

Going to the Dogs

Four Paws Kingdom: Rutherfordton

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Although he doesn't make the rules, Rover is top dog at Four Paws Kingdom in Rutherfordton, about an hour southeast of Asheville. With seven parks, hiking trails, a swimming pond, a creek, and a fun fair (all for canines), owners Birgit and Meik Bartoschek say it's the only dog-dedicated campground in the United States.

In addition to an agility course, obedience workshops, dog Olympiads, a playground, and a camp store selling delectable treats for your pet, Four Paws offers seminars each season, April through November. This year, seminars will include a May 26 session on communicating with dogs and a June 9-10 beginner's dog agility class.

"We're crazy about dogs, and we provide things nobody else does," Meik Bartoschek says. You won't find any place in the United States that provides a full-service campground and all the amenities campers could wish for in addition to any amenities a dog owner could want."

Nightly rates at the campground, located off Highway 74-A, range from \$33 to \$39 for campsites, and \$69.50 for cabins, which are open to dogs. Campsites are named in honor of Scooby Doo, Lassie, Benji, Rin Tin Tin, and other canine celebrities. —*Jess Clarke*



PHOTOGRAPH BY DONNA KENNEDY / FOUR PAWS KINGDOM

Walk the Good Path

Max Patch & Hot Springs: Madison County

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PHOTOGRAPH BY STEWART YOUNG

Long-time locals know the restorative qualities of trekking to the Max Patch bald and picnicking while gazing over the horizon into three states. Follow up your hearty hike with a dip in the mineral-rich waters that fill Hot Springs Spa's open-air hot tubs, covered only by a canopy of trees on the shores of the French Broad River. Downtown Hot Springs is an amalgam of outfitters and gift shops, with Appalachian Trail through-hikers a constant fixture on Main Street. Dine on organic treats at the Bridge Street Café, or go for beer and buffalo burgers at the Paddler's Pub.

—*Constance F. Richards*

Get There:

Contact: (828) 287-7324
www.4pawskingdom.com

Local Knowledge: Within 30 minutes of the campground are Lake Lure, Chimney Rock Park, and Hickory Nut Gorge.

Get There:

Contact: www.nhotsprings.com
(828) 622-7676

Dining:
Bridge Street Café, (828) 622-0007
Paddler's Pub, (800) 303-7238