

Warrenton Dog Park nears completion thanks to hard work and dedicated volunteers

by Trish Nevan

The verdict is in: Warrenton's off leash dog area at Carruthers Park is nearing completion, thanks to the generous help of dog-loving businesses and individuals throughout the area and the dogged determination of park organizer, Jann Luesse.

On a blustery Sunday morning in October, Jann and her husband, Jim Scheller, were busy attaching clips to the black chain link fence forming the boundaries of the soon-to-be Warrenton off-leash dog park. Nearby, the couple's Australian Shepherds, Cohosh and Emmett, gave the grassy setting a trial run.

"Hopefully there won't be a Christmas tree at the opening ceremony," she smiles, admitting that while there is still a lot more work to do, she is cautiously optimistic that the park will be welcoming dog visitors as soon as Thanksgiving.

The dog park, which started out as the wishful thinking of four women for a place for dogs to play and socialize safely, has grown into a labor of love for dog park supporters throughout the area.

When completed, the off-leash area will have fenced areas for large and small dogs, a double-gated entry, dog wash area, benches, drinking water and access for people with disabilities. A rain shelter is on the wish list for the future.

Luesse, who says she has no background in organizing this kind of project, says the experience has lengthened her resume. Researching off-leash parks over the internet, she said she was amazed by the number of dog parks that have websites and says that information was very helpful in making decisions about what would best suit the Warrenton site.

Still, it's been a learning experience for everyone involved. Luesse says that their first work party to install the chain link fencing was supposed to be led by an experi-

enced volunteer, but when a family emergency called him away at the last minute, Jann had to scramble and ended up downloading how-to-install instructions off of the internet that morning. She laughs that the assembled group all processed the directions differently, but they arrived at the same result.

Jann says they have had wonderful volunteers and supporters, including retired citizens, a group of youngsters from the Nazarene church, 4-H members and even an individual doing community service work. Local businesses have also helped with donations of and discounts on services, equipment and products. However, as with most community projects of this size, more volunteers are always welcome and financial donations will be put to good use.

She says, "There won't be any surplus money when we're done; we'll always need donations for wastebags and other needs.

Weather permitting, the dog park work party will continue most weekends until completion. Anyone wishing to join the fun is welcome. For more information, contact Jann at 503-861-3669 or warrentondogpark@yahoo.com or visit www.warrentontrails.org.



Above: Jim Scheller takes a break from fencing duties for a game of fetch with his Australian Shepherds, Cohosh and Emmett.