

In May 2000, the United States government officially removed "selective availability" from the **Global Positioning System** satellites. This meant that civilian **GPS** units now possessed greater accuracy than previously permitted. Within days a GPS enthusiast hid a container in the backcountry of Oregon, posted the coordinates on the internet and told others to **"go find it!"**

The phenomenon of **Geocaching** sprang from that one simple posting! As it has grown in the years since, it still maintains the simple guidelines of those early days—find the cache, take something, leave something, and sign the logbook.

Getting Started

Getting started is easy. If you have a hand-held GPS and Internet access, you're halfway there!

- Log on to **GEOCACHING.COM** and enter the **zip/postal code** of the location where you would like to go geocaching.
- Enter the longitude and latitude of the geocache you want to search for into your GPS. You will probably also want to print out a copy of the geocache sheet.
- **Go get it!** Search in the area your GPS leads you. Usually GPS accuracy will be limited to a thirty-foot area. Keep this in mind as you search.
- When you find the cache, take something from the container and leave something you've brought with you. Sign the logbook and then return the container to its hiding spot for the next finder.

How Does Geocaching Work?



Containers are typically water-tight and often are transparent, so that the contents are clearly visible to anyone who might stumble across it accidentally.

1 A Geocacher carefully chooses a location and fills a container with items to trade and a logbook.

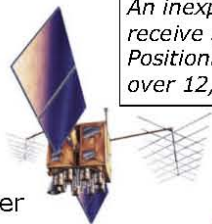
He then registers his new cache on **GEOCACHING.COM** to share it with the rest of the world.



2 After receiving the coordinates and other information from the website, another Geocacher uses a hand-held GPS to look for the cache.

The GPS receives signals from the **Global Positioning System satellites** to give the user their current longitude and latitude. However, the Geocacher has no idea of the altitude of the cache location or the terrain or what kind of structure the cache container might be hidden in. **This is part of the challenge of finding the cache!**

Hand-held GPS units start at about \$100.



An inexpensive hand-held GPS can receive signals from the 26 Global Positioning System satellites in orbit over 12,000 miles away!

3 The finder takes something from the container as a memento of their visit, leaves something for the next player, signs the logbook and returns the container to its hiding place. Later, they will log their visit on **GEOCACHING.COM** so that others can read about their adventure.



Geocaching is a great activity for young and old alike. Whole families form geocaching teams and spend time searching together!

Variations of the Game

As Geocaching has grown, several variations of the game have evolved. Some are:

Micro-Caches

Small caches often hidden in 35mm film canisters, usually with just a log-sheet. Very often these are hidden in urban settings with the challenge being finding them without being noticed.

Multi-Caches

A cache in which the finder must follow a set of instructions and go to several locations before finally finding the cache container. This is a great way to offer a guided tour of an area.

Mystery Caches

A puzzle must be solved in order to find the location of the cache container. The possibilities are only limited by the imagination and cunning of the hider.

Event Caches

A meeting where several Geocachers get together for a day of fun. These are usually held in state parks or other public areas.

Cache In Trash Out!

In an effort to give back to the parks and other environments that allow the placing of geocaches, participants often practice what they call "**CITO**," that is, they "**Cache In and Trash Out**." Geocachers do their part to remove trash and debris from the environment and leave the area as untouched as possible.

Many Geocachers carry garbage bags with them and even organize special "**CITO Events**" to beautify parks and environments.



Dos & Don'ts

Do

- get permission where needed before hiding a geocache.
- fill the cache with family-friendly objects.
- respect the environment—practice **CITO** while caching and leave the area as undisturbed as possible.
- mark your container plainly so that it is obviously a **Geocache**.
- perform monthly checks on any caches you have hidden.

Don't

- ever bury a cache.
- trade items that might be harmful (like lighters or knives) or family un-friendly.
- put any food items in the cache. These can attract animals who might be harmed or might damage the container.

Local Organizations

Many areas have regional or local Geocaching organizations. Often times these groups hold Geocaching meets, or **Event Caches** where they play games, discuss their finds and usually **eat!** Geocaching clubs are always very happy to work with local officials and park representatives to help set geocaching policies.

Event Caches are a great way to get introduced to Geocaching without having to go out and buy a lot of equipment. If you're not sure if Geocaching is for you yet, contact some local cachers about the time and place of an event cache in your area.

Want to Know More?

Join us at www.ncmageocachers.com for geocaching information in Western North Carolina



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Let's Go GEOCACHING!



Do you have a love for the outdoors, a fondness for high-tech toys and an adventurous spirit? If so, **Geocaching** might just be the hobby for you!

Thousands of people in over 200 countries are discovering the pastime known as Geocaching (pronounced "Geo-cashing"). It's the adventure/sport that has families and individuals using the Internet, hand-held GPS's and their eyes and wits to search for "treasure" hidden **all over the world!** The odds are that sometime in the past few years you've been within a few feet to a few miles of a geocache and **didn't even know it!**



GEOCACHING.COM