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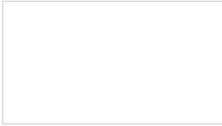
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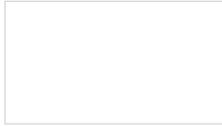
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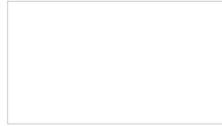
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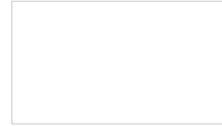
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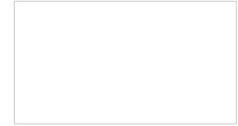
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GOOD THINKING

## Park Spark transforms dog doo into light

By [Ben Coxworth](#)

12:50 September 22, 2010

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The Park Spark features a gas lamp fueled by dog poop

[Image Gallery \(5 images\)](#)

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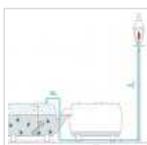
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It's definitely a good thing that so many dog owners scoop their pooches' poop, but what happens to that waste after it's been bagged and discarded isn't so great... usually it ends up fermenting in a landfill, where it poses a health risk, attracts vermin, and releases harmful methane gas into the atmosphere. [Picking it and turning it into plant fertilizer](#) is one option, but American conceptual artist Matthew Mazzotta would like to see it fed into digesters that use it to produce methane gas, which is then used for fuel. To that end, he has created a sort of demonstration project/art installation called Park Spark, at a dog park in Cambridge, Massachusetts. It features a lamp that lights the park at night, powered by nothing but canine doo-doo.



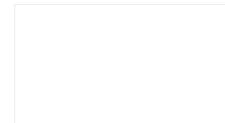
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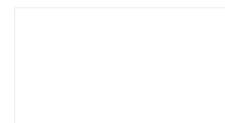
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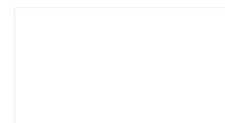
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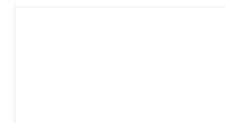
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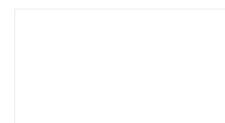
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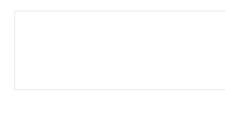
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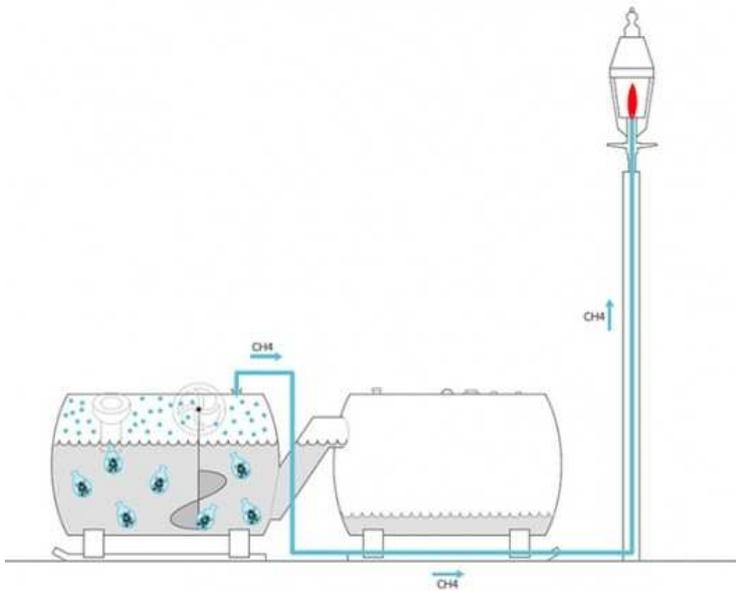
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Methane digesters are already in use in places such as India, where the gas from cow manure is used to provide supplemental heat and electricity for villages. Even the concept of using dog feces isn't entirely new, as Mazzotta got the idea from reading about a similar proposed project in San Francisco. That digester ultimately never saw the light of day, but Matthew met with the scientific advisor for the project, and learned how to make his own.



To use the Park Spark, dog owners scoop their dog's poop in one of the supplied biodegradable bags, then drop it into a large airtight tank. They then turn a wheel on top of the tank, to stir the contents. Through a process of anaerobic digestion, microorganisms break down the feces and produce methane gas. That gas rises and is ultimately released – and burned off – through a valve on the lamp. When burned, the methane is separated into carbon dioxide and water. Although CO<sub>2</sub> is still a greenhouse gas, it's a much less potent one than methane.

The flame in the lamp burns as long as there is fuel to feed it.



While the amount of energy created by one digester in one park might not be huge, Mazzotta hopes the project gets people thinking about their place in the natural world. "The energy of the digester manifested as an 'eternal flame' is evidence of the redundant and unquestioned nature of our behaviors," he states on the [Park Spark website](#).

"What lies beneath the circumstances that have driven us to develop 'green technologies' is the fact that we are disconnected from our environment. When we start to unveil how we are connected to our surroundings we are immediately shown a much more dynamic and interconnected picture of what we are part of."

Mazzotta is now trying to establish Park Sparks in other cities, and is open to suggestions for other possible uses for the gas that they create.

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One step closer to Thunderdome.

 **5318008** - *September 22, 2010 @ 09:09 pm CDT*

This must be the most expensive street lamp in the world. A triumph of ingenuity over common sense. I wouldn't fancy having to service the device. Incidentally, I have a similar machine in my back garden, for sewage treatment, only it works aerobically, so does not produce methane. Solids have to be removed every 6 months. Is this too much information?

 **windykites1** - *September 23, 2010 @ 01:09 pm CDT*

This is the cheapest street light ever. I say a triumph for common sense. This is a design that will pay for itself in electrical savings. That is the point. Good for you on the leaching septic system.

 **James Yarger** - *September 26, 2010 @ 02:09 pm CDT*

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