



**CITY of BEVERLY
PLANNING AND COMMUNITY
DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT**

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**City of Beverly
Geocaching/Letterboxing Guidelines**

Purpose

Geocaching, letterboxing and other similar pursuits are recreational activities which involve using GPS coordinates and devices, maps and compasses, and other methods of orienteering to find hidden containers known as caches. Caches contain logbooks for finders to write in, and possibly trinkets to trade and collect. Geocaching and other similar activities are a unique way to explore new areas and are therefore encouraged, however, necessary precautions must be in place to mitigate potential risks. The purpose of this policy is to establish management guidelines for geocaching and letterboxing on City of Beverly, City of Beverly Parks and Recreation, and City of Beverly Conservation Commission land, so as to minimize impact on natural and cultural resources and to mitigate safety concerns.

Definitions

For purposes of this policy and the permit, we will be using the following definitions:

Beacon Cache - A beacon is a device that transmits a wireless message, which can be used to find a geocache. Examples of beacon devices: NFC transmitter, Chirp™, WiFi router, Radio transmitter.

Cache or "Traditional" Cache - A hidden container filled with a logbook, pen/pencil, stamp and possibly trinkets, and is located at the posted coordinates.

Challenge Cache - Requires seekers to find an associated physical cache, and to find an additional set of geocaches as defined by the challenge owner. Challenge caches encourage geocachers to set and achieve goals.

Geocaching - A game for GPS (Global Positioning Systems) users. The idea is to have individuals/organizations place caches and share the locations of these caches on the Internet. GPS users can then use the location coordinates to find the caches. Once found, the user records their find on www.Geocaching.com.

Letterboxing – A treasure hunt using clues and sometimes map coordinates or compass bearings. The idea is for someone to hide a cache, write clues to the location and enter the clues on the letterboxing Web site. People can obtain these clues and attempt to locate the box. The box typically contains a logbook, rubber stamp, and ink pad.

Letterbox Hybrid - Combines the use of GPS, and the stamps of letterboxing.

Multi-cache - Multiple cache containers are located from information received from the previous container.

Mystery/Puzzle Cache - Geocachers must solve a puzzle on the cache page to get the coordinates for the first stage or the final container.

Night Cache - Designed to be found at night. They are difficult or impossible to find during the day. Typically, geocachers use a flashlight or UV light to follow a series of reflectors to the final location.

Offset Cache - Coordinates will take the visitor to a location to find a number stamped/written in or on an item at the location or once at the location, the user will continue the search according to instructions on the initial information received from geocaching.com.

Teamwork Cache - Created cooperatively by two owners from different areas. They encourage two geocachers to work together to find a cache in the different areas. Geocachers trade information that leads each to the final container in their own area.

Virtual Cache - A virtual cache means there is no cache container. It's the location that is the cache itself. Nothing is normally traded, except photos and experiences.

Guidelines

- Caches must be located adjacent to an existing and authorized trail. Geocachers are required to stay on legal trails to avoid impacting natural and cultural resources.
- Containers must be transparent, e.g., Tupperware or Rubbermaid. Metal (ammo boxes), PVC pipes, or other non-transparent containers are prohibited.
- No digging or excavation is permitted at any time in the placement or retrieval of a cache.
- No defacement or alteration to City of Beverly property, including but not limited to signs, benches, buildings, or natural features is allowed.

- No removal or significant disturbance of vegetation, plant growth, or other flora is permitted at any time in the placement or operation of a cache.
- Caches shall not contain food, alcohol, firearms, drugs, dangerous items (e.g. fireworks, matches), or sexually explicit material.
- No natural or cultural materials from the surrounding area shall be placed into the cache.
- Caches must be located appropriately given the area's operating hours (e.g. night caches cannot be located in an area with dusk to dawn hours).
- Caches shall not be located in:
 - Sensitive archaeological sites; such locations include historic buildings, structures, or rock walls if the cache is placed in such a way as to diminish the quality of the resources
 - Areas that contain unique, exemplary or highly sensitive resources and landscapes such as rare species habitat highly sensitive to human activities and rare or exemplary natural communities
 - Areas that could potentially cause danger to visitors trying to locate the cache
 - Locations where cache-related foot traffic may create confusion, public safety concerns or impacts to significant ecological or cultural resources
 - Underwater, caves or dens
 - Other locations that are deemed inappropriate by the Planning Department or Parks and Recreation Department
- The cache owner must:
 - Maintain the geocache container
 - Visit the geocache regularly
 - Fix reported problems (such as replacing a full or wet logbook, replacing broken or missing container)
- The City has no obligation with respect to the cache including but not limited to no obligation to protect it from theft, loss, destruction, or vandalism. The City has the right to remove the cache at any time in its discretion. If a cache is removed, the City will make a reasonable effort to email the responsible party regarding the removal in order to allow the responsible party to pick up the cache. The City is under no obligation to continue to hold the cache for more than 7 days after emailing the responsible party. If the cache is not picked up within 7 days of the email, it will be deemed abandoned property and discarded.

