

Geocaching For Joey's, Cubs, Scouts, Venturers, Rovers and Leaders

By Lisa Nicholls
CSL QHD

What is Geocaching?

Basically it is one big treasure hunt! All you need is a GPS or a GPS enabled smart phone, & a big sense of adventure! The world is literally your oyster! You will find Cache just about anywhere. In fact, there are over 1.8 million caches hidden all around the world & over 5 million Geocachers! Chances are that there is one hidden somewhere near your Scout Hall.

Geocaching started way back in May 2000, when a guy named Dave Ulmer decided to test his GPS accuracy by hiding a container in the woods. This idea was called "The Great American GPS Stash Hunt", & he soon was posting it on in an internet GPS users group. All the finders had to do, was to find the container (now called a cache) using their own GPS device. The only rules being "Take some stuff, leave some stuff." It only took a week for it to spread like wild fire! First there were 2 users who found it, and then all of a sudden others were also hiding their own caches. They had a mailing group called "GPS Stash Hunt", but changed the name to Geocache to Geo (meaning for earth as in the global use), & cache which has 2 meanings. A temporary hiding place to store items or, in the computer world, "memory Cache" which stores information on discs

We all know Scouting is about fun, with maybe a bit of learning, so this is an excellent way to teach your Cubs all about how to use a GPS', even map & compass work. And the best thing is that they won't even know that they are learning something!

A few things you must know before starting;

Some common terms used in Geocaching;

GPS – Global Positioning System

Waypoint – A reference point for a physical location. These are found by using a set of coordinates.

Latitude – Used to make waypoints. Latitude is the angular distance north or south from the earth's equator measured through 90 degrees. Think of latitude as rungs on a ladder.

Longitude - Used to make waypoints. Longitude is the angular distance measured on a great circle of reference from the intersection of the adopted zero meridian with this reference circle to the similar intersection of the meridian passing through the object. Think of the long lines running north and south.

Muggle – A non Geocacher. You must ensure that there are no muggles around when Geocaching.

DNF – Did not Find

TFTC – Thanks for the Cache

TFTH – Thanks for the Hide

TOTT – Tools of the trade

D/T – Difficulty/Terrain

What you will need to take with you

All your normal precautions when doing outdoor activities. Sunscreen, first aid kit etc
Pen/Pencil & whatever else the Cache owner may suggest on their info page.

THE GEOCACHERS CREED (copied from www.geocreed.info)

Write on board

Not Endanger Myself or Others

- Like any outdoor activity, geocaching involves some inherent risk and many geocachers enjoy manageable risks. Minimize inordinate risks. (**risk assessment**)
- When creating a cache, describe any hidden dangers and, if possible, arrange the hunt to minimize these dangers.
- When seeking a cache, know your limitations and be aware of your surroundings. Don't attempt anything beyond your abilities.
- A cache you own, or one you're trading out of, could be found by children or even a prisoner work crew - consider the location of the cache and those likely to find it when deciding what to leave as a trade item.

...Observe All Laws and Rules of the Area

- Don't break the law or rules of an area, or encourage others to do so, when placing or seeking a cache.
- Don't leave illegal items in a cache.

...Respect Property Rights and Seek Permission Where Appropriate

- Check if permission is required before placing a cache on private property, and respect the landowner's wishes.
- Check if public land has a geocaching policy and respect existing policies.
- Promptly remove your cache if the land manager or steward asks.
- Do not damage, or interfere with the function of, buildings, structures, or signage.

...Avoid Causing Disruptions or Public Alarm

- Don't place a cache near schools or government buildings unless the administration and staff are fully aware of the placement.
- Use caution where children play. Parents are understandably concerned when strangers are near their children.
- Don't place a cache near critical infrastructure that might be considered a terrorist target, or create a cache that could be mistaken for a terrorist device (e.g. a pipe bomb).

