GEOCACHING is a real-world, outdoor treasure hunting game. Players try to locate hidden containers, called geocaches, using GPS-enabled devices and then share their experiences online.

GEOCACHING IN 8 EASY STEPS

1. Go to www.geocaching.com and register for a free account.
2. Visit the Geocaching.com homepage
3. Enter a location and click the magnifying glass to search.
4. Choose any geocache on the results page and click on its name.
5. Enter the coordinates of the geocache into your GPS device.
6. Use your GPS device to help you find the hidden geocache.
7. Sign the logbook and return the geocache to its original location.
8. Share your geocaching stories and photos online.

A Reason to Get Outdoors

Geocaching combines technology with outdoor adventure and is a great way to explore locations near and far. Pair geocaching with camping, hiking, biking, boating or any number of activities for an even more enjoyable experience.

The "Treasure"

In its simplest form, a geocache contains a logbook or logsheet for you to sign. Caches may also contain items for trade, but the journey in discovering a geocache is often the greatest reward.

Location, Location, Location

There are geocaches on every continent, from Antarctica to North America. They may be at your local park, the end of a long hike, underwater, or on the side of a city street.

A Global Community

People from all age groups can participate in geocaching, including, families with children, students, adults and retirees. Geocaching is a great way to bring friends and family together while having fun outdoors.

GEOCACHING BASICS

Before You Go

- Learn how to operate your GPS device and bring extra batteries.
- Select a geocache with terrain and difficulty ratings that will meet your goals. A (1/1) is easiest, a (5/5) the most difficult.
- Read the geocache description and don't forget the hints. It is also a good idea to bring a map.
- Remember that a geocache can take longer to find depending on environmental obstacles.
- Pack any needed supplies such as water, food and extra clothing.
- Invite friends and family with you; sharing the experience can be very rewarding. Pets are usually welcome too!
- Let someone else know where you are going.

On Your Way

- Mark your car or a trailhead as a waypoint to ensure your safe return.
- Rely on your eyes rather than your GPS device within 15 meters of the geocache location.
- Remember, geocaches are hidden in plain sight and never buried, but they are often very cleverly camouflaged.
- Be mindful of the environment; practice Cache In Trash Out.

After the Find

- Sign the cache logbook.
- Leave the cache as you found it (hidden, of course).
- Share your geocaching stories and photos online at Geocaching.com.

Rules of Geocaching

- If you take something from the cache, leave something of equal or greater value.
- Write about your find in the cache logbook.
- Log your experience at www.geocaching.com.

Basic Guidelines

- Geocaches should never be buried or placed in a location that might cause unnecessary concern.
- Don't place items such as food, explosives, knives, drugs or alcohol in a geocache.
- Geocache contents should be family friendly.
- Respect local laws and obey posted signs.

TYPES OF GEOCACHES

Traditional
The original geocache type consisting of, at minimum, a container and a logbook. Coordinates listed on a traditional cache page give the cache's exact location.

Multi-Cache
A Multi-Cache involves two or more locations. Hints found at the initial location(s) lead to the final geocache, which is a physical container.

Mystery or Puzzle Caches
Mystery or Puzzle Caches can involve complicated puzzles you will first need to solve to determine the coordinates of the cache.

Event Cache
A geocaching event organized by local geocachers or geocaching organizations in the interest of discussing geocaching. Coordinates on the cache page indicate event location.

GEOCACHING is a real-world, outdoor treasure hunting game.

Geocaching Live
Geocaching Live-enabled products work on your smartphone to bring geocaching to you, wherever you are. Visit www.geocaching.com/live to find an application that transforms your smartphone into a geocaching-friendly GPS device.

summary info

W58°22

N50°42

CACHE IN TRASH OUT

Cache In Trash Out is a worldwide environmental clean-up effort supported by the geocaching community. Since 2002, geocachers have been dedicated to cleaning up parks and other cache-friendly places around the world.
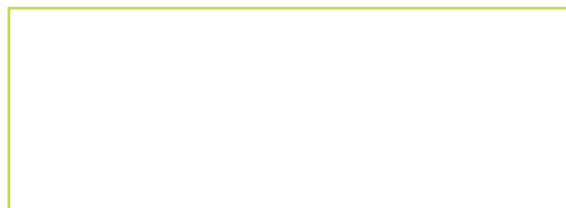
Check the online event calendar to participate in organized clean-ups in your area.

