

A campground dedicated to dogs

Five years ago, Meik and Birgit Bartoschek traveled the country looking for a campground for their Corgis. When they couldn't find one, they stopped in Rutherfordton, N.C., in the foothills of the western North Carolina mountains, and built Four Paws Kingdom.

"We were the first dog-dedicated campground in the U.S.," says Meik Bartoschek, a former resort hotel consultant. "Most of our guests come from farther than 200 miles."

Four Paws' 33 acres of four-legged fun offer hiking trails, a swimming pond, dog playgrounds, and a fully equipped agility course. Birgit Bartoschek is a dog trainer who offers agility and obedience

instruction. She's also an artist whose whimsical canine illustrations decorate the campground.

Canine campers love splashing in the pond and romping in the large fenced dog park, where there are plenty of trees for shade, toys, and fresh water.

Larry and Mary Sherman of Asheville, N.C., took Bear, their 10-year-old Akita, and Suzi, their 6-year-old Jack Russell Terrier, for a getaway. Suzi was taken with the agility play area. "For the doggie set, Four Paws is truly a class-A camping experience," Larry Sherman says.

And there's plenty of fun for humans, too. Four Paws hosts events such as potlucks, bingo, and karaoke, and serves gourmet meals to campers during its April through November season.

— Barry Silverstein