...Minimize My and Others' Impact on the Environment

- Follow [Leave No Trace](#) ethics whenever possible.
- When seeking a cache, practice "Lift, Look, Replace" - put all stones or logs back where you found them. Leave the area as you found it or better (e.g. pick up litter).
- Obtain the best possible coordinates for your cache to reduce unwarranted wear on the area. Recheck and correct your coordinates if finders report significant errors.
- Do not abandon a cache.
 - If you stop maintaining a cache, remove the container, archive its listing and explain the disposition of the cache in your archive note, or put it up for adoption or rescue.
 - If you de-list a cache on one host, but keep it on another, make sure you mention this in the archive note to prevent rescues of active caches.

...Be Considerate of Others

- Treat other geocachers civilly - in the field, in the forums, or wherever your paths may cross.
- Don't spoil the hunt for others - allow them to experience the cache as its owner intended.
 - Avoid leaving tracks to the cache. Do not disrupt the cache area or mark the hiding spot.
 - Minimize giving unsolicited clues that reveal the cache (i.e. "spoilers").
 - Don't provide any hints if the cache description asks you not to. In all other cases, be cryptic or encrypt any hints or spoilers you enter in online logs.
 - Edit your log if the cache owner requests that you remove spoilers.
- Promptly alert the owner of any issues with their cache. Make minor repairs if you can, it will save the owner a trip.
- Cache owners appreciate feedback - write an online log, send an email, or otherwise let the owner know about your experience with their cache.
- Only place caches you can maintain and respond promptly to problem reports.
- If you exchange trade items, trade kindly: Consider what future finders would like and leave something equal to or better than what you take.
- If you place a traveling item into the game, attach a tag that describes its goal, so that others can help it along. If you pick up a traveling item with a tag describing its goal, move the item toward its goal if possible. Contact the owner if you hold a traveling item for more than a couple of weeks or so.
- Obtain permission from the originator before copying unique themes and techniques, adding to an existing series of caches, or placing a cache close to another.

...Protect the Integrity of the Game Pieces

- The owner entrusts you to not damage or jeopardize the cache. Try to ensure the cache is ready for the next finder and is as good as or better than you found it.
- Make sure the container is properly closed to prevent the contents from getting wet or destroyed.
- Be inconspicuous in retrieving, signing in, and replacing a cache to avoid vandalism.
- Put the cache back where you found it and hide it well. Don't move a cache - if you suspect the cache is not in the intended spot, hide it the best you can and alert the owner as soon as possible.
- Don't collect traveling items meant to stay in the game. This is tantamount to stealing.
- Don't tamper with or involve a game piece in "alternate" games without the owner's permission.

How do I do a Geocache?

- First find <http://www.geocaching.com/> on the web and register.
- Once you have registered & are on your page, you can find a cache by either finding it through the web or on your phone app.

Page

1. Go to the main page of Geocaching.com
2. Click on the word "Play" which is written in white near the top of the page.
3. This will take you to a search engine where you can put in all the information on where about you would like to go searching for a cache
4. Here you can put in as much or as little information as you like. Any easy way is to just type in the post code of where you would like to Geocache.
5. Press "go"
6. This will then take you to another page with all the Geocaches in the area that you requested.
7. Click on the Geocache you would like to do. Again another page will open
8. Make sure you read all the information on the Cache before deciding to do it with your Cubs. It will explain the difficulty of the find as well as they type of terrain. It may also tell you to bring extra items such as a torch or tweezers.
9. From here you can either manually put the coordinates in your GPS or send it to your phone.
10. Once on your GPS or phone you should be able to find the cache by following the green line as per the phone app below.

Phone

1. Open your Geocaching app – There are 2 apps in the store. Unfortunately you will need the one that cost money!
2. From here you could either press "find nearby Geocaches" or press the advance search option below.
3. This will then take you to another page with all the Geocaches in the area that you requested.
4. Click on the Geocache you would like to do. Again another page will open
5. Make sure you read all the information on the Cache before deciding to do it with your Cubs. It will explain the difficulty of the find as well as they type of terrain. It may also tell you to bring extra items such as a torch or tweezers.
6. Press "Navigate to Geocache:"
7. This will take you directly to a map. On the map will be two points. A blue one which indicates your current position and a green one which indicates where the Geocache can be found.
8. Your mission if you choose to accept it, is to walk towards the green point. Basically if the line is getting smaller and the amount of meters on the top right hand is getting smaller you are getting closer. If the line is getting longer and the amount of metres is going up, yep you guessed it, you are getting further away from the cache.

