

CANEBRAKE MAILBOX PAVILION

Mailbox Management and Future Capacity

For Discussion with the Canebrake Improvement Association (CIA)

How We Got Here

This conversation began when Kathy Steuermann asked CCWD and CIA to develop a new plan for the caretaking of the mailbox pavilion and keys. For many years, Kathy has kept the master keys at her home, maintained the mailbox information, assisted residents with assignments, and carried an enormous amount of the practical responsibility for making the system work.

We want to begin by **thanking Kathy for shouldering this enormous responsibility for all these years**. She described the role herself as the “**Keeper of the Keys**,” and we would love to preserve the warmth, history and trust of that title while making the job much easier and more sustainable.

As Kathy tells the story, Bob Calhoun once arrived at her house with an old leather briefcase and two coffee cans full of loose, unorganized keys and told her that handling the mailbox keys was the Water Manager’s job. Kathy took it on — and has been doing it ever since.

Ellyn Hae and Cheryl Dimmock did some brainstorming together about how we might make Kathy’s job easier while creating a system that will work well for Canebrake going forward.

What We Learned

In reviewing the history, we confirmed that CCWD holds a 99-year Ground Lease for the mailbox pavilion site. The lease states that the property is leased to CCWD for the sole purpose of maintaining post office boxes for Canebrake residents and places responsibility for maintaining the pavilion and mailboxes with CCWD.

CIA also has an important historical role. The original mailbox notice shows CIA’s central role in establishing the centralized mailbox system and arranging its financing. It also shows that CIA anticipated the need for additional mailbox capacity as Canebrake grew.

A Simpler Plan for the Keys

The first part seems pretty simple:

Let’s get the keys out of Kathy’s house!

We propose making sure there is a complete, verified set of working duplicate mailbox keys and storing them in secure key-management equipment in the CCWD office at the Community Center. The CCWD PM/EA would maintain the official records and provide administrative support.

And, if Kathy is willing, we would be delighted for her to continue as our **Keeper of the Keys**, bringing all of the knowledge, history and trust she has brought to the role — just without having the keys stored at her house or having to make trips to find replacement keys.

Kathy has already indicated that if the keys are securely kept at the Community Center, working duplicates are available, and she does not have to go get keys made, she is comfortable continuing to handle mailbox assignments.

Bill Dimmock is ready to begin the installation once we are ready to go. While we are looking at the physical setup, this may also be a good opportunity to consider adding another parcel locker if it makes sense and is permitted by USPS.

And Then We Discovered Another Question

While looking at the management system, we discovered that we may also have a mailbox-capacity issue.

Canebrake has **100 parcels plus the Ranger residence**. Sixteen parcels currently have no dwelling, leaving approximately **85 developed properties**. We currently have **75 individual mailboxes** — a numerical difference of 10 boxes.

That is a separate question from Kathy's request. It does **not** mean we have to do anything about capacity right now. It simply seems like a good time to look at it.

Where Do We Go From Here?

For the **key-management piece**, we are asking CIA whether it is willing to purchase appropriate secure key-storage equipment so we can put Kathy's requested new system into place.

For **mailbox capacity**, CIA has several choices:

1. **Do nothing for now.** Keep using and managing the 75 individual boxes we have.
2. **See whether we can reconfigure what we already have** to create additional individual boxes, if that is feasible and USPS-approved.
3. **Look at purchasing additional USPS-approved mailbox equipment** and, if appropriate, another parcel locker.

4. **Look at both reconfiguration and new equipment**, get actual options and prices, and then decide.

No one is asking CIA to write a check for additional mailboxes today. We are simply asking whether CIA would like us to investigate the capacity question further and, if so, in which direction.

Any specific mailbox-equipment purchase and cost would come back to CIA before funds are committed. Attachment 1 contains a Proposed Canebrake Mailbox Management Policy. Attachment 2 contains a Proposed Mailbox Assignment and Use Agreement.

ATTACHMENT 1: PROPOSED CANEBRAKE MAILBOX MANAGEMENT POLICY

1. Purpose

This policy establishes a secure, consistent and sustainable system for administering the centralized Canebrake mailboxes, including mailbox assignments, official records and duplicate-key management.

2. Administration

CCWD shall administer and maintain the Canebrake mailbox facility consistent with its Ground Lease.

The CCWD PM/EA shall maintain the District's official mailbox records and provide administrative support.

CCWD shall coordinate with USPS regarding matters for which postal requirements or approval apply.

3. Official Mailbox Records

The CCWD PM/EA shall maintain the official mailbox assignment record, including the Canebrake physical address, assigned mailbox number, mailbox status, and other information reasonably necessary to administer the system.

Information concerning duplicate keys shall be maintained securely.

4. Mailbox Assignments

Mailbox assignments shall be administered in accordance with USPS requirements.

The existing Canebrake system associates individual mailboxes with physical Canebrake addresses through USPS Form 4232, *Rural Customer Delivery Instructions*. The existing Canebrake instructions also state that changes to the established mailbox arrangement must be approved by the Post Office or carrier.

Kathy Steuermann shall continue to assist with mailbox assignments and provide the historical and practical knowledge of the mailbox system that she has maintained for many years.

5. Keeper of the Keys

Kathy Steuermann shall initially continue in the trusted community role of **Keeper of the Keys**.

The role includes assisting with mailbox assignments, helping preserve continuity and institutional knowledge, and coordinating with the CCWD PM/EA.

The title recognizes the stewardship and trust of the role; physical custody of the duplicate key set will be maintained securely in the CCWD office.

The person serving in this role may be changed in the future without amendment of this policy.

6. Custody of Duplicate Keys

A complete, verified duplicate set of mailbox keys shall be maintained in secure key-management equipment in the CCWD office at the Community Center.

This arrangement is intended to eliminate the need for the complete duplicate/master key set to be stored at a private residence.

7. Replacement Keys and Locks

Property owners and residents are responsible for safeguarding keys issued for their mailbox.

The actual cost of replacement keys, locks, or related replacement equipment may be charged to the person requesting the replacement.

No annual mailbox fee is established by this policy.

8. Parcel Lockers and Mail Retrieval

Parcel lockers are shared community resources and are not permanently assigned to individual properties.

Residents should retrieve packages promptly and regularly empty their individual mailboxes so that the centralized system can function effectively.

Under the existing Canebrake procedure, when the carrier places a package in a parcel locker, the parcel-locker key is placed in the recipient's individual mailbox. After retrieving the package, the resident returns the parcel-locker key through the outgoing mail slot.

9. Mailbox Capacity

Mailbox capacity shall be reviewed periodically as Canebrake develops and as requests for mail service arise.

Decisions to purchase additional mailbox equipment or reconfigure existing equipment are separate from routine mailbox administration and shall be subject to applicable USPS requirements and approval by the organization providing the funding.

10. USPS Requirements

Nothing in this policy supersedes USPS requirements.

Mail delivery, address association, mailbox configuration, and changes affecting postal delivery remain subject to USPS requirements and approval where applicable.