Procedure

- Anyone wishing to place a geocache, letterbox, or similar item must complete an Official Geocaching/Letterbox Application (see attachment A below) through the Planning Department. Completed applications should be submitted to Chelsea Zakas at czakas@beverlyma.gov or dropped off in person to the Planning Department in City Hall.
- Applications are reviewed and approved by City staff in the Planning Department to ensure natural and cultural resources protection and public safety.

- The applicant is required to include an explanation of the geocaching/letterboxing activity in the cache container (provided as Attachment B, below).
- The City has the right to remove the cache at any time, without notice, in its sole discretion.

Attachment A - Official Geocaching/Letterbox Application

Responsible Party Contact Information:

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip Code: _____

Daytime Phone Number: _____

E-mail Address: _____

Geocache/Letterbox Information:

I wish to place a geocache in _____ (name of park or area).

Type of geocache/letterbox: (circle all that apply)

- | | |
|----------------------|-------------------|
| Beacon Cache | Night Cache |
| Challenge Cache | Offset Cache |
| Letterbox Hybrid | Teamwork Cache |
| Multi-Cache | Traditional Cache |
| Mystery/Puzzle Cache | Virtual Cache |

Geocache/Letterbox Name: _____

Geocache/Letterbox Website (where cache will be posted): _____

Container Description (size, color, etc.): _____

Cache Coordinates and Map (WGS 84): _____

If Multi-Cache, additional coordinates: _____

Geocache rating (difficulty): _____ Terrain: _____

Description of Cache Site (accessibility, likely approach routes, etc.): _____

I have read, understand, and agree to abide by the City of Beverly's policy on geocaching/letterboxing. I hereby agree to waive, release and hold harmless the CITY OF BEVERLY, its officers, employees, agents, volunteers, committees and boards (collectively, "Beverly") from and against any and all liability, loss, damages, claims or actions (including costs and attorney's fees) for bodily injury, death, and/or property damage associated in any way with my geocaching activity on City property regardless of fault. I further agree to hold harmless, indemnify and defend Beverly from and against all costs (including without limitation, reasonable attorney's fees and court costs), loss, damages, expenses, claims and liabilities provided that such claims, damages, liabilities, injuries,

costs, fees, expenses, or losses are alleged to be caused in whole, or in part, by an act or omission of or by me.

Responsible Party's Signature

Space below for official use only:

Received by: _____ Date: _____

Planning Department: _____

Date permit is applicable: _____

**GEOCACHE/LETTERBOXING SITE
PLEASE READ**

Congratulations, you've found it! Intentionally or not!

What is this hidden container sitting here for?

It is part of a worldwide game. You have found a Geocaching or Letterbox site. These games involve a player to hide a "treasure" (this container and its contents) and publish the exact coordinates or directional clues on the appropriate Web page so users can go on a "treasure hunt" to find it. The only rules are: if you take something from the cache, you must leave something for the cache, and you must log your visit in the logbook. Hopefully, the person that hid this container found a good spot that is not easily found by uninterested parties. Sometimes, a good spot turns out to be a bad spot, though.

IF YOU FOUND THIS CONTAINER BY ACCIDENT:

Great! You are welcome to join us! We ask only that you:

- Please do not move or vandalize the container. The real treasure is just finding the container and sharing your thoughts with everyone else who finds it.
- If you wish, go ahead and take something. But please also leave something of your own for others to find, and write it in the logbook.
- If possible, let us know that you found it, by visiting the appropriate Web site listed below.

Geocaching and letterboxing is open to everyone with a sense of adventure. There are similar sites all over the world. These organizations have their homes on the Internet. Visit the Web sites if you want to learn more, or have any comments:

<http://www.geocaching.com>

<http://www.letterboxing.com>

This container has been placed here with permission of the City of Beverly Planning Department. Please contact Chelsea Zakas in the Planning Department with any questions or concerns.

Reference: City of Beverly Planning Department Geocaching Placement Approval

Contact Information: Chelsea Zakas, Associate Planner - czakas@beverlyma.gov