

North Port Parks & Recreation

Rainbow Bridge Presentation



NORTH PORT
FLORIDA

The Rainbow Bridge Poem

*There is a bridge connecting Heaven and Earth.
It is called Rainbow Bridge.
Just this side of Rainbow Bridge there is a land of meadows, hills,
and valleys with lush, green grass.
When beloved pets die, they go to this place.
There is always food and water and warm spring weather.
The old and frail animals are young again.
Those who are maimed are made whole again.
They play all day with each other.*

*There is only one thing missing.
They are not with their special person who loved
them on earth.
So each day they run and play.*

*Until the day comes when one suddenly stops playing and looks up!
The nose twitches.
The ears are up!
The eyes are staring.
And this one suddenly runs from the group.
You have been seen!
And when you and your special friend meet,
you take them in your arms and embrace.
Your face is kissed again and again and again,
and you look once more into the eyes of your trusting pet.
Then you cross the Rainbow Bridge together...*



Review

Concept and Options for a Rainbow Bridge

The bittersweet words of the 'Rainbow Bridge' poem has brought comfort to many grieving pet lovers. Inspired by this poem, Appalachian artist Amy Wald created an enchanted real-life Rainbow Bridge along the shores of Lake Lure a few years ago

This concept was presented for consideration at MCEP bridge by a resident.

Challenges

After Hurricane Helene hundreds of collars were washed away, some made it to a marina miles from the bridge location others were never located.

North Port City Ordinance

Personal Property is prohibited from being left in Parks.

Collars were found along the banks of Lake Lure in the winter of 2025. These collars are listed below.



- 1. ZIG ZAG RAINBOW – 20”
NO TAGS
- 2. THREE ORANGE STRIPES
20” NO TAGS



- 11. PINK 20” ABBEY RED
BONE SHAPE TAG
- 12. PINK WITH WHITE DOTS
19” NO TAGS

Tribute Program

The existing Parks & Recreation Program does Honor, Celebrate and Remember could this work.....

Requires an update to the Administrative Regulation for the Tribute Program to include the Rainbow Bridge

Honor. Celebrate. Remember.

If you're interested in honoring friends or loved ones, consider purchasing a tree, bench, or paver through North Port Parks & Recreation. The Parks & Recreation Department will work with you to determine the best location for your selected monument, based on the property's needs and available space. You can choose from a set of pre-determined messages to be displayed.

Please note that pavers are only available at the Children's Memorial at Atwater Community Park (4475 Skyway), the Garden of the Five Senses (4299 Pan American Blvd.) and Circle of Honor to be located at the City Center Campus.

Whatever the occasion, your donation to the City of North Port parks system will leave a lasting impact on our community. The parks and open spaces in the City of North Port are an integral part of the community that enhance livability, sustainability and economic vitality. Contributions to the Tribute Program will be acknowledged with a plaque (as applicable) and letter of completion.

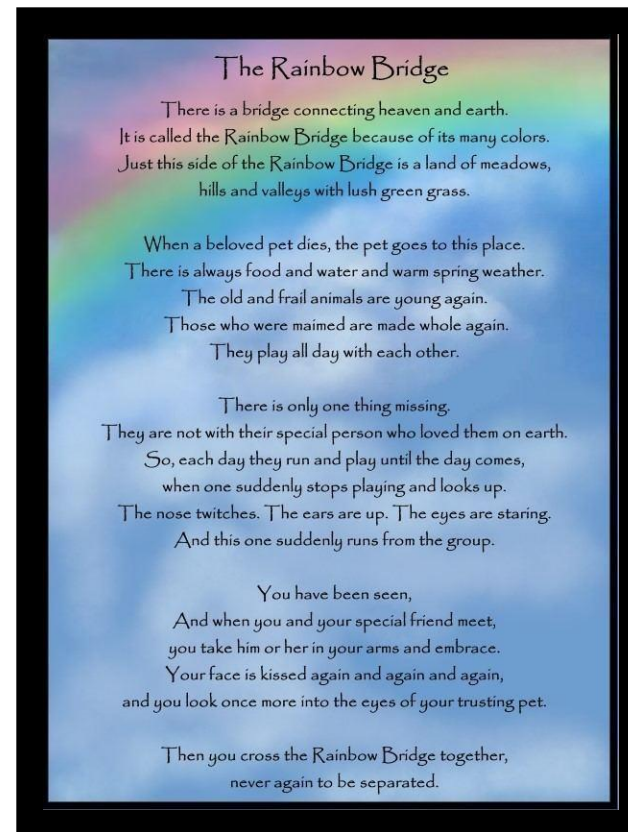
Choose from a variety of tribute options designed to honor your loved ones or celebrate special moments.

Pricing is effective as of Feb. 4, 2026, and may be evaluated on a quarterly basis. Trees and benches have a five-year donation period, while pavers have a 10-year donation period.

- Tree - \$430
- Bench - \$850
- Buddy Bench - \$830
- Paver - \$100



How to get there?



Suggested Motions

I move that the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board recommend to the City Commission that Parks & Recreation install a **Rainbow** Bridge at the Canine Club located at 6700 Appomattox Drive, North Port, Florida, and that the City Commission amend the Administrative Regulation for the Tribute Program to include the purchase of plaques for pet owners to purchase in memory of their past pets.

The City's Administrative Regulation governing the Tribute Program be amended to expressly include pet memorials and authorize the purchase and installation of plaques by Parks & Recreation for pet owners to purchase, at their own expense, in memory of their past pets, with such plaques to be placed on the Rainbow Bridge at the Canine Club in accordance with Parks & Recreation design, material, and placement standards.

Parks & Recreation staff develop and implement appropriate procedures for administration of the pet memorial plaque option within the Tribute Program, including but not limited to:

- Establishing standard plaque sizes, materials, and inscription limits consistent with existing tribute and memorial practices.
- Creating a fee schedule to recover plaque fabrication, installation, and maintenance costs, consistent with City policies and applicable Parks & Recreation regulations.
- Preparing informational materials and application forms so that residents are aware of, and can participate in, the pet memorial plaque option under the Tribute Program.



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