

GEOCACHING

What is Geocaching?

- Geocaching is an outdoor activity in which the participants use a GPS receiver or other navigational techniques to hide and seek containers (called "geocaches" or "caches"). It's a fairly new activity that originated on May 1, 2000 when President Bill Clinton announced that Selective Availability (SA) on satellite signals would be turned off for more accuracy for civilian use. Before this date, the civilian accuracy for GPS units was around 100 meters, after May 1, 2000 civilians were able to enjoy an accuracy of 10 meters. After 10 years of activity there are almost 1.3 million active geocaches published on various websites devoted to the activity

Who can Geocache?

- Anyone! It's a fun, entertaining activity for all ages which is also a great tool for learning how to use your GPS.

How does Geocaching work?

1. In order to "Geocache" you will need a GPS and access to the internet to find Geocache locations. From various websites you can find locations in your area to locations across the globe.
 - <http://www.geocaching.com/>
 - <http://www.opencaching.com/>
2. Some sites will let you upload the geocaching locations directly to your GPS unit. Once you find the geocache site you would like to visit, you can either upload the coordinates directly to your GPS or write them down and enter them manually.
3. Once you have the geocache location entered in your GPS, you can use the GOTO feature to direct you in the right location and to give you the distance to the Geocache.
 - The map feature on your GPS should help you get your bearings and which direction to head to. If you don't have a map on your GPS you should have a paper map or Gazetteer.
4. Once you are in the vicinity of the Geocache, start looking on the ground, around rocks, under bridges, etc. for something that might look out of place or relatively obvious.
 - A Geocache usually consists of a logbook, pencil and small items (coins, buttons, small toys, etc) left for other seekers to take, if the seeker brings an item to leave.
5. You have Geocached! Write your geocache user name (which you will create on the Geocache site of your choice) and leave a cache for the next person!
 - Upon your return from the field, you can leave comments in about the Geocache on the website you choose to obtain your Geocache information from.

Before You Go

- Find a geocache that will meet your immediate goals. Are you looking for a difficult hike or an easy adventure?
- If you're headed out on the trail, pack any needed supplies such as water, food and extra clothing. Bring both a map and a compass. Check geocache terrain and difficulty ratings.
- For safety, let someone know where you are going.
- Do not forget your GPS and extra batteries.

Get Out and Play

- Mark your car as a waypoint to ensure your safe return.
- Be mindful of the environment, practice Cache In Trash Out.
- Bring friends and family with you; sharing the experience can be very rewarding. Pets are usually welcome, too!
- Remember that distances can be deceiving. A geocache can take longer to find depending on trails, rivers and other obstacles.

Share Your Experience

- If you take something from the geocache, leave something of equal or greater value.
- Write about your experience in the geocache logbook.
- Place your geocaching stories and photos online.

