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By Hillary Hamm, Daily News staff writer
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Trevor Bice considers his dogs fortunate.

His two mixed-breed pups, Calvin and Ozzy, have a big yard to trounce around in at Bice's Pullman home.

Bice said other dogs aren't so lucky, and the Whitman County Humane Society Board member and chairman of the Pullman Dog Park Committee hopes to build a park where canines from around the area can exercise and socialize with other animals.

The plan includes using a 2-acre portion of the 7-acre Animal Haven shelter site currently under construction on Old Moscow Road. Bice said the committee has worked for about a year to develop the idea, which could cost as much as \$50,000 and include safety fencing, an underground sprinkler system, benches and fountains.

"We have the land. Let's use it," Bice said. "Our intentions are to do a first-class dog park."

Pullman has an ordinance that requires dogs to be leashed in public areas. The only other dog park in the area is located in Moscow, adjacent to the Moscow Humane Society.

The park would only be open during daylight hours and pet owners would need to swipe a card through a security system to access the space. Bice said the committee is still figuring out how visitors to Pullman could use the park, but the cost would be about \$50 to \$75 per year for residents.

Pullman resident Carissa Little said she would take her 6-month-old Schitzu puppy, Ollie, to the park. For now, she and her neighbors congregate at Jefferson Elementary School every evening to let their dogs romp, though there's usually competition for the grassy space.

She said she didn't even know about the city's leash law.

"If the (dog park) is a spot dogs are allowed to be ... we'd use it," she said. "He loves to be outside with other dogs."

Little suggested there be a seasonal pass, as she doesn't expect she would use the dog park in the winter months.

Heidi Pederson, who will soon move to Pullman from Moscow with her 4-year-old mixed-breed dog Roxy, was excited to hear there might be a dog park in Pullman until she heard it would be fee-based.

She said there shouldn't be a charge for the park at all, unless it's like "a Hilton for dogs."

"I wouldn't pay to use it, not when I can just walk her around the block," she said.

Bice said he hopes Pullman dog owners understand the park is intended to be "sustainable by users." That includes self-policing for dog fights and owners who don't pick up after their pet.

Dog Park Committee member Doug Hobart said about \$2,200 was raised by a Washington State University class in 2008. The money helped to pay for an artist's rendering to be shown to the public, and upcoming fundraising events will hopefully generate more donations.

Hobart recognizes that the slumped economy may not be conducive to fundraising for a large project, but said committee members are relying on peoples' passion for animals and their community.

Bice said the key to developing the park is to not take away from fundraising efforts for the roughly \$3 million Animal Haven project.

He said the dog park and shelter donations would likely come from different types of donors and won't necessarily compete.

The committee is in search of grant money for the project and has considered other funding options, such as handing over the naming right to the park for \$50,000, or enrolling charter lifetime dog park members for a \$500 contribution. Other ideas include an adopt-a-yard program, such as a 100-square-foot piece of grass for \$1,000, or a square yard for \$10.

Hobart said there's no way to know when the park could be operational.

"I'd like to say it would be done this summer, but we don't know how fundraising will go," he said.

n To donate to the Pullman Dog Park project, call (509) 332-2246, or send donations to the Whitman County Humane Society, attn: dog park, at P.O. Box 1095, Pullman, WA 99163.

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