dog Ryder by his side," says Kreg Lindberg, president of DogPAC. "The park is renamed the Bob Wenger Off-Leash Area in his memory."

Summer fun in Bend also includes the Fourth of July Pet Parade and DogPAC's Deschutes Dog

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A Bozeman dog takes in the mountain vistas while hiking.

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Bozeman, MONTANA

PEOPLE: 37,000

DOGS: 22,000

Bozeman is an outdoorsy community with a dog for almost every family. "We know you're a newcomer if you don't have a dog in your truck cab," says Phil Rogers, executive director of the Heart of the Valley Animal Shelter. Dogs join families camping, hiking national forest trails, swimming, duck hunting, and meeting up in the city's seven dog parks. "After outings, dogs strolling down Main Street can expect a drink of water set out by local shops," Rogers says.

Winter events in Bozeman feature snow, of course. "Each February (or March), we sponsor the Snowshoe Shuffle, a lighted, dog-friendly snowshoe course in a ski area," Rogers says. "When snow retreats, owners take their dogs to the city's very own canine beach." Warm-weather events include Woofstock, complete with dock diving, agility, and herding, and the newly established K-9 9K race.

Bozeman clearly has its heart in the right place. The Heart of the Valley Animal Shelter has 90 percent of the dogs who go through its doors reclaimed by their owners, adopted, or rescued, and also provides a 15 acre off-leash dog park open to all.



Bozeman dogs and families enjoy the annual Snowshoe Shuffle at a local ski resort.

COURTESY PHILLIP WISE PHOTOGRAPHY

TOP: COURTESY JOHN OLSEN; BOTTOM: COURTESY BOZEMAN PET PICS

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Annapolis, MARYLAND



Dogs are welcome on eCruiser tours of Annapolis.

PEOPLE: 39,000

DOGS: 20,000

"In Annapolis, all you need to feel at home is a good boat, a good hat, and a good dog," says Connie Del Signore, president of the Annapolis & Anne Arundel County Conference & Visitors Bureau.

Annapolis extends a welcome to tourists with dogs in tow; many bed and breakfasts, inns, and hotels allow dogs. "Walk down the streets on any spring, summer, or fall evening, and you'll see a host of dogs dining with owners at outdoor restaurants," Del Signore adds.

Visitors to Quiet Waters Park walk their dogs along miles of trails, winding through hardwood forests and enjoying vistas. Quiet Waters also features the county's first dog park, with two large off-leash areas. "Boats, including the Harbor Queen, allow dogs on their cruises, and it's common to see dogs at the helm of many a boat, dinghy, and kayak at the City Dock," Del Signore says. "Dog watching is as popular as people watching in America's sailing capital."

Paws Pet Boutique, a leading advocate for dogs in Annapolis, sponsors events such as the Crabtowne Canines march in the Fourth of July parade, Canines in the Courtyard on Feel Good Fridays fundraiser series, and Ben's Cruise for Compassion. "Rescued from a puppy mill, Ben 'hosts' the annual benefit that raises funds to help give animals a voice in the legal system," Del Signore says. Equally passionate about dogs in need, Annapolis re-homes a large number of its shelter's dogs.

