

Prairie Pastures

Special Bulletin

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Good fences make good neighbors

What would a dog park be without secure fencing and escape proof gates! In this special bulletin you will find fence and gate related issues, some changes, some future projects and just some things to remember. Read ... learn ... enjoy ... and give us feedback. We need to know what you're thinking in order to make the most of bulletins like this, and to best develop our park.

One of the main reasons our park is so great is because we have so many different areas, and our knowledgeable and adaptable members use those areas to best accom-

modate the varied needs of our dogs. Our savvy owners keep a vigilant watch over which dogs are entering the park and shift from area to area to insure their dog is involved in appropriate play; but also to give space to those dogs that need it.

The fences and gates that make up our park are an extension of the owners control over their dog. Owners rely on those fences and gates as they constantly attempt to stay one step ahead of their dogs.

Sometimes our regulars will take short cuts, and because they are so familiar with the various dogs maybe that's okay. Problem is, others are always watching. First time visitors will assume the short cuts are acceptable. We rely on our experienced members to educate others by example.



Wider gate into Senior Area

We are very pleased to announce that the main gate into the senior area was recently widened, to allow for wheelchair access. (The terrain will



still be a challenge, but at least the gate is now wide enough.)

The impetus for this change came about during a discussion between Steering Committee members and other park members, and exemplifies what the committee strives to achieve. They listened to concerns and out of the debate that

followed this simple, but effective solution took form.

Thanks to Joe Wosoba for building the gate and to Mike Cain for installing it. We know this isn't the perfect solution to providing handicap accessibility into the park, but it's a start and was able to be implemented quickly.

Second Entrance

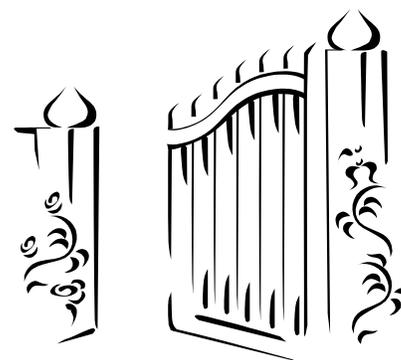
The SENC board has agreed to move forward with the project that will result in a second entrance into the dog park. Initial plans call for a double-gated entrance to the east of the drive-thru\service gate. This will allow for access into the pond and senior areas. Final approvals are still required and there is no definite time frame. We are looking for volunteers with experience in fencing and\or cement work – and of course, donations are always very much appreciated!

Double-gated entrances are a requirement of any good dog park. Not only does this feature help to prevent escapes, it also serves as a

safe area – to allow you and your dog to adjust before entering the actual park. It gives newcomers a safe place to check out who is already in the park, and to wait while owners already in the park call their dogs back from crowding the gate. And it's a safe place to remove leashes, instead of struggling to do so while being surrounded by other dogs. Double-gated entrances take some of the stress out of entering the park, while reducing the chance of fights or escapes..

Having a second entrance into the park is a feature found in the best dog parks! This is just one more way to empower owners, by giving

them the option of selecting which area is most appropriate for their dog, and by providing an alternative way out in the event of trouble.



Drive-thru\service gate

The drive-thru\service gate should be locked at all times. Anyone that must enter thru the drive-thru gate should lock it immediately after entering.

If you do see the gate unlocked, please don't enter --- it's not safe for you or your dog, and it's not fair to put those already in the senior area at risk.

Even if you're a regular and think you can enter safely, remember, first timers could be watching your example.



Please take those extra steps to the main entrance.

For those of you that do have keys to the drive-thru gate, we are in the process of making changes around the keys\padlock on the drive-thru gate. If you have a key, or if you need access via this gate, please contact us ASAP, otherwise you could find yourself locked out.

Plants and flowers

In keeping with our name, Prairie Pastures, our goal is to develop prairie areas full of grasses and wild flowers native to Iowa and specifically to Clinton County.



Safety of our dogs and members will always be our top priority; plants toxic to dogs will be avoid-

ed wherever possible, entrances and interior fences will remain free from plants to prevent any visual obstruction while also presenting an open and inviting entrance for our visitors.

Sturdy plants will be selected; ones that will stand up well to dog exploration, but also require minimal care so as not to put extra work on already over worked volunteers.

With over 8 acres of land, there are plenty of places for native flowers, and for large expanses of prairie grasses. This does mean that some of our existing plants will be removed\replaced. Anyone interested in assisting with this long range project, please contact us.

Before entering

The Senior\Disabled area has been set aside for those with special needs. Always ask first before entering this area – and please avoid using this as a shortcut to the pond, especially during the busy months. Eventually the second entrance will allow you to go directly to the pond, but until then, avoid cutting thru the senior area, and leash your dog when you must pass thru.

To the big dog owners --- big dogs should never be in the small dog area. That area is set aside for small dogs only – please no big dogs in the small dog yard. The big dogs

have plenty of space to explore, please leave the small dog area strictly to small dogs.

And to the small dog owners; never assume that the big dog area is safe for your small dogs. When the big dogs play the little guys can easily be injured. It is up to you to keep your dog safe – look before entering the big dog area, if there are a lot of big dogs, or if the big dogs are rough housing or even just doing a lot of running, please think twice before entering.



To all.... Before entering any area take a close look at the type of activity that is taking place. If it's not a good fit for your dog, go to another area or come back another day. Keep your dog safe!

**.... and before leaving the park, leash up your dog.
It's the law (and the area is being patrolled)**

Close those gates

Signs were recently posted reminding people to keep gates closed, but we are still getting reports of gates being left standing open. Always



close gates. Even if you didn't open the gate – if you see it standing open, close it. Leaving a gate open – or ignoring an open gate – not only puts your own dog at risk, it is inconsiderate to others.

You'll also notice "S" hooks hanging from most latches – please hook these thru the holes in the latch, as

they prevent dogs from popping open the latches. We are encountering more and more dogs that have figured out how to "pop" the latches, so please help by replacing the "S" hooks each time you pass thru a gate.

Speak out!

Do you have questions? Or ideas you'd like considered? Bring your ideas or concerns up at a Steering Committee meeting!

The committee's purpose is to work as a group to suggest and develop projects that will make our park the best it can be. The Steering Committee meeting schedule has been posted at the park, feel free to at-

tend a meeting or contact us for more information.

The committee is always looking for individuals with different perspectives as we strive to represent the majority of park membership. Consider becoming a committee member, or working with the committee on a project of particular interest to you.





*Offering Educational, Historical, Cultural,
and Recreational Opportunities to Our Community*



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.Contacting SENC – reporting issues

Comments, questions, complaints or compliments... should be directed to **SENCinfo@gmail.com** or messages can be left at **563.242.9088**. (Special thanks to Pam Wisor for single handedly managing all correspondence for the past few years.)

Policies and procedures have recently been developed regarding dealing with complaints\incidents that arise. Copies of the policies\procedures, along with a complaint form can be found inside the bulletin board inside the main shelter of the dog park. Or contact us for a copy.

And if we don't have your email address – please consider providing it. It's a great way for us to get messages out to our members quickly and at no cost.

Wish List

Our park relies on donations and volunteers. Please contact us if you can help with any of the items on our Wish List.

- Roofing materials (to replace lodge roof)
- Large mower to replace John Deere
- ✔ ~~Small "dorm" fridge for inside the lodge~~
- ✔ ~~Regular size fridge for inside the garage~~
- Stairs down pond hill (materials & labor)
- Patio pavers
- Use of a roto-tiller

