

CCC Resident Memories

The Dog Park

Continental Country Club Discussion Group

Catherine Main

I thought a little history on the "dog park" might be interesting to some of the residents who utilize this area.

When we moved here 23 years ago, we owned dogs but had no place to run them or socialize them with other dogs. My husband, Russ, viewed the area under the power lines as a good area, but it was terribly overgrown with weeds and had a culvert which retained water behind the homes on Robin Road. It was a mecca for bugs, snakes, and who knows what else.

Russ went to talk with our then general manager, Bobby Hunt, and asked if he could clear that area to use for people to run their dogs. Bobby fully agreed, but didn't have the staff or the time to have it cleared.

Russ said if he could use one of the large mowers (he's had lots of experience running equipment), he would do the clearing. In addition, they arranged to have some of the fill dirt from the clearing for Phase III fill in the culvert. It became an arduous task as the weeds were so deep and thick. We hauled limbs away, picked up rocks, and finally got the area suitable for dogs to run. Russ continued to mow the area for several years until maintenance and lawn crews took over the job.

CCC now has a "dog park". Even though most dog owners would love to have the area fenced for the safety of dogs and people, that has not yet come to fruition. However, it is important to realize that a "dog park" was never in the plans for CCC. If dog owners don't respect the area and the area ceases to be mowed, it can disappear as quickly as it appeared. I think it's an area we can't afford to lose and has to be respected.

My husband made the dog park to begin with. Continental never had a dog park, nor did they ever do anything to create one. 24 years ago, when we moved here, that field was an overgrown mess with a big ravine behind the homes on Robin which had water with all the crud that Florida water has in it - snakes, bugs, etc. and it was a mosquito haven. He talked with the then - GM and asked if he could mow it to be used as a place to run our dogs off leash. He used one of the big golf course mowers and mowed the field several times before it was fit to run dogs there. In addition, he arranged for some of the dirt from Phase III to be hauled over to fill in the ravine behind the Robin Road houses. It has been used for 24 years as a dog park, but has never been formally designated as property used for that purpose. Our documents are very specific about having our dogs on leash - and that means even in the "dog park" that now exists. Fencing an area allows us to take our dogs off leash and remain safe. The size of the proposed park is more than adequate for dogs to run, play, fetch, etc. I called many towns which have dog parks all over the country and visited several in this area. There is not one park which 1) is any larger than the one proposed here, or 2) that allows any wheeled vehicle within the fenced area. As a matter of fact, some of the townships I called said they do not even allow a wheelchair inside the enclosure. Their reasoning is that if someone is in a wheelchair, it

presents a liability because of uneven ground and they would be unable to control their dog. Mike Roberts did his homework thoroughly on this project. I think we're getting a win-win with a fenced dog park.

A ride in the woods

<https://fb.watch/4gJEC20cp5/>

Catherine Main

This area was a thick, inaccessible woods when we moved here. We used to walk through the thick branches and weeds until my husband began cleaning paths through the woods so we could all drive our golf carts through. Every single path through that area was chopped, sawed, hauled, and stomped down by him. It became an area where "birders" loved going, people loved walking, and the "dog group" had Easter egg hunts, etc. We have Russ to thank for making this area accessible for everybody to enjoy. There are many who refer to the area as "Russ's paths" through the woods. It is still his favorite part of this park. There is much more to this park than the front areas where most of the "amenities" are located.

Donna Deatrich Melcher

Much of it has been cleared and there is much more than is overgrown now where there used to be paths. Russ got sick and couldn't do as much up there as he used to. He is still up there every day,

Suzanne Mann

When Tony Young was Golf Superintendent here, he would have all the staff come down to the woods for a steak barbecue! So much fun!!!!

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Yes. That area past the bridge (known as the overflow) was his pet project and the hardest to tackle. It was so overgrown and dense, it was quite a project. There are still areas up there that have not been traveled much. He knows where they are, so we go down them quite often. The pigs have done a number on many of the trails. Funny story: several years ago, we planted squash and cucumbers up in a remote area in the woods. A lady got turned around on the trails and saw the little garden. She reported back that someone was growing marijuana up there because "why else would someone plant something in a hidden area?". She called the sheriff who determined that, in fact, they were squash and cucumbers. She told everybody about the garden and the area got a lot of traffic. Russ ripped up the plants and that was the end of it. Just as an aside, when we moved here, the little dirt road along Hidden Lake was there, but the area by the lake was so overgrown, it was impossible to see the water. Russ began chopping things down - ended up with scratches, cuts, and poison everything - but finally got it down enough so people could enjoy seeing the lake and all it had to offer. It has since been maintained by CCC, but "back in the day" they did not have the manpower or the \$\$ to have anyone mowing or cutting. He has done a ton of work in this park.

The Gazebo area

Linda Tong

IT would be so Very nice if the shrubbery behind the gazebo was cut down to afford a Great view of the lake, instead of craneing your neck to just get a fleeting glimpse. Imagine the sun's reflection, the birds

Catherine Main

Several years ago, Russ and another resident took their little boat out and cut back a lot of the brush so the lake was more visible. They hauled the brush back to be picked up so it wasn't just left to float in the lake. It would be very expensive to hire done. It was quite a job, but they would tackle it again once the other guy gets back down here.

Cathy Popiel

I took this photo in the mid 1980's. The area was wide open; no Hydrilla. I can also remember the canals around the gazebo area were re-dredged about 20 years ago. The canals were originally put in by the developer to afford residents access to Lake Okahumpka and should be maintained. I can't help but wonder with the area's population growth & development stressing the aquifer now, if in time the lake will become a swamp. The canal across from Hidden Lake was also a clear waterway. That canal has become a swamp.

