



Department of Parks & Recreation – Geocaching Administrative Policy

Geocaching, also known as GPS Stash Hunt or GeoStash, involves “hiding” items, usually containers holding various “treasures” and then providing specific Global Positioning Satellite (GPS) coordinates for each “cache” on a website. Visitors to these websites can choose which “cache” they would like to locate using their own personal GPS device. Cache searchers typically bring along their own “treasures” and make an exchange once the cache has been located.

Virtual Caching involves locating not a cache, but a specific landmark, feature, park sign, etc.

These should be encouraged at parks in lieu of physical caches. However, neither geocaching nor virtual caching will be permitted at the Abram Frink Jr. Community Center or within the fenced grounds (MyPlace, Skate Park, manicured athletic fields) at the James City County Recreation Center.

Procedures concerning geocaching with the James City County Department of Parks & Recreation are as follows:

I. CACHE PERMITS

- A. Placement of a cache on County property must be secured with a permit. Any cache located on park property that does not exhibit the required affixed permit number is unauthorized and is subject to removal from its location.
- B. The person applying for a permit must provide a valid address, telephone number, email address, driver’s license number and the website address, which will be held on file by the Parks Division.
- C. The exact location of the cache must be pre-approved by the Parks Administrator or designee, whose main concern will be public safety and the prevention of undesirable impacts to natural, historical and cultural resources.
- D. The exact cache location, including GPS coordinates, must be stated on the permit.
- E. All permits will be in effect for a period of 12 months. The exact starting and ending dates will be recorded on the permit. Upon expiration of the initial permit, the cache will be reviewed and inspected by Parks staff and extended for another 12 months. Permit holders will be contacted with any issues.

NOTE: If, during the effective period of a permit, a permit holder wants to change the location of the cache, a new permit must be issued and the effective permit canceled.

- F. Upon expiration of a permit, or in the instance a permit holder cannot be reached or is not maintaining the cache, it will be removed by Park staff and held for 10 days, after which Park staff will dispose of the cache. Confiscation and disposal by Park staff will be recorded in an incident report.
- G. If it is determined that a cache has been the cause of adverse environmental damage, the cache may be removed by the Parks Administrator or designee and the permit canceled.

II. CACHE CONTAINERS AND CONTENTS

- A. Cache 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 Parks Administrator or designee.
- B. Each cache container must have an identification label affixed to the outside identifying it as an approved cache and containing the permit number.

- C. Caches may not contain inappropriate or dangerous items. Such items include, but are not limited to, food, medications, personal/hygiene products, pornography, weapons of any type, etc. Log books are encouraged in James City County parks, over exchange items.
- D. All caches are subject to random inspection by Parks Administrator or designee. Park staff has the authority to immediately remove any item held in a cache deemed unacceptable or that is in violation of this policy.
- E. James City County is not responsible for maintenance, vandalism or theft of any cache on County property.

III. CACHE LOCATIONS:

- A. Physical caches are prohibited inside any park building, shelter or structure.
- B. The location of a cache must be pre-approved by the Parks Administrator or designee.
- C. Caches may not be placed in locations that may lead to the creation of spur trails.
- D. Caches may not be buried nor may vegetation or stones be disturbed to place a cache.
- F. Caches may not be placed in dangerous, inappropriate or protected areas and habitats, on cliffs, underground or underwater.
- G. Metal detectors may not be used in cache searches.

IV. COMPLIANCE

- A. Failure to comply with this policy directive will result in the revocation of effective geocaching permits. Continued failure to comply with these guidelines will prevent the issuance of any further geocaching permits to the non-compliant group or individual.
- B. If geocaching activities as a whole are found to have a negative impact on park resources or if safety becomes an issue in geocache searches, the Parks Administrator or designee may ban geocaching from certain areas or from the entire park.

V. REVIEW AND CANCELLATION

- A. James City County reserves the right to cancel the program at any time if a violation of County rules, Parks & Recreation rules or any state, federal or local law occurs.
- B. Any complaints regarding the geocaching policy, permit or the location of a cache should be forwarded to the Parks Administrator or designee.



Department of Parks & Recreation - Geocache Permit

No.: _____

The effective dates for this permit are: _____ / _____ / _____ to _____ / _____ / _____
Month Day Year Month Day Year

This Virtual Cache Geocache has been placed by:

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____ Driver's License No. and State: _____

Email Address: _____

Website Referencing Cache: _____

Cache GPS Coordinates: _____

Physical Location Description: _____

The Cache I Have Placed (permit holder initials each requirement):

Yes

No

1. Is in a non-breakable container.

2. Does not contain inappropriate or dangerous items.

3. Is not buried or placed in a protected area, but placed in an area approved by the Parks Administrator.

I hereby agree to respect and adhere to the regulations set forth in the Geocache Policy of James City County. I recognize that James City County has the right to cancel the program at any time. In addition, the James City County Department of Parks & Recreation shall assume no responsibility whatsoever for the loss or damage to the property or injury of the permit holder from any cause and permit holder agrees at all times to indemnify, protect and save harmless the James City County Department of Parks & Recreation and its agents and employees from liability in connection with permit holder's property and/or operation under this permit.

Permit Holder

Parks Administrator

Date: _____

Date: _____