GEOCACHING

Geocaching is an outdoor treasure-hunting game in which the participants use a Global Positioning System (GPS) receiver or other navigational techniques to hide and seek containers (called "geocaches" or "caches") anywhere in the world. A typical cache is a small waterproof container containing a logbook and "treasure," usually toys or trinkets of little value. Today, well over 540,000 geocaches are registered on various websites devoted to the pastime. Geocaches are currently placed in over 100 countries around the world and on all seven continents, including Antarctica.

The History of Geocaching …

- The Global Positioning System (GPS) originally know as the Navstar Global Positioning System was first launched in 1978 and was designed, built, and is operated by the U.S. Department of Defense.
- By the mid-1990s the system was fully operational with 24 satellites, and about the same time the first commercial GPS units became available on the market.
- The Department of Defense didn't want their technology used against them so they instated a process called Selective Availability, where they introduced some "noise" into satellite signals, which affected satellite signals and reduced their accuracy to only about 15 meters.
- May 1st, 2000 President Bill Clinton decided to turn off Selective Availability, which made commercial GPS units accurate up to about 3m.
- On May 3rd, 2000, Dave Ulmer, hid the first geocache in the woods near Beaver Creek, Oregon, near Portland (N 45 17.460 W 122 24.800) and posted it on an internet GPS users' group. It was a black bucket with a logbook, pencil, and various prizes.
- Mike Teague, the first person to find Ulmer's stash, began gathering the online posts of coordinates around the world and documenting them on his personal home page. The "GPS Stash Hunt" mailing list was created to discuss the emerging activity.
- The term Geocaching was first coined by Matt Stum on the "GPS Stash Hunt" mailing list on May 30, 2000.
- Jeremy Irish, a web developer for a Seattle company, after stumbling upon Mike Teague's web site in July decided to create a tool to improve the cache-hunting experience, and on September 2nd, 2000 www.Geocaching.com was launched
- Today there are 536,277 caches worldwide. The world has truly become a geocahers playing field!

Geocaching Etiquette…
The three main rules of geocaching, "Take something, Leave something and Write in the log book"!
Trading
Trade up, trade even, or don't trade at all. Small toys, fresh batteries, collectibles, these are typical items to find in a cache. No food, weapons, explosives or illegal substances.
Encountering Other Cachers
One of the greatest pleasures of caching is meeting other cachers on the trail. Take a minute to introduce yourself. Just don't point out where cache is hidden or give clues unless requested to do so. If "caught in the act" of finding a cache, offer to re-hide so they can enjoy the hunt too.
Maintenance
When you log a cache, be sure to report its condition to the owner. Better still, if the log is wet, drop in a replacement. Place contents that are in danger of getting wet in a zip-lock bag. If the cache is filled with moldy trade garbage, pack it out and wipe out the container. Be a friendly cacher and carry spare zip-lock bags, log book and pencils.
Re-hiding
Replace it as you found it, taking care to restore the hiding place to as close to its original state as you can determine.
Log Your find
Let the owner know you were there, whether you found it or not! There is nothing wrong with posting a DNF, and it may alert the owner to problems with the cache.
Be nice, share a story from your hunt, list your trades. If you have a problem with the cache, let the owner know in a separate email.
Muggles
Many caches request that you use stealth when searching. Letting a muggle see you might compromise the hide and result in a missing cache. A Muggle is simply a non-cacher, and may be curious as to what you are doing lurking in the bushes (certainly the police will take an interest). Be polite and feel free to explain Geocaching. Be an ambassador for the game!

Today there are many different types of caches and goodies that go inside them…

CACHE TYPES

Traditional Cache
This is the original cache type consisting, at a bare minimum, a container and a log book. Normally you'll find a tupperware container, ammo box, or bucket filled with goodies, or smaller container ("micro cache") too small to contain items except for a log book. The coordinates listed on the traditional cache page is the exact location for the cache. The general rule of thumb is, "If you take an item, leave an item, and write in the logbook." Some caches are themed, so make sure to read the description before going on a hunt.

Multi-Cache (offset Cache)
A multi-cache ("multiple") involves two or more locations, the final location being a physical container.

Letterbox Hybrid
A letterbox is another form of treasure hunting using clues instead of coordinates. In some cases, however, a letterbox has coordinates, and the owner has made it a letterbox and a geocache. To read more about letterboxing, visit the Letterboxing North America web site.

Event Cache
Occasionally, local geocachers and geocaching organizations designate a time and location to meet and discuss geocaching. After the event the caches are archived.

Cache In Trash Out Event
Cache In Trash Out is an activity intimately tied to geocaching. While out there on a cache hunt, we collect litter along the trails and properly dispose of it. Cache In Trash Out Events are much larger clean-up events that involve and benefit the larger community.

Mystery or puzzle caches
The "catch-all" of cache types, this form of cache can involve complicated puzzles you will first need to solve to determine the coordinates.

