# Geocaching Challenge

## AN OUTDOOR CHALLENGE
## FROM THE BC CAMPINGCOMMITTEE

Girl Guides Guides
of Canada du Canada
**BRITISH COLUMBIA COUNCIL**

## OBJECTIVES

The BC Girl Guide Geocaching challenge is designed to get girls & Guiders to learn about geocaching and GPS technology in a fun way.

To get you started, there is some information included about the history of Geocaching, types of geocaches and how to set up your own geocache or send out a trackable.

## CHALLENGE REQUIREMENTS

To earn the geocaching challenge crest, complete all sections of the challenge for your branch

*Note: Caches set up for a geocache hunt meeting can be temporarily set up without being logged.*

| Branch | Section A | Section B |
|---|---|---|
| **Sparks** | **Learn about geocaching**<br>- When did it begin?<br>- Where is the very first geocache located? | **Go Geocaching…**<br>- Find a geocache in your neighbourhood and log your finds onto www.geocaching.com. |
| **Brownies & Guides** | **Learn about geocaching & GPS units**<br>- When did it begin?<br>- Who created the term geocaching?<br>- Where is the very first geocache located?<br>- How do GPS work? | **Go Geocaching…**<br>- Find two different types or sizes of caches in your neighbourhood. Log each of your finds onto www.geocaching.com.<br>- Learn how to create and maintain a geocache<br>**or**<br>- Learn about a trackable (geocoin or travel bug) using www.geocaching.com, look at the history to follow where it has traveled, what are its goals, if possible find a trackable in your area and move it to a new location.<br>- OPTIONAL: Send out your own trackable item or create your own geocache. |
| **Pathfinders** | **Learn about geocaching & GPS units**<br>- When did it begin?<br>- What is Selective Availability and why was getting rid of it important to geocaching?<br>- Where is the very first geocache located?<br>- How do GPS's work? | **Go Geocaching…**<br>- Find at least three different types or sizes of caches in your neighbourhood. Log each of your finds onto www.geocaching.com.<br>- Learn about a trackable including its goals and where it has traveled, if possible find a trackable in your area and move it to a new location.<br>- Create a geocache with your Unit and post it OR send out a trackable into the world and track its progress on www.geocaching.com. |
| **Rangers & Adults** | **Learn about geocaching & GPS units**<br>- When did it begin?<br>- What is Selective Availability and why was getting rid of it important to geocaching?<br>- Where is the very first geocache located?<br>- How do GPS's work? | **Go Geocaching…**<br>- Find at least three different types or sizes of caches in your neighbourhood. Log each of your finds onto www.geocaching.com.<br>- Create a geocache with your Unit and post it OR send out a trackable into the world and track its progress on www.geocaching.com.<br>- Create a geocache hunt meeting for a local Spark, Brownie, or Guide or Pathfinder Unit. |

# 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.

Once you have completed the challenge, mail in this page with a **BC Challenge Crest Order Form** and payment to receive your crest(s). The BC Challenge Crest Order form can be found on the BC Girl Guides website http://www.bc-girlguides.org (click on Program > Challenges & Activities > Provincial Challenges). Please make the payment cheque payable to "Girl Guides of Canada - BC Council".

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Unit Name:** | | **Guiders Name:** | |
| **District:** | | **Number of Crests:** | |
| **Area:** | | **Guiders E-mail:** | |
| **Province:** | | **Guiders Address:** | |
| **Geocaches Found:** | | | |
| **Geocaches Created or Trackable Released:** | | | |

# GEOCACHING

Geocaching is a real-world, outdoor treasure hunting game using GPS-enabled devices. Participants navigate to a specific set of GPS coordinates and then attempt to find the geocache (container) hidden at that location.

# A BRIEF HISTORY OF GEOCACHING

- The Global Positioning System (GPS) originally known 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
- As of February 2016 there are 2,776,441 active geocaches and over 15 million geocachers worldwide. The world has truly become a geocachers playing field!

# HOW TO START GEOCACHING

1. Register for a free membership at www.geocaching.com.
2. Visit the "Find a Geocache" under the Play menu
3. Enter your postal code and click "search."
4. Choose any geocache from the list and click on its name.
5. Enter the coordinates of the geocache into your GPS Device.
6. Use your GPS device to assist you in finding the hidden geocache.
7. Sign the logbook and return the geocache to its original location.
8. Share your geocaching stories and photos online.

The three main rules of geocaching, "If you take something, leave something and make sure to write in the log book"!

Please respect the environment you are geocaching in and try and be as stealthy as possible.  If someone asks you what you are doing be polite and explain to them what geocaching is.