For more information visit
www.geocaching.com/cito

Groundspeak®

Geocaching.com is owned and operated by Groundspeak, Inc. of Seattle, Washington. Groundspeak's mission is to inspire outdoor play using location-based technology.
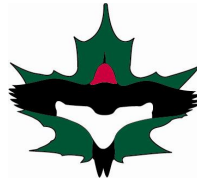
Compliments of:

GROUNDSPEAK PRESENTS

A GUIDE TO GEOCACHING

Geauga Park District
9160 Robinson Road
Chardon, Ohio 44024

1-800-536-4006 In-County
Phone: 440-286-9516
Fax: 440-286-1285

GEOCACHE / LETTERBOX PERMIT APPLICATION

☐ Geocache   ☐ Letterbox

Date: _____ Phone: _____

Name: _____

Address: _____

Email: _____Caching/User Name: _____

Geocache / Letterbox Location

Park: _____

Trail(s): _____

Description of Area: _____

_____

For Geocaching Only
Latitude: _____   Longitude: _____

Cache/Letterbox Name: _____ Container Size: _____

Description of Cache/Letterbox and Contents: _____

_____

Permit is good from date issued to **March 1** of the following year. After that date, the cache/ letterbox must be removed or moved and the new location re-permitted.

We request that you monitor this cache/letterbox and maintain it to be family friendly. This means the cache/letterbox will not contain food, alcohol, firearms, drugs or dangerous or adult items. We also require that you direct people seeking your cache/letterbox to follow established trails most of the way to your cache/letterbox. We discourage off trail hiking, as it negatively impacts the environment.

A permit will be issued to you upon approval of your application. Please allow 10 days for a response. Forward questions or concerns to Judy Barnhart, nature education coordinator, at 440-286-9516 Ext. 2011 or jbarnhart@geaugaparkdistrict.org.

Attachment 8.2.4 b)

GEOCACHE / LETTERBOX PERMIT GENERAL INFORMATION

1. Application or letter is sent to Judy Barnhart, nature education coordinator, at Geauga Park District, 9160 Robinson Road, Chardon, Ohio, 44024, or jbarnhart@geaugaparkdistrict.org. Be sure to complete all information requested.

2. Once received, application or letter will be reviewed by the Geocache Committee. They will consider the cache/letterbox location and whether there would be negative impact to the park area.

3. Committee will make a recommendation for approval to Geauga Park District Executive Director Tom Curtin.

4. Permit will be issued. Permit will be valid from date issued to March 1 of the following year. After that date, cache must be removed or moved and a new location re-permitted. Once permit is received, applicant must sign and return a fully executed copy of the permit. Activation of the permit takes place when the Park District receives this fully executed copy of the permit.

5. Permit holder will be responsible for:

    a. Monitoring the cache monthly
    b. Keeping contents of the cache family friendly
        (Family friendly means the cache/letterbox will NOT contain food, alcohol, firearms, drugs or dangerous or adult items.)
    c. Directing people searching for your cache/letterbox to follow established trails most of the way to your cache/letterbox
        (The Park District discourages off trail hiking, as it negatively impacts the environment.)
    d. Becoming familiar with the Park District's Rules and Regulations (available upon request) and being responsible for any violations or damage to park property.
        (This does not include any damage or violations by another park patron.)
    e. Restoring the premises to its original condition immediately following the conclusion of the activity
    f. Understanding that Geauga Park District retains the right to terminate the conditions of the permit at any time
    g. Agreeing to indemnify, hold harmless and, if requested, defend Geauga Park District and its Board of Commissioners and officers, employees and agents from and against any claims arising out of any and all personal injuries, property damage or other losses or expenses experienced, suffered or sustained by any person or entity during or in connection with the exercise of the privileges herein granted

Geocache Site Registration Form

Name: _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____

Cache Name: _____

Park: _____

Coordinates: _____

Distance to next closest cache: _____

Cache Owner: _____

Container: _____

Proposed Placement Date: _____

Geocaching Rules:

- All caches placed in Blaine Parks must be registered, unregistered caches will be removed.
- Caches must not be buried and be accessible from a standing position.
- Caches must not contain items that are offensive, dangerous, or illegal.
- Blaine Park and Recreation retains the right to remove, or have removed, a cache it feels is in an inappropriate location or is causing undue impact on the natural habitat.
- Caches must be at least 1/2 mile apart, and 1/10 of a mile from an existing trail.
- Caches need to be public, no member only or subscription caches.
- Individuals will be limited to (2) caches per park and/or a total of (5) caches throughout the park system.
- Caches are not allowed in picnic areas, play areas, and the beach.
- Geocaching may only occur during normal park hours 5:00am - 10:00pm.

Recommended Geocaching Locations: Pioneer Park, Lochness Park, Laddie Lake Park, Trees Edge Park, Kane Meadows Park, Hidden Ponds Park, West Lake Park and Open Space South Lake Blvd. & Naples Circle.

