BOY SCOUTS OF AMERICA®
VIRGINIA HEADWATERS COUNCIL

Geocaching Merit Badge - Part 2

Eric Cutright, SM Troop 1029, Oct 2020
(parts adapted from original presentation by Melissa Portz, ASM Delano Troop 273)

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The Plan for Today
Part Two – Geocaching.com

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Geocaching
Merit Badge

Troop 1028/1029 Merit Badge Counselors

Geocaching.com overview

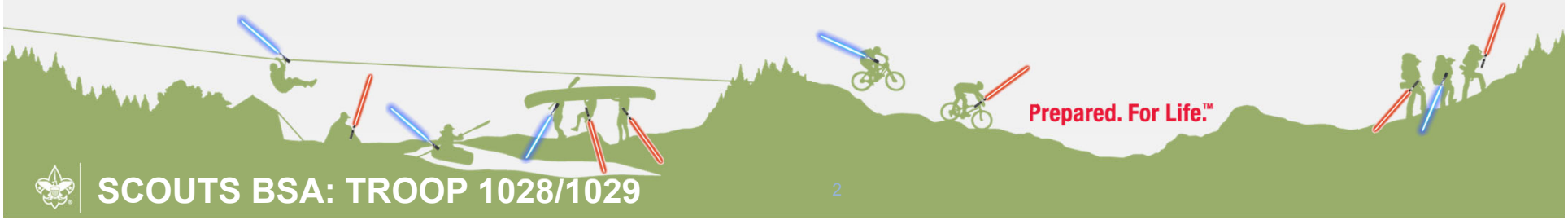
Finding a Geocache

4 steps including safety guidelines

Hiding a Geocache

4 steps including placement guidelines

How to Finish the Geocaching Merit Badge



Overview of Geocaching.com

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What is Geocaching.com?

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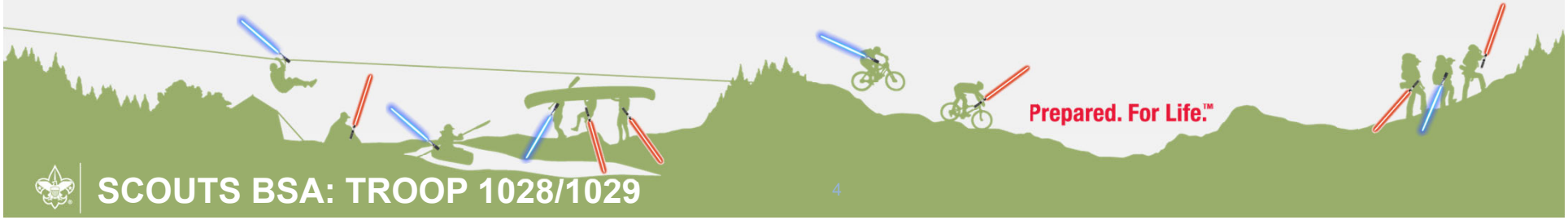
Geocaching Merit Badge

- **Geocaching.com is a website created by geocachers for geocachers to list geocaches all over the world**
- **Basic membership is free, prime membership for a small annual fee**
- **Cool things you can do:**
  - Create your own geocache and register it for others to find
  - Look for geocaches near you to find
  - Record comments when you find a geocache
  - Keep track of how many geocaches you have found
  - Create your own trackable listing and see where it travels



Internet Safety

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- **Obtain parental permission and follow the rules**
- **Never give out your email, phone number or other personal information**
  - Don’t use your real name – create a geocaching “handle”
- **Never open e-mail /files if you don’t know who sent it**
- **Tell a parent if you see or receive anything that makes you feel uncomfortable**
- **Never agree to meet with anybody you meet online**
- **Don’t share passwords**
- **Don’t believe everything you read online**
- **Obey the laws**

Example Profile (Alec C)

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Profile for User: Crazy Scout Cacher

Profile | Geocaches | Trackables | Souvenirs | Gallery | Lists | Statistics

Crazy Scout Cacher

1 Caches Found

Edit Your Profile

E-Mail Address: Send Message

Member Since: Monday, 17 September 2012

Status: Member (Give a Gift Membership)

Last Visit: Wednesday, 22 October 2014

See the Forum Posts for This User

Example Geocache Entry

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Geocaching > