



## ***Welcome to letterboxing at Flanders Nature Center & Land Trust***

### **What is letterboxing?**

Letterboxing is a treasure hunting activity done world-wide. Letterboxers follow a set of clues to find “boxes” that have been hidden and to record their finds. Information can be found at [www.letterboxing.org](http://www.letterboxing.org) and at [www.atlasquest.com](http://www.atlasquest.com). At Flanders all letterboxes are hidden on, or near, trails maintained by Flanders. The letterboxes may be behind a rock or under some leaves or branches or they may be “hidden” in plain view.

For anyone familiar with GeoCaching: Letterboxing is a different activity with different rules. It is important for geocachers to read the letterboxing guidelines.

At Flanders Nature Center & Land Trust there will be letterbox series. The first series is the “2014 Launching Series”. This has eight letterboxing trails. On these trails there are letterboxes containing rubber stamps for the letters F, L, A, N, D, E, R and S. The next series, titled “Take a Hike”, has four trails. These trails will have stamps for H, I, K and E. In the spring of 2015 another series will be planted.

Anyone who hikes 12 of the trails, and has a passport with the 12 letters stamped on it, may bring it to the Flanders office and will be given a reward and asked to sign their TRAIL NAME on our poster of SUCCESSFUL FLANDERS LETTERBOXERS.

### **Who does this? Older kids? Younger kids? Just kids? Adults with kids? Adults without kids?**

Letterboxing is done by people of all ages, but is always done with an adult who can ensure that the letterboxes are replaced carefully. Families with children of all ages, adults without kids, and scout troops are a few examples of letterboxers you might meet.

### **What do I need to get started?**

You need to find a **rubber stamp** and will want to give yourself a “trail name.” This can be any nickname you choose such as “The Smith Clan” or might be inspired by the stamp you choose such as “Hiking Elephants.” You will also need a map, a set of clues and a logbook to record your “finds.”

If you are new to letterboxing you might find the glossary at [www.atlasquest.com](http://www.atlasquest.com) helpful.

Clues which include a check list for each trail, trail maps, and passports can be downloaded from the Flanders website: [www.flandersnaturecenter.org](http://www.flandersnaturecenter.org). Trail maps are available at kiosks at Flanders trailheads. Clue sheets can also be found at [www.atlasquest.com](http://www.atlasquest.com) and [www.letterboxing.org](http://www.letterboxing.org) if you search Woodbury or Middlebury, CT.

Other items to consider bringing on your hikes are a stamp pad, a pen, a compass (not needed for most hikes), a bag for trash, extra baggies for letterbox repair (hopefully not needed), and basic

hiking/walking “stuff”: water, bug spray, a light pair of gloves (for reaching into holes in trees or stonewalls in order to retrieve a letterbox), sunblock, a magnifying glass (in order to closely examine an acorn, a leaf or a stone).....

## **How do I find the letterboxes?**

The set of clues will give you the starting point. Read the clues and you will find the letterbox!

Remember that letterboxing is an environmentally friendly activity. You do not need to disturb any plants or animals. You will never need to dig. Remember - leave everything as you found it. Well, almost everything - if you find litter, please take it with you.

Letterboxes will always be accessible. They are placed so that someone walking on the trail is unlikely to find them, but the clues will get you to the correct location.

Boxes may be found in a crevice, natural hole, or cavity, or hidden on a man-made structure. They may be under a piece of bark or under a small pile of leaves.

If located off a trail, care should be taken to avoid damage to the area.

## **What do I do when I find a letterbox?**

Letterboxers are supposed to be discreet so avoid shouting “I found it, I found it!” if non-letterboxers are near-by. (This is definitely a hard rule to follow!) Care needs to be taken so that non-letterboxers don’t see you replacing the box.

Look inside and find the logbook. Use your stamp to stamp this logbook and record the date and your trail name. You may leave a message for future letterboxers. Use the rubber stamp found in the box and stamp your logbook and your passport. If it is a letter stamp, be sure to imprint your passport. Some letterboxing trails will have two or three letterboxes. Only one box on each trail will contain a letter stamp.

Return everything to the letterbox. Be sure to make it water-tight and put it in the exact place you found it.

## **What do I do if the box is missing or damaged?**

Call the Flanders Office at 203 263-3711, stop by the office between 9-4 Monday through Friday, or email [flanders@flandersnaturecenter.org](mailto:flanders@flandersnaturecenter.org) .