

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

June 24, 2004

**INDEPENDENCE DAY COMES ONE DAY EARLY
FOR DOGS AT SOUTH KITSAP DOG PARK**

Contact: Marina Hardy – 253-474-9424 (Day)/253-853-6361 (Evening)
www.kitsapdogparks.org

Kitsap County's dogs will get a taste of freedom on July 3 at 10 A.M. when Kitsap Dog Parks, Inc., holds the grand opening of Bandix Dog Park, a 30-acre facility on Bandix Road off the Burley-Olalla Road near Highway 16.

Kitsap Dog Parks, Inc., is a nonprofit 501(c)3 corporation established by a core group of dog owners who lost recreational opportunities, including off-leash activities, when the Tacoma Narrows Airport closed its approach areas. The group, a mix of Pierce County and Kitsap County residents, worked for more than 18 months to create a dog park and off-leash area. In cooperation with Kitsap County's Parks and Recreation Dept., the group located and developed the Bandix Road site.

Bandix Dog Park offers a mix of woods trails and open clearings linked by trails. The park will be open to the general public. Kitsap Dog Parks, Inc., plans to continue development of the park facilities in coming months, but wanted to see the park go to the dogs as soon as possible. To date, the group has arranged for the removal of junked automobiles, carried out a large quantity of smaller trash, built two woods trails, created broad paths connecting cleared areas through the brush, and fenced the parking area. Additional volunteer labor is needed. Planned projects include more brush and stubble removal, fall planting of native grasses, building more woods trails, construction of a covered bulletin board, and creation of a 1-acre fenced play area for dogs that do not yet have recall training.

Off-leash areas are an increasingly popular form of recreation for the more than one-third of American households that include dogs. The off-leash area in Marymoor Park in Redmond, Wash., is used by more than 650,000 carloads of visitors per year. Dog parks help socialize and exercise dogs in a safe environment; promote responsible pet ownership; provide elderly and disabled owners with an accessible place to exercise their companions; and promote public health and safety.

"We believe area dog owners will find Bandix Dog Park a fun place to socialize with each other and exercise their dogs," Marina Hardy, president of Kitsap Dog Parks, Inc., said. According to Kitsap County businessman Stan Stearns, founder and board member of Kitsap Dog Parks, Inc., "We hope Bandix Dog Park will be just the first of several off-leash areas in Kitsap County that will give area dog owners and their pets accessible recreation."