

**GEOCACHING, LETTERBOXING, WAYMARKING, AND EARTHCACHING ACTIVITIES IN
CITY OF COLUMBUS PARKS AND WATERWAYS
INFORMATION AND PERMIT CONDITIONS:**

Geocaching and letterboxing involve hiding items, either containers with various treasures, travel bugs, stamps, etc., then providing Global Positioning Satellite (GPS) coordinates and/or other clues on a website. Visitors to these websites can choose which “cache” or letterbox site they would like to locate, either by following the clues or using their own GPS device. Those searching for caches typically bring along their own “treasures” and make an exchange once the cache has been located. Those visiting Letterbox sites bring along a book in which they apply the hidden stamp to indicate that they have visited that letterbox site.

Waymarking and Earthcaching involve locating a specific landmark, facility, geographical feature, etc. based on its coordinates. These activities are preferred by the City of Columbus Recreation and Parks Department in lieu of placing a physical cache.



THE CITY OF
COLUMBUS
ANDREW J. GINTHER, MAYOR

RECREATION AND PARKS
DEPARTMENT

Procedures Concerning Geocaching, Letterboxing, Waymarking and Earthcaching on Columbus City Parkland:

PERMITS

1. Geocaching and letterboxing established by the applicant will not be permitted in any [City of Columbus Nature Preserve](#).
2. Placement of a cache or letterbox on City of Columbus parkland and waterways must be secured with a permit. Any cache or letterbox located on City of Columbus parkland and waterways that does not exhibit the required affixed permit number is unauthorized and is subject to removal from its location and the owner is subject to fines.
3. The person applying for a permit must provide a valid geocache, letterboxing, waymarking or Earthcache username, address telephone number, email address and the website address(es) on which the location will be posted.
4. The exact location of the cache, letterbox, waymark or Earthcache name, number and exact location (including GPS coordinates) must be stated on the permit.
5. The geocache, letterbox, waymark or Earthcache name, number and exact location (including GPS coordinates) must be stated in the permit.
6. All permits will be in effect for a calendar year. Permits may be renewed on a year-to-year basis.
7. Upon expiration of a permit, the permit holder is responsible for removing the cache or letterbox and for removing the cache or letterbox location from all websites and any information sources.
8. If the permit holder fails to remove the cache or letterbox following the expiration of a permit, it will be removed by department staff and will be disposed of.
9. Department staff will periodically review websites to ensure that all caches, letterboxes, waymarks and Earthcaches identified in a City of Columbus parkland or waterway are permitted. If any non-permitted items are

found, the department staff will contact appropriate personnel and have those coordinates removed from the website.

10. If it is determined that a geocache, letterbox, waymark or Earthcache has been the cause of adverse environmental damage, they may be removed by department personnel and the permit will be cancelled.

GEOCACHE CONTAINERS AND ASSOCIATED CONTENTS

1. Geocache and letterbox containers must be non-breakable, have some form of latch or other closing mechanism to prohibit content exposure to wildlife, and must be approved by the Columbus Recreation and Parks Department. No Army ammunition boxes will be permitted.
2. Each container must have an identification label affixed to the outside identifying it as an approved cache/letterbox location and must contain the permit number and expiration date.
3. Caches and letterboxes may not contain inappropriate or dangerous items.
4. All caches and letterboxes are subject to random inspection by department personnel, who have the authority to immediately remove any item held in a cache or letterbox deemed unacceptable or that is in violation of this policy.
5. No motorized vehicles or equipment will be used when placing or locating the caches.

CACHE/LETTERBOX/WAYMARK/EARTHCACHE LOCATIONS

1. Physical caches and letterboxes are prohibited inside of any Columbus Recreation and Parks facility.
2. The location of a cache, letterbox, waymark or Earthcache must be pre-approved by the Conservation Section of Columbus Recreation and Parks Department.
3. Geocaches, letterboxes, waymarks or Earthcaches may not be placed in locations that may lead to the creation of spur trails. Examples of off-limits areas include woods, un-mowed fields, prairies, wetlands or other such areas that do not have an improved trail at the location of the cache, letterbox, waymark or Earthcache.
4. Caches and Letterboxes may not be affixed to trees, buried, nor may vegetation or stones be disturbed to place a geocache or letterbox.
5. Caches and Letterboxes may not be placed in dangerous, inappropriate, or protected areas/habitats, on cliffs, within floodplains, underground or underwater.
6. Metal detectors may not be used in cache searches.

COMPLIANCE

1. Failure to comply with these permit conditions will result in the revocation of effective geocaching permits and online cache, letterbox, waymark or Earthcache listings. Continued failure to comply with these guidelines will prevent the issuance of any further permits to the non-compliant group or individual.
2. If geocaching, letterboxing, waymarking or Earthcaching activities as a whole are found to have a negative impact on park resources, or if safety becomes an issue in searching for their locations, the Columbus Recreation and Parks Department may ban these activities from certain areas or from the entire park.
3. The Columbus Recreation and Parks Department will determine the number of manageable caches, letterboxes, waymarks, and Earthcaches at each location.