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SPECIAL ISSUE!
Dogs Around the Bend

Residents of the Winning Oregon City Work, Dine, and Stay Fit with Their Dogs.

By Lynn M. Hayner

Bend, Oregon

People: 80,000
Dogs: 27,000

The city of Bend, Ore. — a place where dogs both work and play, ski and swim — claims the DogTown USA title for 2012.

Bend beckons dog owners with an abundance of pooch-included sports, activities, and events. “Winter recreation is a big deal here, and owners cross-country ski, skijor, snowshoe, and hike with their canine friends,” says Doug LaPlaca, CEO for Visit Bend, the city’s convention and visitors bureau.

“New this year, our dog advocacy group, DogPAC, acquired a Sno-Cat — renamed ‘sno-dog’ — to enhance trail grooming at Wanoga Sno-Park, resulting in a wonderful network of dog-friendly winter trails,” Area residents and winter visitors can watch...
Days event, featuring the recently launched Ruff Run 5K, crazy river retrieves, timed fetch, and the entertaining “hot dog on a spoon” race. And because canine fitness matters, the Humane Society of Central Oregon hosts a Healthy Hounds weight loss challenge, with a 3K walk. Among sports and play, owners and their dogs have the luxury of dining together at dozens of Bend restaurants that allow dogs in patio areas. The Bend Ale Trail is a network of 10 local breweries that blend into Bend’s dog-friendly culture. “One of the newest breweries, GoodLife, opened last summer with a massive outdoor beer garden, where visitors are encouraged to bring dogs,” La Placa says.

Tourists in Bend find many hotels enthusiastically welcome dog guests. The Oxford Hotel, for example, greets each canine with a personal bed proportional to his size, travel bowls, organic dog treats, and a map of walking trails and parks — for those in their party who can read, of course.

The business community in Bend caters to four-legged friends as well. “Bend is awash in businesses that produce dog-friendly products, allow dogs in the workplace, or welcome dogs with shoppers,” La Placa says. “In Douglas Fine Jewelry, shoppers will be greeted by a friendly bully breed who’s happy to lick their hands, and Sunnyside Sports and Eyes on Wall Street, a vision center, both have shop dogs on-site.” Down the road, the Polka-Doodle Dog Bakery serves up healthy, fresh dog treats from original recipes designed over the course of 15 years. While some Bend dogs watch over local shops, others help out with nature-oriented jobs. Mt. Bachelor Avalanche Rescue Dogs are skilled at locating victims under masses created by snow slides. They train on the mountain every day with their handlers to ensure the safety of both skiers and snowboarders. The dogs in the area’s High Desert Search Dogs group focus on wilderness and urban tracking and trailing. Their motto: Lending a nose to help others.

Both dogs already in homes and dogs in search of homes find caring hands in Bend. The city estimates that about 75 percent of its dogs are licensed, and some 80 percent are voluntarily spayed or neutered. Of the approximately 2,000 dogs who came through the Humane Society of Central Oregon shelter last year — it covers a large region, including Bend — about 1,700 were re-homed, adopted, or returned to owners. Dogs are only euthanized for health or severe behavior cases, and fewer owners surrendered their dogs last year than the before.

“What I love about Bend is the diversity of things to do: My dog and I can visit a traditional dog park, play fetch in the Deschutes River, hike in the Three Sisters Wilderness, and then top any day off together at Cascade Lakes brewpub,” Lindberg says. “It doesn’t get much better than that!”

The late Bob Wenger, a prominent dog advocate in Bend, rides with his dog Ryder near the city’s Old Mill District.

### MONTANA

**PEOPLE:** 37,000  
**DOGS:** 22,000

Bozeman is an outdoory community with a dog for almost every family. “We know you’re a newcomer if you don’t have a dog in your truck cab,” says Phil Rogers, executive director of the Heart of the Valley Animal Shelter. Dogs join families camping, hiking national forest trails, swimming, duck hunting, and meeting up in the city’s seven dog parks. “After outings, dogs strolling down Main Street can expect a drink of water set out by local shops,” Rogers says.

