



Dog Park Stewardship Toolbox

The Stewardship Toolbox is a resource to help dog owners form and sustain stewardship groups for Portland’s dog off-leash areas (OLAs).

The work that Stewardship Groups do will vary widely depending on their mission and goals. The purpose of this Toolbox is to provide broad guidelines for creating and sustaining a Stewardship Group, and to offer suggestions as to how your group could operate and what it might accomplish. The Toolbox is available electronically at www.PortlandParks.org



Parker

Portland Dog Parks Spokesdog

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About the Toolbox

Mission Statement

The purpose of the Stewardship Toolbox is to motivate, empower and assist local park users in creating off-leash area Stewardship Groups that will strive to:

1. Ensure that off-leash areas are safe, fun, and well-run
2. Act as intermediaries between dog owners, park users and Portland Parks & Recreation
3. Motivate and empower dog owners to take an active role in the maintenance and improvement of off-leash areas

Acknowledgements

The Toolbox was developed as a project of Portland Parks & Recreation's Dog Off-Leash Program Advisory Group.

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Why Start a Stewardship Group?

Stewardship Groups can:

- Create a sense of community and pride among off-leash area (OLA) users
- Help resolve conflicts and problems at their OLA
- Empower users to have a real impact on the maintenance and operation of their OLA. As recognized stakeholders, Stewardship Groups are positioned to:
 - o Identify maintenance issues and needed improvements to PP&R staff
 - o Work directly with PP&R staff on an ongoing basis to improve the OLA
 - o Obtain funding for OLA improvements and maintenance

Starting a Stewardship Group

Get the word out

Let other OLA users know you'd like to start a group by:

- Posting notices in and near the OLA (bulletin board, power poles, etc.)
- Talking with other dog owners at the OLA
- Putting notices in neighborhood papers, such as the Southeast Examiner
- Attending local neighborhood association meetings and meetings of other park-related groups (e.g. Friends of Mt Tabor) and get notices posted in their email, website or newsletter
- Establishing a way for people to get more information. Consider setting up a general email like taborOLA@gmail.com

Get together

Hold a meeting at the park, someone's home, or a local meeting space to discuss items such as:

- What you would like to accomplish as a Stewardship Group?
- Are there specific issues or problems you want to address?
- Do you want to create a mission statement or goals?
- How do you want your group to operate? For instance, do you want to have monthly meetings, meet at the park or a home, form a social media site, etc.? (Meeting regularly is highly recommended.)
- Do members of your group have particular strengths, interests, and connections that they can contribute? (For example, website design, grant writing or fundraising.)
- Who should be the lead contact person or chairperson for your group?

Get more dog owners involved

Let more people know about the Stewardship Group by:

- Posting notices at the OLA with meeting and contact information
- Organizing a sign-up event at the OLA
- Creating an email distribution list or group
- Creating a group Facebook page, website or blog
- Connecting with neighborhood associations, business associations, and other park organizations to send notices through their email networks, websites and social media
- Posting notices of meeting and events in local media

Getting Started: Online Resources

Neighborhood Media

Hollywood Star

www.hollywoodstarnews.info

Mid-County Memo

www.midcountymemo.com

Neighborhood Notes

www.neighborhoodnotes.com

NW Examiner

www.nwexaminer.com

Sellwood Bee

www.readthebee.com

SW Community Connection

www.swcommconnection.com

Southeast Examiner

www.southeastexaminer.com

St. Johns Review

www.stjohnsreview.com

Neighborhood connections

Office of Neighborhood

Involvement

www.portlandonline.com/oni/

Social media

Facebook

www.facebook.com

Blogger

www.blogger.com

Your Group At Work

Stewardship Group activities and involvement will vary widely. Here are examples of the type of the work groups may do, as well as possible roles for the chairperson.

Improving the OLA

- Identifying maintenance needs (add more chips, drainage issues, etc.)
- Identifying needed improvements (message board, poop dispensers, water faucets, etc.)
- Identifying priorities for maintenance and improvements
- Organizing work parties

Resolving Conflicts

- Help to notify PP&R staff of enforcement or conflict issues
- Help to mediate conflicts between dog-owners
- Help PP&R staff in resolving conflicts between neighbors and park-users
- Draft or assist in drafting Good Neighbor Agreements or Outreach and Monitoring Plans

Events

Stewardship Groups may want to organize regular or special events such as:

- Work parties
- Park cleanup days
- Social/community events such as pet fairs or barbecues
- Fundraising events

Fundraising

Your group may want to raise money for a specific capital project or to resolve a maintenance issue.

There are a variety of ways to raise money for your OLA, including:

- Seeking local business sponsors
- Grant funding
- Raffles, silent auctions, dog-washes, treat sales, and other activities at group-sponsored events

Role of the chairperson/lead contact

- Acts as a liaison between Stewardship Group members, dog park users, and PP&R Staff
- Maintains a close and ongoing relationship with PP&R staff

Your Group at Work: Online Resources

SE Uplift's Fun Neighborhood
Fundraising Toolkit
[www.southeastuplift.org/toolbox/
toolkits/fundraising](http://www.southeastuplift.org/toolbox/toolkits/fundraising)

Connect with Portland Parks & Recreation

PP&R can help! Let us know about your group so we can lend a hand by:

- Providing a “Who to Call” list of Program, Maintenance, and Enforcement Staff who will help address particular issues
- Listing your group contact information in the OLA Stewardship Group directory
- Assistance with outreach and publicity, including adding your events to the PP&R calendar, promoting your group on the Portland Dog Parks Facebook Page, sending notices of group meetings and events to the Dog Off-Leash Program mailing list, etc.
- Printing flyers and posters
- Connecting your group with volunteers
- Arranging tools for work parties and providing required waiver forms for volunteers
- Proposing improvements in your OLA

PP&R also organizes an annual meeting for OLA Stewardship Group chairpersons, which is a great opportunity to connect with and learn from what other groups are doing.

Contact PP&R Dog Off-Leash Program staff at 503-823-DOGS to get started!

About the Dog Off-Leash Program

Portland Parks & Recreation’s Dog Off-Leash Program:

- Provides 32 off-leash areas (OLAs) that are healthy, fun places for dogs to play
- Promotes compliance with leash laws and scoop laws in order to ensure healthy park spaces for all users
- Encourages dog owners who do not use off-leash areas to do so
- Encourages responsible behavior within the off-leash areas
- Connects dog owners with the resources they need to use off-leash areas appropriately
- Supports volunteer efforts
- Supports sponsorship and fundraising efforts

Connect with PP&R: Online Resources

Portland Parks & Recreation
www.portlandparks.org

Portland Dog Parks on Facebook
www.facebook.com/portlanddogparks