



Geocaching —

What is it and how do you do it?

Geocaching is a high-tech treasure hunt game played throughout the world by adventure-seekers equipped with GPS devices. Special camouflage containers, called caches, are hidden in locations where adventuresome types can combine being outdoors with the use of sophisticated (but easy to use) global positioning technology to hunt for these “treasures.”

How do you geocache?

- 1) Load or input in the Global Positioning System (GPS) coordinates for the cache/container you want to find. Cache coordinates can be found at geocaching.com or via other promotional locations (like the Paul Bunyan Scenic Byway’s web site.) The coordinates are the longitudinal and latitudinal markers for the hidden container.
- 2) By showing where you are in relation to where the input GPS coordinates are, the GPS device then directs you to the general location of the container (within a few yards of the exact location). Keep in mind that distances can be deceiving. Understand the difference between distances as the crow flies (a direct line) versus true distance of travel. You may be a mile from the cache according to your GPS device, but there may be a river or other obstacles (like a lake or private property) in the way. It is up to you to find the best route to the cache. Now you are ready to find your first geocache! As you leave your car or a well-marked trail, make sure to mark its location as a waypoint! It may sound silly, but once you get focused on the cache hunt, it’s easy to get disoriented. Use the waypoint to guide you in your safe return.
- 3) Search for the container — the cache could be as big as a tackle box, the size of a peanut butter jar, or as small as a film canister. Remember, geocaches are *hidden* but not buried. It helps to think like the person who hid the cache. If there are stumps around, investigate around the base. Check for an unnatural pile of rocks.
- 4) You found it. Hurray! Now what?
 - Sign the logbook with your name, the date, and a few words about your experience.
 - If you trade for items, remember to trade for something that is of equal or greater value.
 - Make sure to seal the cache and place it back exactly where and how you found it. If it had some rocks covering it, please replace those.
 - Use the waypoint you created as a helpful guide for your return.
- 5) Share messages online with others about what you found or saw. Log into geocaching.com. You must register to “participate” in this web site, but the account is free. Upload photos to share your experience with other geocachers.

Welcome to the exciting world of Geocaching!

A Few Safety Tips

As with any outdoor activity, it is important to be prepared. Here are a few helpful tips:

- Make sure to tell someone where you are going and when you intend to return. Going into a forest or remote location without a partner is inherently dangerous. Geocaching is great fun, so think about planning a group hike with your family or friends around the geocache adventure.
- Pay attention to your surroundings. It is easy to focus on your GPS device and forget to look around you. Being conscious as to where you are walking will not only ensure your personal safety but will also respect the environment.
- Remember to **check for ticks** after being in or around any wooded area.