

Hendricks County Parks and Recreation

Rule Name: Geocaching & Letterboxing

Adoption Date: January 1st, 2020

Amendment Date(s):

Note: Starting in 2020, all participants will be required to complete an application on an annual basis. Permits begin on February 1st, and end on January 31st, regardless of when the participant applied.

Applies to McCloud Nature Park, the Vandalia Trail, W.S. Gibbs Memorial Park and all future properties managed by Hendricks County Parks & Recreation.

Hendricks County Parks & Recreation (HCP&R) supports and encourages the sports of geocaching and letterboxing as activities that promote exploration of the varied outdoor spaces in our county. HCP&R parks, natural areas, and trails are intended to provide visitors with safe and enjoyable recreational opportunities. HCP&R actively manages public properties and facilities for a range of uses, including both recreational and natural habitat values.

This Geocaching & Letterboxing rule establishes procedures to facilitate and manage geocaching and letterboxing on HCP&R property to provide a balance of appropriate stewardship and recreational opportunity. This rule also applies to any other activity that involves hiding physical items on HCP&R property.

All caches must be pre-approved by HCP&R staff; non-compliant caches will be removed from the placement site. To obtain permission to place a cache, submit an application (see below). For questions, call or email our staff at McCloud Nature Park.

Phone: 765-676-5437

Email: mccloudnp@hcparks.net

All park visitors must obey all park laws, rules, and regulations.

Rules regarding placing caches on HCP&R property:

- Participants of geocaching and letterboxing must follow guidelines outlined within the Geocaching website: <https://www.geocaching.com/play/guidelines>
- Practice CITO (Cache In, Trash Out) by picking up any trash you see on the trails.
- Geocachers must “leave no trace” in selection of cache sites. Caches should be placed less than 25 feet away from a trail or road to avoid damaging the ground, site hardscape, landscaping, or vegetation while placing or locating a cache. Geocachers must consciously consider potential damage that may result from other participants searching for or accessing the cache.
- Geocachers are prohibited from building any structures in the parks. Scheduled resource management activities, such as a prescribed burn or species eradication, shall be considered in evaluating a license application.
- Caches cannot be approved for placement in an area that could reasonably cause danger to a geocaching participant or to another person who visits the HCP&R property. Examples of inappropriate areas include a cliff, bluff, lake, stream, road, or flood prone area.

- Geocaches are never to be placed in any park buildings, and caches placed near buildings must clearly express that they are located outside the buildings.
- The movement of already downed leaves, twigs, and bark to conceal geocaches is allowed. Movement of rocks, removal of bark from trees, and or relocation of a living plant are not permitted. It is prohibited to excavate soil, cut vegetation, or move or remove natural objects.
- The cache should not be readily discernible by the general public.
- The cache container must be clear, waterproof, and have never held food.
- Each approved geocache or letterbox must:
 - Have an official “Approved by Hendricks County Parks & Recreation” sticker affixed to the outside of the cache, available upon approval of the geocache or letterbox permit.
 - Have the geocache or letterbox name affixed to the outside of the cache as named on geocaching.com or letterboxing.org.
- Online geocache and letterbox descriptions, such as those on geocaching.com or letterboxing.org, must include:
 - Park entry information and the following statement: “This geocache/letterbox has been approved by Hendricks County Parks & Recreation.”
 - To help protect our park’s environment, direct people seeking your cache to park in designated parking lots and to follow established trails, as close as possible to your cache site, to minimize off-trail hiking.
- Each cache has a one-year limit for the approved location. Cache owners must reapply for a new location each year. Permits begin on February 1st, and end on January 31st, regardless of when the participant applied.

HCP&R is not responsible for any damage, or loss of geocaches or equipment.

HCP&R will work with cache owners to resolve minor issues. HCP&R reserves the right to remove and dispose of any geocache for reasons including, but not limited to:

- Inappropriate location or improper marking of the cache container
- Risk of damaging park structures or maintenance equipment
- Causing negative impact on the environment, such as unauthorized trails leading to the cache
- Poor maintenance of the cache
- Non-family friendly content, food, or hazardous materials in cache
- Little or no recent activity, to reduce the density of caches
- Other reasons deemed inconsistent with the HCP&R mission/statutes

All caches and letterboxes are subject to inspection by HCP&R, who have the authority to immediately remove the cache, letterbox or anything inside the container. HCP&R reserves the right to rescind a permit or archive a cache at any time.