9. The app will then take you within around 3-4 meters of the Cache. This is where you start to actually hunt.
10. If you get stuck and can't find it, there are hints on the opening page to the cache.
11. Once you have found the cache, record your details on the paper and then again on the cache site. Just enter the Post a log/field note section. You still do this even if you did not find the cache.

Note: there is also an option to save your cache for “off line” for when you are Geocaching in areas with no internet connection.

So hopefully you are all a bit more confident in doing Geocaching. Go home, find some simple ones, do them and then introduce them to your Cubs

You can do them any time.

Many Caches' have great educational information in their descriptions, ranging from history to environmental info.

- Part of Camp
- Can do on hikes, bike hikes
- Part of a scavenger hunt
- Use as an emergency fill in for the program
- Compass work – Cubs can take compasses along with them too and work out which way they are going.
- Mapping Work
- Part of Clean up Australia day
- World Environment Badge
- Local History Badge

Types of Geocaches

Traditional CacheThe original Geocache. Usually has a container, log book or log sheet. There can be items in there also to trade.

Multi-Cache (Offset Cache)

A Multi- Cache means there are 2 or more waypoints/locations. Each point will give clues or information for the next way point or final location of the cache.

Mega-Event Cache

The Mega-Event Cache is an organised even that is has anything over 500 Geocacher's in attendance. There are both Geocache and other activities involved and normally go for at least one day. A bit like Jamboree, people from all over the world attend these.

Cache In Trash Out Event

A fun spin to help our environment. This can be done as one big event organised by Groundspeak, or Clean up Australia day, when you are hiking. Or you can even organise your own clean up Cache In Trash Out Event. Great for Badge work. More info can be found on this link; [Cache In Trash Out](#)

EarthCache

Another great educational tool for the Cubs! These Caches are places where Cubs can learn all about geosciences. A fantastic way to teach them about geological process of fossils, climate, plants, glaciers, lakes etc & how to look after them. Great for an environmental program. For more infor, click here <http://www.earthcache.org/>.

Groundspeak Headquarters Cache

This is the Headquarters Cache. You need to go to Groundspeak headquarters for this one. So maybe a bit of fundraising may need to be done here ☺

GPS Adventures Maze Exhibit

These are Caches designed to teach people about the technology behind GPS's. You need to go to an exhibit for this one.

Virtual Cache

These Caches have no container. Instead you may be required to answer a question about a location, send a postcard or take a photo.

Webcam Cache

This one requires you to get in front of a previously placed web camera. For more information, click here [Web Camera category on Waymarking.com](#).

10 Years! Event Cache

This is held from April 30th to May 3rd each year as an Event Cache. Introduced in 2010 to celebrate 10 years of Geocaching.

Location less (Reverse) Cache

This one doesn't have a container either. Bit like a backwards Geocache. This time you have to find an object and then log it's coordinates.

Scouts Australia Geocache competition

Starts March 15th

Ends August 15th

\$10,000 in prizes

Find as many Geocaches as you can in 6 months.

Can be individually, as a team or both

Open to all members including Leaders

You need to register on the Scouts Australia Web site (you will need your password to get in)

Links & more information

Official Geocache Website (this is where you create your account) - <http://www.geocaching.com/>

Geocachers creed brochure - www.geocreed.info

Geocaching Glossary of Terms - <http://www.geocaching.com/about/glossary.aspx>

Geocacher University - http://geocacher-u.com/?page_id=9

Scouts Australia Geocache competition (*you will need your SA password to get in*) - <http://geocaching.scouts.com.au/>

GeoScouts Australia - <http://www.geoscouts.org.au/>

It is recommend that you find the cache yourself before you set your pack loose. Refer to the first part of the creed for reasons why. Do a risk assessment.