Earthcache
An Earthcache is a special place that people can visit to learn about a unique geoscience feature or aspect of our Earth. Earthcaches include a set of educational notes and the details about where to find the location (latitude and longitude).

Virtual Cache
A virtual cache is a cache that exists in a form of a location. Depending on the cache "hider," a virtual cache could be to answer a question about a location, an interesting spot, a task, etc. The reward for these caches is the location itself and sharing information about your visit.

Webcam Cache
These are caches that use existing web cameras placed by individuals or agencies that monitor various areas like parks or road conditions. The idea is to get yourself in front of the camera to log your visit.

Locationless (Reverse) Cache
Locationless caches could be considered the opposite of a traditional cache. Instead of finding a hidden container, you are given a task to locate a specific object and log its coordinates. A scavenger hunt of sorts, it involves collecting waypoints of various objects around the world.

Cache Goodies

Travel Bugs
What is a Travel Bug?
Simply put, a Travel Bug is a trackable tag that you attach to an item. This allows you to track your item on Geocaching.com. The item becomes a hitchhiker that is carried from cache to cache (or person to person) in the real world and you can follow its progress online.
What does a Travel Bug do?
It's really up to the owner of the bug to give it whatever task they desire. Or no task at all. The fun of a travel bug is inventing new goals for the Travel Bug to achieve. One Bug's goal may be to reach a specific country, or travel to 10 countries.
How do Travel Bugs work?
Each Travel Bug has its own unique tracking number stamped on it. This tracking number is used as proof by the user that they found the item. It also doubles as a way for the user to locate the personal web page for the travel bug.
Travel Bugs are tracked with the help of users who go online and "grab" them from caches, or receive them from users. The idea is by picking up and dropping off Travel Bugs on the web site you are mirroring the Bug's real world adventures. Each Travel Bug has its own "diary" that follows its movements.

Geocoins
What is a Geocoin?
A geocoin is a special coin created by individuals or groups of geocachers as a kind of signature item or calling card. Like Travel Bugs, each geocoin is assigned a unique tracking ID which allows them to travel from geocache to geocache or to be passed amongst friends, picking up stories along the way.
How do Geocoins work?
Because each geocoin is assigned a unique tracking number its progress can be tracked online through logs which the finder posts. There are different types of logs which can be made on a geocoin's personal home page, whether for virtually picking up or dropping off the coin, or simply for "discovering" the coin. You'll have the opportunity to share your thoughts on the geocoin page and to upload any photos associated with it. In addition, by logging a geocoin your online collection will reflect that you found that particular coin.

BC GIRL GUIDES GEOCACHING CHALLENGE

Geocaching is an outdoor treasure-hunting game. Participants use a Global Positioning System (GPS) receivers or other navigational techniques to hide and seek containers called geocaches or caches.

A typical geocache is a small waterproof container holding a logbook and a treasure (i.e. usually inexpensive toys or trinkets). Today, over 540,000 geocaches are registered on websites. Geocaches can be found in over 100 countries and on all seven continents, including the Antarctica.

The BC Girl Guide Geocaching challenge is designed to get Guiders and girls to learn about GPS units in a fun way. To earn the geocaching challenge crest, complete all sections of the challenge for your branch. **Fill out the slip below and mail it to: Girl Guides of Canada - BC Geocaching Challenge, 1476 West 8th Avenue, Vancouver, BC, V6H 1E1.**

Challenge Requirements:

Branch	Section A	Section B
Sparks & Brownies	Learn about geocaching - When did it begin? - Where is the very first geocache located?	Go Geocaching… - Find a geocache in your neighborhood and log your find onto www.geocaching.com.
Guides & Pathfinders	Learn about geocaching and GPS units - When did it begin? - Who created the term geocaching? - Where is the very first geocache located? - How does GPS work?	Go Geocaching… - Find two geocaches (a micro and regular one) in your neighborhood. Log your find onto www.geocaching.com. - Create a geocache with your Unit and post it **OR** send out a travel bug or geocoin into the world and track its progress on www.geocaching.com.
Rangers & Adults	Learn about geocaching and GPS units - When did it begin? - What is Selective Availability and why was getting rid of it important to geocaching? - Where is the very first geocache located? - How do GPS's work?	Go Geocaching… - Find two geocaches (a micro and regular one) in your neighborhood. Log your find onto www.geocaching.com . - Create a geocache with your Unit and post it **OR** send out a travel bug or geocoin into the world and track its progress on www.geocaching.com. - Create a geocache hunt meeting for a local Spark, Brownie, Guide or Pathfinder Unit.

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BC Girl Guides Geocaching Challenge

Please list the coordinates of the geocache(s) (i.e. N 49° 15.317 W 123° 14.669) you found and/or created, and the Travel Bug or Geocoin number (i.e. TB18N93) that you released on the slip.

Unit Name		Guider's Name	
Area		District	
E-mail Address		Contact Phone No.	
Geocache(s) Found		Geocache Created or TB/Geocoin Released	