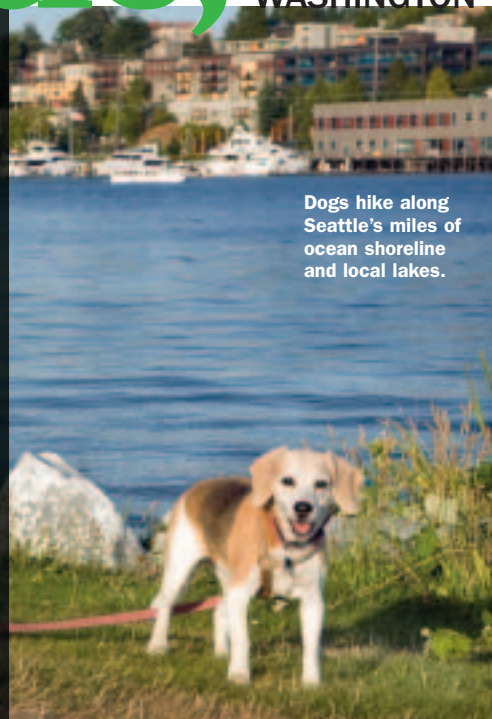
4 Seattle, WASHINGTON

PEOPLE: 608,000

DOGS: 153,000

Home to more dogs than children, Seattle has 11 dog parks within the city, miles of dog-friendly hiking in the Cascade foothills, and indoor dog parks for rainy days. "In Seattle it's not unusual to see dogs in the local hardware store shopping with their companions," says Sally Clark, city council president. "One of our largest businesses, Amazon.com, has dog-friendly offices, and retailer REI runs a dog 'barn' at their home office." Events such as the Furry 5K Fun Run and Walk and the Dog-O-Ween festivities keep both owners and dogs exercised and entertained. Happy dogs even come to happy hour at Norm's Eatery & Alehouse.

Seattle takes pride in caring for its dogs, too. More than 85 percent of the city's dogs are voluntarily spayed or neutered, and the shelter euthanizes only about 11 percent of the dogs who come in each year.



Dogs hike along Seattle's miles of ocean shoreline and local lakes.

NEW ORLEANS: A CITY THAT INSPIRES

Even in the face of tough economic times and natural disaster fallout, New Orleans puts its heart into making the city dog-friendly. "People are passionate in New Orleans about New Orleans, and this even extends to their furry, four-legged friends," says Ana Zorrilla, CEO of the Louisiana Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals. "Take a walk down Magazine Street, and you'll come across rescue dogs, some waiting to be adopted and some who have already found their forever homes, and everyone stops to pet the pups and ask their story." New Orleanians love their dog parks, and they work hard to include their dogs in festivities, such as Mardi Gras-themed parades for dogs. There's even the New Orleans on Tap dog-friendly beer festival, raising funds to help the Louisiana SPCA.

"While the reality is often bleak for the thousands of homeless animals, New Orleanians' support of animal welfare is unparalleled," Zorrilla says. "The Louisiana SPCA takes in all types, from the tired and sick to the abandoned."

The network of animal welfare providers exploded in the area in 2005 when Hurricane Katrina hit. "A compassionate heart is not hard to find in a city that won't forget," Zorrilla says. "The Louisiana SPCA led the animals through a very dark time, and is now turning the corner on a future where all possibilities to give these animals a second chance are explored."

TOP: COURTESY VISITANNAPOLIS.ORG; BOTTOM: COURTESY EMILY FRIEMAN; OPPOSITE PAGE: COURTESY ANIMAL WELFARE LEAGUE OF ALEXANDRIA

Alexandria, VIRGINIA

PEOPLE: 140,000

DOGS: 35,000

Along the shores of the Potomac River, Alexandria offers dogs a metropolitan paradise. Dogs and their families can play in the 18 dog parks and exercise areas, hike the miles of dog-friendly paths, or stroll Old Town's historic neighborhoods, once walked by George Washington.

Alexandria has 14 dog-friendly hotels, including Kimpton's Hotel Monaco Alexandria, with its renowned Doggie Yappy Hour and "Director of Pet Relations," Charlie the Bichon Frise. "Humans enjoy appetizers and drinks, while dogs chow on biscuits and water," says Patrick Cole, director of communications and outreach at the Animal Welfare League of Alexandria.

Residents and tourists alike cruise the Potomac with their dogs. Potomac Riverboat Co.'s Canine Cruises give two-legged and four-legged passengers a tour of the seaport.

The city estimates that 85 percent of its dogs are spayed and neutered. Community functions also help out canines. "Events such as Olde Towne Dogge Walke raise funds to support the Animal Welfare League of Alexandria, as well as celebrate the city's widespread love of dogs," Cole says. **DF**

Turk, a Border Collie mix, finds a playground of city fun with a volunteer from the Animal Welfare League of Alexandria.



THE REST OF THE BEST

(in alphabetical order)

Bangor,
MAINE

Falmouth,
MASSACHUSETTS

Fargo,
NORTH DAKOTA

Portland,
MAINE

San Diego,
CALIFORNIA

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