Dog Park at James Island County Park Enhanced with New Fencing, Shade Structures

The dog park at James Island County Park has reopened following a series of enhancements designed to improve both the visitor experience and the long-term durability of the space.

The project focused on comfort, accessibility, and flexibility within the dog park. Park staff alongside the maintenance team as well as the planning and development division have worked over the past year to reimagine key elements of the space. The result is a refreshed dog park that better meets the needs of both staff and visitors while preserving the features that make it such a beloved destination.

One of the most noticeable improvements is the installation of large shade umbrellas throughout the big dog park. These structures were designed to provide relief from the Lowcountry sun for both pets and their people.

“The umbrellas are actually the same size as the ones we have at the Splash Zone Waterpark so they’re very big and they’ll work well,” Assistant Park Manager Joey Crawford said. “More shade in the dog park has been one of the top requests we’ve been getting.”

The placement of these umbrellas was carefully coordinated with the planning and development team to ensure maximum shade coverage throughout the day. New picnic tables were also added beneath the shaded areas, creating more comfortable spaces for guests to relax while their dogs play. Pups can also take time to rest in the shade before going out for more playtime.

Another major enhancement was the installation of a brand-new fence surrounding the entire big dog park. Beyond improving the overall look and durability of the space, the updated fencing introduced new functionality for both guests and staff. A new gate leading to the beach area was designed to match the existing double-gate entry system, providing a secure transition point between the beach and the rest of the dog park.

This updated layout gives visitors more control over their experience.

“Basically what that does is it allows customers now to choose whether they want their dog to have access to the water or not,” Crawford said. “For those who prefer to stay on dry land, the new fencing makes it easier than ever to do so.”

The fencing improvements also created operational benefits behind the scenes. With the ability to section off portions of the beach, staff can now complete sand renourishment projects more efficiently. Instead of closing the entire dog park, only a portion of the beach area will need to be temporarily restricted at any given time during renourishment projects.

Accessibility was another key focus. Two new concrete pads were installed to provide ADA access to a brand-new rinse station in the big dog park. This addition made it easier for all guests to clean off their dogs after a swim or a muddy play session, enhancing convenience while supporting inclusivity.

Additional upgrades include new benches, trash cans, and dog waste bag stations placed throughout the park. Each of these elements was selected with durability in mind.

“This is something we’ve wanted to do for a long time,” Crawford said. “It’s really going to spruce up the dog park and make it better. The idea was for everything out there to be very durable.”

With these enhancements now complete, the dog park at James Island County Park is better equipped than ever to serve the community. The updates not only addressed long-standing guest requests but also ensured the space could continue to welcome visitors for years to come and make an already popular destination even stronger.

“It’s been a really collaborative effort all around,” Crawford said.