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## Parks & Recreation

### A Look at Trends in Parks & Recreation

By Emily Tipping

### Dog Parks . . . . .

While 13.1 percent of all respondents currently have a dog park, that percentage more than doubles to 27.5 percent of park respondents. And while dog parks do not appear on the list of 10 top planned additions among all respondents, for parks respondents, 24.6 percent of those with plans to add new features over the next three years will be adding dog parks.

According to Dog Fancy magazine, the first official U.S. dog park opened in Berkeley, Calif., in 1979. These days there are hundreds of dog parks across the country.

The U.S. Humane Society reports that 39 percent of U.S. households owned at least one dog in 2009-2010, with around 77.5 million owned dogs across the country.

Parks are increasingly looking to provide a place for these pups to have their own fun and exercise.

According to the Marin Humane Society, an ideal dog park should be designed to include at least an acre, surrounded by a fence 4 to 6 feet high; a double-gated entry; shade and water; adequate drainage; parking; a grassy area that is routinely mowed; covered garbage cans; pooper scooper stations; benches; wheelchair access; a safe location; and regular maintenance; as well as concern for the environment.

Manufacturers have increasingly been on board with the growing popularity of dog parks, and in addition to standard amenities like pooper-scooper stations, are now offering specially designed water fountains for dogs, agility equipment that can be installed in the park setting and more. To learn more about getting your own dog park off the ground, visit [www.dogpark.com](http://www.dogpark.com).

### Skateparks . . . . .

While skateparks were not among the top planned features for all respondents, they were among the most commonly planned additions for park respondents. Some 15.8 percent of park respondents with plans to add features reported that they will be adding skateparks.

Skateboarding was the third favorite youth outdoor activity in 2010, according to a topline report from the Outdoor Foundation. The organization reported that there were 329 million total outings for youth ages 6 to 24, with each skateboarder averaging 61.3 outings. According to Skaters for Public Skateparks, skateboarding is the third most popular recreational activity for kids between 6 and 18 years old—kids who will be skating in streets and parking lots if they have no designated spot to congregate. As the organization states on its site, if your city doesn't have a skatepark, it is a skatepark.

Skateparks provide the ideal location for youth—as well as adult skateboarders—to try out their skills in relative safety. Skateparks come in many shapes and sizes, with terrain ranging from streetscape-like plazas with rails, curbs and stairs to parks that are almost sculptural, with concrete bowls, half-pipes, snake runs and more.

Learn more about building and advocating for skateparks at [www.skatepark.org](http://www.skatepark.org).