Return form to: Blaine Park and Recreation, Geocache Registration, 10801 Town Square Dr. NE, Blaine, MN, 55449, or FAX at 763-785-6191, or Email to: nmonahan@ci.blaine.mn.us

For questions or more information, please call 763-785-6151.

CITY OF BLAINE
GPS UNIT CHECKOUT

GPS UNIT NUMBER:_____

DATE GPS UNIT OUT: _____ TIME GPS UNIT OUT: _____

DATE GPS UNIT DUE IN: _____ TIME GPS UNIT DUE IN: _____

NAME (please print):_____

Address:_____City_____Zip:_____

Phone: _____ E-Mail: _____

RULES AND REGULATIONS

1. User assumes all responsibility for the GPS Unit.
2. All users are required to provide a copy of their Driver's License and submit a check, cash or credit card deposit in the amount of $200 (replacement value) at the time of issuance of the GPS Unit.
3. The deposit amount is to cover the possible damage/loss of the GPS unit and is 100% refundable upon return of the GPS unit in working condition on the date and time indicated.
4. If the GPS is deemed damaged, any labor or parts charges will be debited from the deposit. If the GPS is not returned, regardless of the reason, the deposit will not be refunded

I agree to assume all responsibilities for the use of the GPS and will notify the Park & Recreation Office immediately if lost or stolen at 763-785-6164.

In accordance with the Minnesota Government Data Practices Act, the City of Blaine hereby informs you that some or all information you are asked to provide is classified as private. Private data is available to you and to the City staff who require it in the performance of their duties, but not to the public. The remainder of the information, including telephone numbers, is classified as public, and is available to the public. This information will be used to process your application for request or permit. You may choose to withhold this information, however if you do, the City of Blaine may not be able to process your application for the request or permit.

I have read the rules and regulations governing the GPS Unit checkout and agree to uphold all rules listed above.
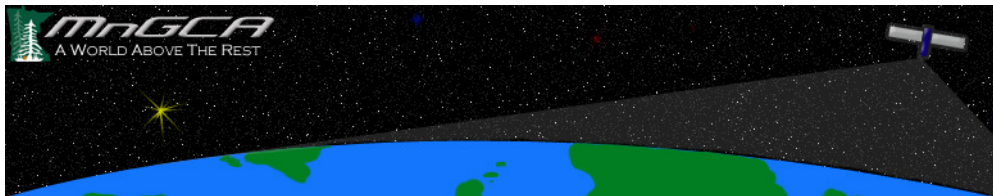
Signature:_____ Date: _____

OFFICE USE ONLY:

GPS Checked Out By: _____ Deposit Amount: _____ Check#:_____Cash:_____ CC:_____

GPS Checked In By: _____ Date Returned:_____ Time Returned: _____

Deposit Returned: Yes No (why)_____

Attachment 8.2.4 d)

Helpful hints for hiding a cache

Posted August 3rd, 2011 by NeverSummer

Ah, Minnesota. We have Over 10,000 beautiful lakes, 86,943 square miles, 5.3 million residents, 4 individually diverse seasons, and over 18,000 active geocaches. Minnesotans take pride in their state and the recreation opportunities it provides, and geocaching is rapidly becoming a popular activity by and for Minnesotans, and those who visit us. We take pride in our parks and wild lands, and the MnGCA strives to improve the credibility of the sport of geocaching, protect our natural resources, and strengthen the community of geocachers in the state of Minnesota. Visitors and residents alike have an amazing opportunity to explore Minnesota through our active geocaching community.

There are many geocaches that have shown you to a place you may have never visited before, left you with a fun story to tell, been creative hides, or that were just plain fun. However, we may be able to identify cache experiences that were confusing or frustrating. Perhaps you could use a hint, but there is none. Or, you realize that there might be concerns about permissions and safer hides. While creating, maintaining and seeking geocaches, using available rating tools and some helpful hints can make the experience great for every cache you hide and seek.

In the early days of geocaching (summer 2001), quite a few people who were active in the geocaching.com forums came up with explanations of the rating system over a great deal of discussion. In the end, that group came to a consensus of suggested definitions of ratings, which is the best they could do. Ultimately, you alone are the best judge for rating your cache. An important key to improving and maintaining high cache quality here in Minnesota is to think about how and why we are placing our caches. Carefully considering factors like actual and seasonally-affected difficulty/terrain levels, as well as the question "Who am I hiding this from?" can give you a better perspective while hiding your geocache. Use of the "Clayjar" rating system, careful consideration for the location, and being aware of how your cache is described can make the hunt, and hide more enjoyable for all visitors to the geocaches in our great State.