Winter events in Bozeman feature snow, of course. Each February (or March), we sponsor the Snowshoe Shuffle, a lighted, dog-friendly snowshoe course in a ski area,” Rogers says. “When snow retreats, owners take their dogs to the city’s very own canoe beach.” Warm weather events include Windsock, complete with deck diving, agility, and盆地, and the newly established K-9 9K race. Bozeman clearly has its heart in the right place. The Heart of the Valley Animal Shelter has become the center of the dogs who go through its doors rehomed by their owners, adopted, or rescued, and also provides a 15 acre off-leash dog park open to all.

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**TOP:** ©BOBSFELD PHOTO  
**BOTTOM:** ©BOBSFELD PHOTO
Annapolis, MARYLAND

PEOPLE: 39,000
DOGS: 20,000

“In Annapolis, all you need to feel at home is a good boat, a good hat, and a good dog,” says Connie Del Signore, president of the Annapolis & Anne Arundel County Conference & Visitors Bureau.

Annapolis extends a welcome to tourists with dogs in tow; many bed and breakfasts, inns, and hotels allow dogs. “Walk down the streets on any spring, summer, or fall evening, and you’ll see a host of dogs dining with owners at outdoor restaurants,” Del Signore adds.

Visitors to Quiet Waters Park walk their dogs along miles of trails, winding through hardwood forests and enjoying vistas. Quiet Waters also features the county’s first dog park, with two large off-leash areas. “Boats, including the Harbor Queen, allow dogs on their cruises, and it’s common to see dogs at the helm of many a boat at the City Dock,” Del Signore says. “Dog watching is as popular as people watching in America’s sailing capital.”

Paws Pet Boutique, a leading advocate for dogs in Annapolis, sponsors events such as the Crabtoberfest Canines march in the Fourth of July parade, Canines in the Courtyard on Feel Good Fridays fundraiser series, and Ben’s Cruise for Compassion. “Rescued from a puppy mill, Ben ‘hosts’ the annual benefit that raises funds to help give animals a voice in the legal system,” Del Signore says.

Equally passionate about dogs in need, Annapolis re-homes a large number of its shelter’s dogs. The city estimates that 85 percent of its dogs are spayed or neutered. Community functions also help out canines. “Events such as Olde Towne Dogge Walke raise funds to support the Animal Welfare League of Alexandria, as well as celebrate the city’s widespread love of dogs,” Cole says.

Seattle, WASHINGTON

PEOPLE: 680,000
DOGS: 55,000

Home to more dogs than children, Seattle has 11 dog parks within the city, miles of dog-friendly hiking in the Cascade foothills, and indoor dog parks for rainy days. “In Seattle it’s not unusual to see dogs in the local hardware store shopping with their companions,” says Sally Clark, city council president. “One of our largest businesses, Amazon.com, has dog-friendly offices, and retailer REI runs a dog ‘barn’ at their home office. Events such as the Frurry 5K Run and Walk and the Dog-O-Ween festivities keep both owners and dogs exercised and entertained. Happy dogs even come to happy hour at Norm’s Eatery & Alehouse. Seattle takes pride in caring for its dogs, too. More than 85 percent of the city’s dogs are voluntarily spayed or neutered, and the shelter euthanizes only about 11 percent of the dogs who come in each year.

Dogs hike along Seattle’s miles of ocean shorelines and local lakes.

Alexandria, VIRGINIA

PEOPLE: 140,000
DOGS: 35,000

Along the shores of the Potomac River, Alexandria offers dogs a metropolitan paradise. Dogs and their families can play in the 18 dog parks and exercise areas, hike the miles of dog-friendly paths, or stroll Old Town’s historic neighborhoods, once walked by George Washington.

Alexandria has 14 dog-friendly hotels, including Kimpton’s Hotel Monaco Alexandria, with its renowned Doggie Happy Hour and “Director of Pet Relations,” Charlie the Bichon Frise. “Humans enjoy appetizers and drinks, while dogs chew on biscuits and water,” says Patrick Cole, director of communications and outreach at the Animal Welfare League of Alexandria.

Residents and tourists alike cruise the Potomac with their dogs. Potomac Riverboat Co.’s Canine Cruises give two-legged and four-legged passengers a tour of the seaport.

The city estimates that 85 percent of its dogs are spayed or neutered. Community functions also help out canines. “Events such as Olde Towne Dogge Walke raise funds to support the Animal Welfare League of Alexandria, as well as celebrate the city’s widespread love of dogs,” Cole says.