

X Marks the Spot: Letterboxing and Geocaching

Looking for a new adventure at Rowe Woods? Do you like scavenger hunts and riddles? Try letterboxing! This new self-guided opportunity allows young explorers to test their navigation skills on a quest to locate hidden treasures. All you need to get started with letterboxing is a set of clues and a keen sense of adventure. Letterboxes usually consist of a watertight container skillfully hidden in a natural setting. The box contains a unique rubber stamp and a logbook. Clues may be straightforward directions or may be hidden in a riddle or trivia question. Once you decipher the clues and find the box, you can mark the station's logbook (with your own rubber stamp if you have one), then mark your own logbook with the stamp in the letterbox.

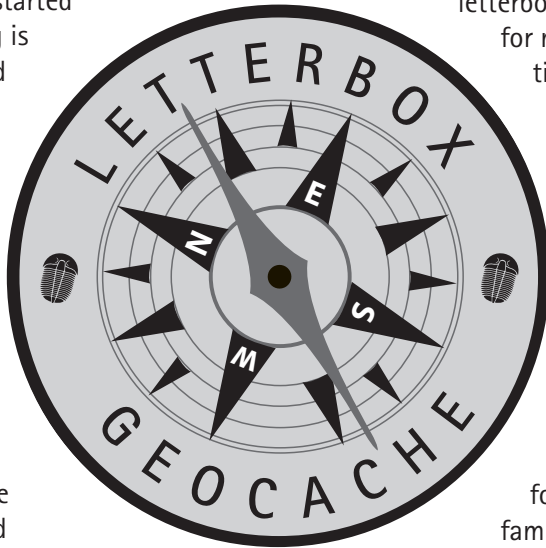
Letterboxing began in 1854 when a hiker placed his calling card in a bottle and hid it on the shores of Cranmere Pool in southwestern England. Those

who found the bottle were invited to add their cards and soon began planting bottles of their own. Some would even leave a self-addressed postcard in hopes of receiving a note in the mail from the next visitor (thus the term "letterbox" was born; letterbox is a British term for mailbox). Over time, letterboxing has spread across the globe and matured to the form we are familiar with today. At Rowe Woods, our version of letterboxing is well-suited for children and families and does not require long hikes or the use of a compass or GPS device. If you are looking for a more challenging game, try our other new self-guided opportunity - geocaching!

Geocaching is similar to letterboxing but requires a longer hike and the use of a GPS (Global Positioning System) to find a "cache." This high-tech activity utilizes the many satellites currently orbiting the earth to pinpoint an exact location. After plugging coordinates into a GPS device, you can use it like a compass to guide you to the cache location. Geocaching was not possible until the year 2000 when the satellite signals available for public use became much more accurate. Since then, more than one million caches have been hidden all over the world!

To get started, stop by the Rowe Visitor Center front desk to get a loaner GPS device and the coordinates for a cache site. Using those tools, you can get within 10 feet of the cache site and then it is up to you to find the waterproof container hidden out of sight. Inside the container you'll find information about the site, some questions to make you think and a logbook to record your find. If you're tech saavy and love to hike, give geocaching a try! 📍

Sources:
Hall, Randy. *The Letterboxer's Companion*. Guilford, CT: The Globe Pequot Press, 2004.
Geocaching - The Official Global GPS Cache Hunt Site. 2010. www.geocaching.com.



There are four brand new letterboxes hidden on the trails around the Rowe Visitor Center. Stop by the front desk to get started. If you find all four letterboxes, you'll get a prize!

Hike for Your Health at Cincinnati Nature Center

While you try out letterboxing and geocaching at CNC, Hike for Your Health and earn a prize.

Between now and December, purchase a \$5 passport from the front desk naturalist. As you hike each trail at CNC, return to the front desk for a stamp. When you've hiked all the trails and your passport is full of stamps, turn it in for a prize!

It's a great way to get healthy while having fun outdoors!

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