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A place for paws and people: Community rallies behind Rotary Bark Park

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LAKE PLACID — A group of local residents, working through the Rotary Club of Lake Placid, and the Lake Placid NY Rotary Foundation, hopes to create a new gathering place that will benefit both dogs and people.

The proposed Lake Placid Rotary Bark Park would provide a safe, fenced area where dogs can run, play and socialize off leash while their owners connect with neighbors and enjoy the outdoors.

The idea began in late 2024 when local residents Harris and Sue Semegram, and Chandler Ralph started discussing the need for a dog park in Lake Placid. What began as a simple conversation soon evolved into a community project that has gained support from local volunteers, Rotary members and the town of North Elba.

 Opt-Out Signal Honored




 “We’ve always believed Lake Placid is a community that values both people and pets,” Harris Semegram said in a press release. “This park isn’t simply about giving dogs a place to run. It’s about creating a welcoming space where neighbors can meet, friendships can grow and people of all ages can enjoy the outdoors together.”

The proposed park would be located at the athletic fields near the North Elba Horse Show Grounds and the North Elba Transfer Station, a site already identified in the town of North Elba’s master plan. Town crews have already completed much of the initial site preparation, including clearing and leveling an area approximately 100 feet by 150 feet. The town has also committed to providing wood chips for ground cover and access to a water source.

Plans call for separate fenced areas for large and small dogs, a double-gated entry system, benches, shade, waste stations and clearly posted rules to ensure a safe experience for all visitors.

Organizers say the benefits go far beyond giving dogs a place to run. Dog parks help encourage physical activity, reduce social isolation and strengthen community connections. They also provide valuable opportunities for dogs to socialize, exercise and develop healthy behaviors.

The project has already generated enthusiasm throughout the community. In October, local volunteers Rick Preston and Jess Ballinger organized a Howl-o-ween 5K Fun Run that raised more than \$3,100 toward the effort. They continue to lead fundraising activities on behalf of Rotary.

 The group hopes to raise approximately \$30,000 to complete the project. A significant portion of those funds will be used for fencing, which is currently being bid by area contractors. Organizers expect construction could begin as soon as weather permits once funding and final approvals are in place.

Community members who would like to support the project can make a tax-deductible donation through the Lake Placid New York Rotary Foundation at lpnyrf.org. Donations designated for the Rotary Bark Park will help bring this community vision to life.

As fundraising efforts continue, organizers welcome donations, sponsorships and community support.