

Crescenta Valley Dog Park



Introduction

Crescenta Valley Dog Park is a community initiated addition to an existing County park (Crescenta Valley Park) located in the Los Angeles suburb of La Crescenta.

Meeting the needs of the community and finding opportunities to protect and restore the environment are priorities in the design and programming of our parks. This project demonstrates these principles; it retains and cleanses stormwater, recharges the groundwater, conserves water and uses energy from renewable sources. At the same time, it creates a balanced approach to accommodating dog owners in public open space, by providing a place to socialize and exercise dogs in a safe environment. It brings people together through their common interest creating a greater sense of community in the park as a whole.

Site and Context

The County of Los Angeles Dept. of Parks and Recreation has historically provided facilities to diverse groups of parks users, from swimmers to skateboarders, lawn bowlers, and equestrian enthusiasts. There was one park user group not considered, until now, the dog owner.

Dog owners are a substantial group of users of the Crescenta Valley Park. A conservative estimate is that there are 103,903 dog owners and 59,273 dogs in the areas of La Crescenta and the surrounding communities of Montrose, La Canada, Glendale, Sunland, and Tujunga. The nearest dog park is in Pasadena, 12 miles in distance. The project was triggered in 2007 by an incident in which a small dog was injured by other dogs at a nearby park where local residents let dogs run and play off leash. The community responded with a petition to the County requesting a safe, off-leash area for dogs – a dog park. The County supported the project and prepared and adopted a Dog Off-leash Area Policy and Guidelines. The site was then selected from eight identified potential sites. As the first such facility owned and operated by the County, the project is a pilot project.

Crescenta Valley Community Regional Park is located in the County of Los Angeles on the foothills of the Verdugo Mountains. Running through the park is the Verdugo Wash, a 9.4-mile-long tributary of the Los Angeles River. The stream flows southeast along the eastern edge of the Verdugo Mountains, then south through a pass between those

mountains and the San Rafael Hills, then west to the Los Angeles River eventually draining into the Pacific Ocean.

Crescenta Valley Dog Park covers an area of approximately one and a half acres in the northwest portion of Crescenta Valley Park. It is bordered on three sides by parkland, and with single-family residential on the fourth side. It is a narrow triangular space adjacent to a flood channel, the Verdugo Wash, and was used for overflow parking. It is below street level, which helps alleviate noise that might come from the dog park, and has nearby utility connections. The project doesn't conflict with other use areas in the park, is adjacent to existing parking and is in close proximity to an already-existing restroom. The existing large oaks and sycamores with large boulders scattered within their canopies provide extensive shaded areas and natural seating.



The Crescenta Valley Dog Park Monument Sign

Opportunities and Challenges

Selecting this site presented us with the opportunity to eliminate the run-off coming from the parking lot into the wash and improve the soil condition that support the existing mature native oaks and sycamore trees.

The County of Los Angeles Department of Parks and Recreation provided the design together with the Dog Off-Leash Policy and Guidelines. The design strategy for this project focused on providing a dog park that reflects the needs and input of the community and incorporates sustainable design principles.

The project was constructed by a non-profit organization, the Los Angeles Conservation Corps, which provides job skills training and work experience to at-risk youth. The selection of this relatively flat site with existing infrastructure, helped minimize costs compared to other alternative sites. Incorporating existing elements such as the mature trees and boulders helped contain costs and enhance the design.

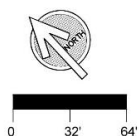
Cost savings were also recognized by considering and including sustainable measures into the design from the beginning.

Design Strategy

The dog park features include: a half acre small dog area and a one-acre large dog area with separate double gated entrances. Each is completely fenced and has large areas of permeable decomposed granite surfacing. Other features include: a dog wash outside the entry gates; drinking fountains for owners and pets; benches in both areas, some with shade structures; and security lighting, as well as areas of cedar chip surfacing under and around the mature trees. The cedar chips material is non-toxic and is a natural flea and fly repellant, the use of this "built-in" pest control prevents the growth of flea population and provides a clean and comfortable environment for both dog and owner.

Sustainable elements were incorporated into the project design. With the exception of concrete walkways all the surfacing is permeable. The site is graded to retain all stormwater on site, recharging the groundwater keeping pollutants from the flood channel. Surface and subsurface drainage devices and prefab dry wells retain all overflow. Other water conserving measures include the use native or drought tolerant plant materials and the irrigation controller is weather-based. Benches and shade structures are 90% recycled material, and both the LED security lighting and the irrigation are solar powered. Additional native sycamore trees were added to improve the habitat, mitigate heat, provide more shading, and sequester carbon dioxide.

