
An agency of the Centre Region Council of Governments
Serving the Borough of State College and the Townships of College, Ferguson, Harris and Patton

GEOCACHING POLICY AND GUIDELINES **(includes Geocaching, Letterboxing, Geodashing, etc.)**

This policy may be amended to include other GPS-based games, as those activities are created.

Centre Region Parks & Recreation (CRPR) is officially charged to manage and operate municipal park facilities on behalf of five participating municipalities and the Centre Region Parks & Recreation Authority. CRPR maintains and programs the municipally-owned parks located in the Borough of State College and in the Townships of College, Ferguson, Harris and Patton. The agency also operates the Millbrook Marsh Nature Center, Centre Region Active Adult Center, and two outdoor swimming pools on behalf of the Centre Regional Recreation Authority.

Geocaching involves the placement of caches (usually small containers) in urban and rural areas, with the majority being placed in natural areas. The general location and geographic coordinates of these caches are shared on the internet at www.geocaching.com. Global Positioning System (GPS) users can then use the location coordinates to search for and discover the caches. Caches contain a variety of items and the visitor is asked to leave a new item to replace the one they removed; not all cachers will take an item, but will sign a log book contained within the cache. Cache owners monitor the cache they placed with the logbooks in the cache box as well as through the electronic logs on the above-mentioned website.

Letterboxing involves the placement of small containers in rural or urban areas that contain a personal stamp (usually a rubber stamp) and logbook. Participants follow clues, sometimes using a compass or maps, to locate the letterbox. The logbook in the box is then stamped with the finder's personal stamp and the letterbox stamp is stamped inside the finder's logbook. Information on letterboxing, which began in Dartmoor, England and has spread to the USA, is available at www.letterboxing.org.

Geodashing includes the use of a GPS unit to participate in a game involving predefined waypoints and does not involve the placement of a physical cache. Therefore, no permit or approval is required for Geodashing.

Centre Region Parks & Recreation welcomes geocaching and related games as a healthy physical activity that encourages park visits. The purpose of this policy is to establish management and placement guidelines for geocaching so as to minimize the impact on natural and cultural resources in the municipal parks of the Centre Region. Permits are required at this time for geocaches and letterboxes only. There is no fee to obtain a permit. Permits are not required for geodashing, however all park rules apply to visits within the municipal parks. This policy does not cover caches/letterboxes located in state parks, state forests, school lands, university lands, or non-park areas of municipal lands.

CRPR Procedures for placing a Geocaching or Letterbox in a Municipal Park:

1. Read this Policy and Guidelines.
2. Complete the Permit Application.
3. Submit the application to the CRPR office (2643 Gateway Drive #1, State College, PA 16801).
4. A permit or a denial letter will be issued to the applicant within 10-days.
5. Upon issuance of a permit, the cache owner may submit the cache, along with the permit # and CRPR-approved language, to www.geocaching.com for the live listing of the cache.
6. Once the cache is approved and live, cache owners must follow all caching guidelines from www.geocaching.com which provides suggestions for maintaining caches, and should check on their caches frequently, especially when receiving log info. that the cache requires maintenance.
7. One month prior to the expiration of the permit, the cache owner needs to reapply for a new permit in order for the cache to remain active.
8. If the cache owner does not reapply for a permit extension, the cache owner will be notified to remove the cache within 14 days, and restore the area to its original condition.
9. If the permit owner has not removed the cache within 30 days from notice, CRPR staff will remove the cache and all contents become the property of CRPR. A notification will be placed on cache listing on www.geocaching.com notifying cachers that this listing is no longer active and needs to be archived.
10. CRPR is not responsible for lost, stolen, or damaged caches.
11. PLEASE NOTE: CRPR sends a list of municipal parks to the www.geocaching.com reviewers to that they know in advance that local caches should have permit numbers from CRPR if caches are to be placed within the local municipal parks (via the coordinates provided to them).

ADDITIONAL GEOCACHING RULES

- I. ALL Municipal Park Regulations must be followed, including the use of the park only during daylight hours (from dawn to dusk). For a complete listing of Centre Region Parks & Recreation parks, please visit the CRPR website at http://www.crpr.org/Parks/details/park_locations.html.
- II. When choosing a location for a geocache or letterbox, owners should be aware of the perception of other park visitors and non-geocachers (aka muggles). Caches that interfere with current park activities, pavilion reservations, maintenance, or other recreational park activities will not be approved. Also, cache locations should not pose any danger to those searching for the cache or to other visitors. CRPR retains the right to remove a cache in the interest of protecting the park environment and/or visitor safety.
- III. No archaeological, historic, or ecologically-sensitive sites should be used for cache locations.
- IV. No burying or digging is permitted. Cutting trees, shrubs, or plants is also prohibited.
- V. **Geocaches** must be clearly labeled "Official Geocache" with the permit number on the outside of the container. Inside the container must be a log book, owner contact information, and a brief information sheet about geocaching for unexpected discoverers to understand the cache process. **Letterboxes** must also be clearly labeled with the permit number and contain a brief information sheet about letterboxing.
- VI. This policy is effective immediately for all geocaches and letterboxes within the CRPR municipal park system. Non-permitted caches/boxes may be removed and destroyed by CRPR at any time.

- VII. CRPR will issue permits for “Nano” caches (such as small fingertip-sized containers), “Micro” caches (such as a 35mm film container), “Regular” caches (such as a plastic kitchen container), and “Virtual” caches (no cache container, the location is the cache itself). No “Large” caches (i.e., buckets, ammo containers, pipe containers) are permitted.
- VIII. Permits for a specific site will be granted for 24 consecutive months from the issuance of the permit. Within 14 days after the end of that period, the cache/box must be removed, the site restored to the original condition, and CRPR notified in writing or by email of its removal. CRPR reserves the right to remove without notice and dispose of the cache after the 14-day period.
- IX. Cache and/or Letterbox Permits will be limited to two current caches/boxes per park. If the location is one of the larger parks, CRPR will consider more than one permit if appropriate. It will not be the responsibility of CRPR to maintain any type of “wait list” for permit slots in a park.
- X. The Cache/Letterbox owner must provide all application information and be available to accompany the reviewer to the proposed cache/letterbox location, if requested. A photo of the proposed site and of the proposed cache/letterbox container should be furnished with the application.
- XI. Cache contents must be suitable for all ages. No firearms, weapons, ammo, food, alcohol, drugs, explosives, or adult items may be included in the cache. A list of the original contents proposed should be included with the application.
- XII. Caches or letterboxes placed in CRPR municipal parks should be available to the public via the public website (such as www.geocaching.com or www.letterboxing.org). Caches for private access (a premium membership required) will not be accepted.

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