

Geocaching on Forest Society Lands

Geocaching is an outdoor activity that involves hiding a small waterproof container containing a logbook and/or small trade items for the challenge of participants using a global positioning system (GPS) device and Internet-published coordinates to locate. When participants locate a geocache, they may sign and date the logbook, and/or take an item from the geocache, replacing it with one they contribute. With the availability of relatively inexpensive GPS units and the recent increase in GPS accuracy, geocaching has become an increasingly popular recreational activity.

The Forest Society's mission includes protecting forest lands and open spaces where people can connect with the natural world. When practiced responsibly, geocaching is a great family recreational activity that encourages participants to get outdoors and enjoy (and protect!) natural landscapes. To that end, the Forest Society aspires to work with the geocaching community by providing appropriate places and guidelines for the placement of caches on Forest Society Reservations. The geocaching guidelines below have been developed for the safety of recreational users and to protect the conservation value of Forest Society Reservations:

- All geocache locations must be pre-approved by Forest Society staff. Anyone wishing to place a cache must complete a *Geocache Identification Form* and submit it to SPNHF's Land Management Department. Once the *Geocache Identification Form* has been reviewed and approved, the cache owner will receive a *Special Use Permit* from the Forest Society.
- Caches will be permitted only on Forest Society Reservations where recreation is actively promoted and supported with appropriate infrastructure (parking areas, kiosks, maintained trails, etc.). Please visit www.forestsociety.org/ourproperties/geocaching.asp for a listing of these reservations.
- Caches will not be permitted in designated Eco-Reserves, sensitive cultural areas, or dangerous or inappropriate places. Unauthorized geocaches on Forest Society lands will be removed.
- Caches must not be buried, nor any vegetation or stones disturbed during their placement. Ideally a cache should be located no more than 10 feet from an existing trail.
- Caches must be placed in a waterproof container that is no greater than 4"x8"x12" in size and must have some form of latch or other closure to deter wildlife.
- The word "Geocache" along with "GC identification number" and the name of the "cache owner" must be clearly visible on the exterior of all geocache containers. The cache name must be the same as that indicated on the *Geocache Identification Form* and on all Internet postings.
- Caches may only contain content which would be suitable for family viewing. No harmful, dangerous, illegal, or obscene items may be placed in or around cache. The Forest Society has the authority to remove any items deemed unacceptable including but not limited to: food items, medications of any type, adult items, weapons, and any items harmful to the environment. Contents of all caches are subject to inspection by Forest Society staff or volunteers at any time.
- Caches must be removed no later than three (3) years following placement date, the site restored to its original condition, and the Forest Society Land Management Department notified of its removal. Within seven (7) days of cache removal, the cache owner shall archive and delete site locations from all publications and/or websites.
- The website where the geocache location is posted must have a link to the geocaching section of the Forest Society's homepage (www.forestsociety.org/ourproperties/geocaching.asp)
- The Forest Society reserves the right to limit the number of geocaches permitted on any Reservation.

Please note also that the Forest Society promotes a multiple use land management philosophy, which includes forest management (timber harvesting). Prior to placing a geocache, please consider that notice will not be provided prior to harvesting or other stewardship activities near geocache locations.