

Owners group given land; funds sought to improve, maintain W-B site

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## [Man's best friend getting a park](#)

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WILKES-BARRE – An unused section of Hollenback Park will soon be the site of a dog park, where breeds of all types will be able to run free and enjoy the outdoors.



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Wyoming Valley Dog Owners Group members Valerie Bowler, left, Derek Zielinski, and Michelle Zielinski show their dogs Nikki, Cash, and Mojo the site of a future dog park at Hollenback Park in Wilkes-Barre on Tuesday afternoon.

The city has given approval to the Wyoming Valley Dog Owners Group to establish a park on a grassy area adjacent to the Hollenback playground along North Washington Street.

“The city attorney, Tim Henry, has been in discussions with the group and they have been given the go-ahead to use the land,” said Bridget Giunta, the city’s administrative coordinator. “They will operate the site and will be responsible for improvements and maintenance.”

Valerie Bowler of Wyoming Valley Dog Owners said the group needs to raise money to help pay for park improvements. She said a fence has to be erected and trash cans and disposable bags also are needed. “We estimate that we will need between \$20,000 and \$30,000 to get everything done,” Bowler said. “We are planning fundraising events to defray some of the costs.”

Bowler said she realizes the group needs public support. She said those interested may call her at 570-820-0965 or access the group’s Web site at [www.wyomingvalleydogowners.com](http://www.wyomingvalleydogowners.com). She said all checks should be made payable to Wyoming Valley Dog Owners.

Derek and Michelle Zielinski joined Bowler at the site. The three brought their dogs – Nikki, Cash and Mojo – who seemed to approve of the group’s plan as they ran around in the grass. Each dog wore a red bandana.

“We hope this will be a good place for people to bring their dogs and socialize and give them the opportunity to exercise,” Bowler said.

Derek Zielinski said he hopes to offer obedience classes at the park and etiquette classes for dog owners. Michelle Zielinski said the park will be fenced in to allow dogs to run free in two areas – one for smaller dogs and another for large dogs.

“This park will allow the dogs to let out some energy,” she said. “Parents take their children to playgrounds and parks, and now dog owners will be able to bring their dogs to the park to play.” Bowler said she hopes to have the site ready for next spring. She realizes it will take a lot of work and public support.

The group is sponsoring a “Barkin’ Beach BBQ and Car Wash” on Sept. 19 at Chacko’s Bowling Alley, 195 N. Wilkes-Barre Boulevard. There will be raffles and contests for pet owners and pets.

“We appreciate what the city is doing for us,” Bowler said. “Now it’s up to us to get the project done.” *Bill O’Boyle*, 20a Times Leader staff writer, may be reached at 829-7218.



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