An important tool in determining your cache's difficulty and terrain, the "Clayjar system" was created to help each geocacher create and use a rating that was nearly universal across borders. Found at http://www.geocaching.com/hide/rate.aspx (http://www.geocaching.com/hide/rate.aspx) , the rating system allows you to look carefully at the scenarios involved with finding your geocache once it is listed. The key here is to use the system to thoughtfully help determine the "D/T" rating for your geocache. Once you have entered your answers to the question, you can see the correlation more clearly of how a cache can be rated based on the whole context of the hide and seeking, versus simply choosing a rating off of the chart without considering the whole hide. Remember: The chart describes the hide AFTER you have considered all factors of the hunt as determined on the Clayjar system survey.

★☆☆☆☆	**Easy** In plain sight or can be found in a few minutes of searching.	★☆☆☆☆	**Handicapped accessible** Terrain is likely to be paved, is relatively flat, and less than a ½ mile hike is required.
★★☆☆☆	**Average** The average cache hunter would be able to find this in less than 30 minutes of hunting.	★★☆☆☆	**Suitable for small children** Terrain is generally along marked trails, there are no steep elevation changes or heavy overgrowth. Less than a 2 mile hike required.
★★★☆☆	**Challenging** An experienced cache hunter will find this challenging, and it could take up a good portion of an afternoon.	★★★☆☆	**Not suitable for small children** The average adult or older child should be OK depending on physical condition. Terrain is likely off-trail. May have one or more of the following: some overgrowth, some steep elevation changes, or more than a 2 mile hike.
	Difficult A real challenge for the experienced cache hunter - may require special skills or knowledge,		**Experienced outdoor enthusiasts only** Terrain is probably off-trail. Will have one or more of the following: very heavy

Attachment 8.2.4 e)

	or in-depth preparation to find. May require multiple days / trips to complete.		May require an overnight stay.
★★★★★	**Extreme** A serious mental or physical challenge. Requires specialized knowledge, skills, or equipment to find cache.	★★★★★	**Requires specialized equipment** and knowledge or experience (boat, 4WD, rock climbing, SCUBA, etc.) or is otherwise extremely difficult.

Careful, honest and regular use of the Clayjar rating system will certainly help all geocachers better understand the rationale behind the D/T ratings for a cache listing. Simply using the above chart to rate your cache will rely on your interpretation of the rating. Using the full questionnaire to determine your cache's rating will take many factors into consideration. It is important to understand that your cache hide involves more than just the immediate "ground zero"—a cache hunt will include the terrain on the hike in, how much bushwhacking is involved, and how difficult it might be to see your cache once you get to "ground zero" in full leaf-cover.

To aid in the hunt, cache descriptions can include a "hint". A hint is meant to be decrypted at the cache site, after a search has failed and a further clue is needed. It should give additional information about the cache or its location. Many cachers appreciate a good hint when a cache may be difficult to locate for many reasons. Perhaps there are many rocks or trees it could be hidden under, or stealthy behavior may be difficult, and a hint can make the find less intrusive or alarming to muggles. An effective hint should narrow the search area. The examples below will likely help with the search:

- "low" (ybj)
- "reach up" (ernpu hc)
- "not in wall" (abg va jnyy)
- "rock" (ebpx) or "tree" (gerr) might be useful, but NOT if the area is full of rocks or trees.

Finding a balance between too specific and not enough information will likely take some thought or cunning. Some hints are fun, little riddles. A "spoiler" hint is appropriate in an area where you want to protect the surroundings or definitely shorten the search. (A "spoiler" is information that can give details away and ruin the experience of something. For example, telling someone the end of a movie before they see it is a "spoiler".) Remember, there IS such a thing as a "Bad hint". Parking instructions and driving directions are bad hints. Those should be listed as Additional Waypoints or simply displayed in the Long Description. Hints like "too easy for a hint", "hint will be provided after DNF," or "email me for a hint" do not help. Remember, the hint is decrypted on site after a search has begun and failed. The cacher is seeking useful information for the hunt at that moment. Groundspeak reminds us that none of these examples are useful in the field, and it would be better to leave the hint field blank rather than using any of them.

Another helpful hint is to be sure to use the description of your cache listing as a way to keep cachers up-to-date on changing circumstances, and important information about the area or access to the hide. Your listing and hint should be used as a tool to keep caches safe from muggles, cachers safe from harm or breaking the law, and to keep geocaching out of the local police reports. While considering your geocache hide, It is important to ask yourself some questions about your hide as you prepare your listing. Remember, you can always update/change your Difficulty/Terrain ratings, or include relevant information in your descriptions.