**Go out and have fun!**

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# TYPES OF GEOCACHES

There are 6 basic types of geocaches that you can create.

| | |
|---|---|
|  | **Traditional** – A single container with of various sizes with a logbook is hidden at coordinates for geocachers to find. |
|  | **Multi-Cache** – A geocache that involves multiple locations.  Typically once you're at the first stage, you will receive a clue to the whereabouts of the second stage, and so on. |
|  | **Puzzle or Mystery Cache** – A geocache that involves you solving a puzzle or riddle to get the final coordinates to find the geocache. |
|  | **EarthCache** – A type of geocache that takes you to a special geological location to learn about the location.  There can be a physical geocache to find, but mostly you need to answer questions about the geological location to log the geocache. |
|  | **Event Cache** - Is a gathering geocachers. The Event Cache page specifies a time for the event and provides coordinates to its location. After the event has ended, it is archived. *(Tip - Could be done as a guiding event.)* |
|  | **Cache In Trash Out** – Is an event where geocachers meet at a location to clean up and preserve the natural area they enjoy geocaching in.  Where they can clean-up litter, remove invasive species, plant trees or vegetation and/or building or help maintain hiking trails. *(Tip - Could be done as a community service project.)* |

# TRACKABLES

Trackables are a special type of object found within geocaches that contain unique tracking codes and have special missions they are trying to complete, which another geocacher has released for others to find.  They are not to be kept, but instead discovered, logged and moved to another geocache!

There are two main types of trackables: travel bugs and geocoin.  Travel bugs resemble dog tags and are usually attached to small objects.  Geocoins resemble coins through there are many variations.

**Travel Bug**



**Geocoin**

If you find a trackable make sure you



log where you picked it up from and where you dropped it off at https://www.geocaching.com/track/.   If you would like to release your own trackable to other geocachers to find and move on you can purchase them online from many online geocaching stores. *(Tip – Your unit can release a trackable and see how far it gets as a program activity.)*

# HOW TO CREATE AND HIDE A GEOCACHE…

For more detailed information on how to create and set-up a geocache please visit
https://www.geocaching.com/play/hide.

1.  **Search for existing geocaches before trying to create your own and hide it.** Try to find a variety of cache types and sizes in various terrains and locations and covering the spectrum of difficulty levels. This will allow you to determine which things work well and help you form wise choices in this endeavor.

2.  **Pick the type of geocache to set up.**  While the Traditional caches might be the first that come to mind to set up, EarthCaches are a great idea to set up to encourage others to visit a geological feature, Event Caches can be done as a one time Guiding event, and the Cache In Trash Out could be set up as a community service project.

3.  **Find a good spot for your geocache.** A quality geocache will be hidden near something of natural, human, historic, or scenic interest or at least at the end of a pleasant walk. Try to make it a place that people would enjoy visiting even if the cache wasn't there.

4.  **Make certain geocaches are allowed there.** If it is private property, obtain permission from the land owner. Some park systems require permits and some do not allow geocaching, so check with park management to make sure geocaching is allowed, and then obtain a permit if required.

5.  **Select an appropriate container.** Geocache containers should be waterproof and durable.  A good seal is important, because, if water leaks in, the cache will be ruined.

6.  **Label the outside.**  Clearly labeling your container as a geocache and with the proper contact information may reduce the chances of your cache being reported as a suspicious package.

7.  **Stock the cache.** Include a letter explaining what it is, just in case a non-geocacher finds it https://www.geocaching.com/play/hide/en-us/small-note.  Also, if the geocache is large enough include a logbook, a pen or pencil and trinkets for finders to trade out.  Keep cache contents family friendly and do not include food or scented items.  *(Tip – Your local dollar store should have everything you need to set-up a geocache.)*

8.  **Hide your cache.** Your cache is more likely to last if you choose a low traffic area where it is not likely to accidentally be discovered and where searchers won't be spotted.  Please make sure your cache location doesn't damage any wildlife, public or private property.

9.  **Use your GPS to obtain the coordinates.** Make sure you have a good satellite signal, and then let your GPS settle at the cache site for a minute or two before marking. Check your owners' manual for the section on how to mark a waypoint if you don't yet know.

10. **List and maintain your cache.** Units can decide if they want to post their cache on www.geocaching.com so other geocachers can obtain the coordinates. Consider maintaining your cache for the rest of the Guiding year as a service project or program requirement. Once posted, be ready to respond promptly to reported problems such as missing containers and wet or full logbooks. However, once you place a cache you don't need to maintain it forever. If you lose interest or unable to maintain it, remove your cache and archive the listing.