CRESCENTA VALLEY DOG PARK: SITE PLAN



SITE AMENITIES

1. PARKING LOT
2. DOG PARK ENTRANCE, INCLUDES:
MONUMENT SIGNAGE
REGULATION SIGNAGE
DOG WASH
COMMUNITY BULLETIN BOARDS
BICYCLE RACKS
SOLAR LIGHTING
3. LARGE DOG DOUBLE GATED ENTRY, INCLUDES:
ADA, REGULAR AND DOG DRINKING FOUNTAIN
4. SMALL DOG DOUBLE GATED ENTRY, INCLUDES:
ADA, REGULAR AND DOG DRINKING FOUNTAIN
SHADED ADA BENCH
5. SHADED ADA BENCH
6. DECOMPOSED GRANITE AREA, INCLUDES:
BENCHES AND WASTE RECEPTACLES
7. CEDAR CHIP AREA, INCLUDES:
BENCH
8. FENCING
9. PLANTING AREA
10. CRESCENTA VALLEY PARK

Conclusion

Most dog parks are simply fenced spaces in unused areas of parks. The Crescenta Valley Dog Park demonstrates to other municipalities and designers the benefits of employing a complete integrated design process oriented toward the needs of dogs and their owners while demonstrating environmental stewardship.

The Dog Off-Leash Policy and Guidelines set the standard for this and future County dog parks. Few municipalities have approved standards and guidelines for dog parks and a number of other municipalities have requested copies of the document for their use. Community participation during the design phase gave the community a sense of ownership and pride in the project. The at-risk youth that constructed this facility gained invaluable job skills and experience. The dog park also offers volunteer opportunities to the community. A local dog park advocate volunteer group formed at the onset of the project and represented the community in the design progress meetings. They will also be instrumental in helping to survey ongoing park use and provide data that will be useful for future improvements and fund-raising efforts.

The Crescenta Valley Dog Park has received enthusiastic reviews from the community and from neighboring communities as well. The community-wide efforts that went into the project have produced an enjoyable and environmentally sensitive facility that celebrates people, dogs, and community.





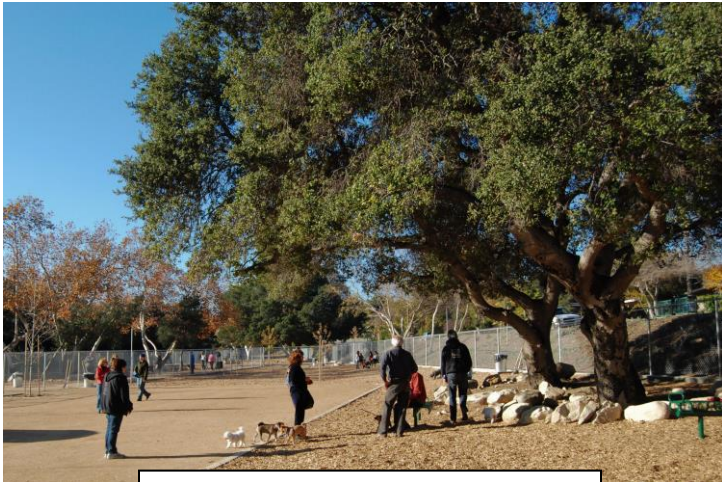
Entrance



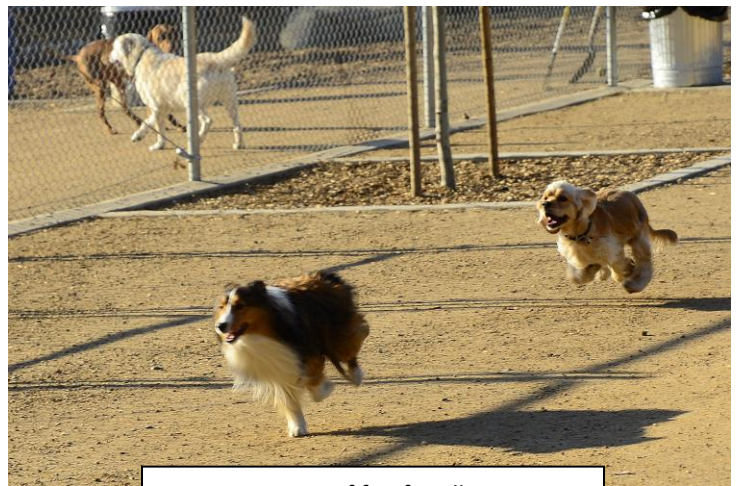
Large dog off leash dog area



Shady beautiful spaces



Small dog off leash dog area



Lots of fun for all