

<b>PARKS AND RECREATION DIVISION POLICY</b>	
<b>SUBJECT</b>	<b>Geocaching in York County Parks Policy</b>
<b>POLICY NUMBER</b>	
<b>ORIGINAL EFFECTIVE DATE</b>	<b>October 10, 2012</b>
<b>REVISION DATE</b>	<b>July 20, 2020</b>
<b>HISTORICAL REFERENCE</b>	<b>December 2, 2019</b>

**Background** - 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. In this policy, the term parks includes any outdoor park and/or athletic complex.

**Purpose** - The purpose of this policy is to establish authority and procedures for geocaching in York County Parks.

**Procedures:**

**CACHE PERMITS**

1. Permit requests will be accepted online. The “Geocache Permit Request Form” may be found on each park’s webpage.
2. The person applying for a permit must provide a valid address, telephone number, email address, and the website address on which the cache will be posted.
3. The exact location of the cache must be pre-approved by the Recreation Supervisor or designee, whose main concern will be public safety and the prevention of undesirable impacts to natural, historical, and cultural resources.
4. The exact cache location, including GPS coordinates, must be stated on the permit.
5. All permits will be in effect for the life of the cache. 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.
6. Upon expiration of a permit, the permit holder is responsible for removing the cache and for removing the cache location from all websites and any information source.
7. If the permit holder fails to remove the cache, it will be removed by park staff and held for ten (10) days, after which staff will dispose of the cache. Confiscation and disposal by park staff will be recorded in an incident report.
8. If it is determined that a cache has been the cause of adverse environmental damage, the cache may be removed by the Recreation Supervisor or designee and the permit canceled.

**CACHE CONTAINERS AND CONTENTS**

1. 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 Recreation Supervisor or designee.
2. Each cache’s permit number must be placed on the website.
3. Caches may not contain inappropriate or dangerous items. Such items include, but are not limited to, food, medications, alcohol, personal/hygiene products, pornography, weapons of any type, etc. Log books are required in York County Parks.
4. All caches are subject to random inspection by Recreation Supervisor 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.
5. All Caches cannot be locked, they must be accessible at any time.
6. York County is not responsible for maintenance, vandalism, or theft of the any cache on County property.

### **The CACHE LOCATIONS**

1. Physical caches are prohibited inside any park building, shelter, or structure.
2. Caches may not be placed in locations that may lead to the creation of spur trails.
3. Caches may not be buried, nor may vegetation or stones be disturbed to place a cache.
4. Caches may not be placed in dangerous, inappropriate, or protected areas and habitats, on cliffs, underground, or underwater.
5. Metal detectors may not be used in cache searches.

### **COMPLIANCE**

1. 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.
2. 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 Recreation Supervisor or designee may ban geocaching from certain areas or from the entire park.

### **REVIEW AND CANCELLATION**

1. York County reserves the right to cancel the program at any time if a violation of County rules, Parks and Recreation rules, or of any state, federal or local law occurs.
2. Any complaints regarding the geocaching policy, permit, or the location of a cache should be forwarded to the Recreation Supervisor or designee.