



Friends of Belfast Parks

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The Scoop on “April Stool’s Day” in Belfast

Saturday, April 4 is “April Stool’s Day” in Belfast and Portland! On that day, local park stewardship organizations in both Maine cities will “team up to pick up” dog waste in local parks. Friends of Belfast Parks will hold its 3rd annual event from 10am to noon in Belfast, while Friends of the Eastern Promenade will host their 17th Annual “April Stool’s Day” from 8am -10am in Portland.

In Belfast, local dog owners and other interested citizens are invited and requested to gather at the gazebo at Steamboat Landing at 10:00 am. Participants will be provided with gloves, scoopers, and bags and will pick up dog waste left over the winter months in the parks and streets on the waterfront.

Debbie Hockensmith, coordinator for the Belfast event, says that the goal of “April Stool’s Day” is not only to clean up the public areas, but also to draw attention to the problems created by dog owners who fail to pick up after their dogs as required by law. Dog feces carry parasites and bacteria, attract vermin and flies, detract from the appearance of streets and green spaces, and contaminate bay waters. “And we all know how totally disgusting dog poop is when stuck to the bottom of a shoe! Picking up after one’s dog is a hallmark of responsible pet ownership” said Hockensmith.

According to Carol Good, president of Friends of Belfast Parks, “while most dog owners abide by the dog waste ordinance and pick up after their pets, a number of irresponsible owners repeatedly leave their dog’s waste for others to clean up. Although our local ordinance carries penalties for failing to pick up, the city has not been inclined to issue citations for these violations in the past.”

Good and Hockensmith both believe that a few well-publicized fines would help draw attention to the problem and result in fewer violations of the ordinance. “We are confident that education, paired with enforcement, will change people’s attitudes and behaviors about this issue.”

In the days leading up to April Stool’s Day, small pennants reading “*Who Left This?*” will be placed in piles of dog feces found in public places. The Friends of Belfast Parks will continue to distribute its “*Picking Up Where Your Dog Left Off*” educational pamphlet to dog owners who license their dogs in the city, and will also continue to strongly advocate for enforcement of the current dog waste ordinance.

For more information about “April Stools Day” in Belfast, visit the Friends of Belfast Parks website (www.friendsofbelfastparks.org) or call Debbie at 338-1704.