One of the principle considerations behind hiding a cache is who you are trying to hide it from: Are you hiding it from the cache seeker? (a "sneaky hide") Or, are you hiding it from muggles? (a well-hidden hide) If hiding from a cache seeker, consider increasing the difficulty for the cache. Are you hiding your cache from muggles? Be sure to give a hint or clear description to make sure the cache is located with minimal damage to the surrounding area. (Remember, Difficulty and Terrain are not necessarily related.) Are you hiding your cache from both seekers and muggles? Be sure to think about how your listing, hint and placement might impact the surrounding area, or how a lingering seeker might raise an alarm with muggles. Remember that one person's Difficulty "2" is another person's Difficulty "4", and be considerate with your listing and hints. When you might be in doubt, it never hurts to round up, and use feedback from geocachers' logs to adjust as time goes on.

In addition to the tools provided by Groundspeak at geocaching.com, we can use a helpful list of questions to ask as you prepare your hide. This list is by no means all-inclusive, a requirement, or endorsement—Rather, think of these questions as a way to improve the image of geocaching in Minnesota, and to make your caches really stand out as excellent examples of what this activity can provide.

Start by asking: "How will your geocache improve the credibility of the sport, protect our natural

resources and strengthen the community of geocachers in the state of Minnesota, and those who visit us?"

• Why would I bring someone here?
• Can I get permissions?
• What is the best spot in this location to hide a cache?
• What is the best container for that spot?
• Can I maintain this cache as necessary if I place it here?
• Who am I hiding it from?
• What will this area look like after 6 months of cache-seeking traffic?
• Can the cache last without being detected by muggles?
• When it IS detected by muggles, do they have good reason to suspect it's a bomb or trash?

After answering these questions, get permissions, make your cache to suit the spot (instead of using a cache you already have out of convenience) and make a good cache page. Be sure to use Reviewer notes to have a discussion with your reviewer about your hide, and cache description. Then, come back and ask yourself all those above questions again, and add a few more:

• Have I taken into account the seasonal differences of Minnesota for the ratings of my cache?
• Have I accurately rated the difficulty of this cache for a "novice" cacher?
• Have I accurately rated the terrain for Minnesota's seasons, or otherwise?
• Does my description address any seasonal differences in difficulty or terrain?
• Would a good hint address the seasonal differences or Difficulty/Terrain ratings I have chosen?
• Have I chosen applicable attributes to guide seekers in planning for their hunt?
• Can I easily do a little better?
• Have a communicated permissions and other relevant information about my hide to the reviewer?
• Is my listing ready to be published?

When hiding a cache, we can suggest asking if the hide can in any way affect geocaching in a negative way or draw negative attention to the sport. When seeking a cache, we might suggest asking if your search will draw negative attention to the sport, cause damage to the area or possibly destroy the hide. Be sure to think carefully about these, and other questions, as you consider how your geocache improves the credibility of the sport, protects our natural resources and strengthens the community of geocachers in the state of Minnesota.

The list is a great start, but is far from complete. As RudeRat said in the MnGCA forums, "We all cache differently, and because of that, there is no right answer to how to place a cache. 'Numbers cachers' may place a skirt lifter, which fits within their definition of a worthy cache, while hikers and bikers may place a cache a mile down the trail. You may have 'evil' cache hides vs. kid friendly, cliff hangers vs. wheel chair accessible; some caches are hidden from muggles while others are hidden from cachers."

Above all else, we are all aware of the Groundspeak guidelines about cache placement:
(http://www.geocaching.com/about/guidelines.aspx (http://www.geocaching.com/about/guidelines.aspx))

1. All local laws apply.
2. Obtain the landowner's and/or land manager's permission before you hide any geocache, whether placed on private or public property.
3. Geocaches are never buried.
4. Geocache placements do not deface or destroy public or private property.
5. Geocaches are not placed on school property or military bases.
6. Physical elements of different geocaches should generally be at least 0.10 miles apart.

By using the suggested list of questions, we have the opportunity to raise the bar of our geocaches here in Minnesota. Take pride in what we do! With the MnGCA, we can each strive to improve the credibility of the sport, protect our natural resources and strengthen the community of geocachers in the state of Minnesota, and those who visit us.

Citations

http://support.groundspeak.com/ (http://support.groundspeak.com/)
http://mngca.org/mission_statement (http://mngca.org/mission_statement)

Written by Joel, aka "NeverSummer". Minnesota-born, and "GPS-stash hunting" since 2001, "officially" on geocaching.com since 2005. He lived near the "Original Stash" in Oregon for 5 years before returning to Minnesota, where he continues to geocache around the Duluth area.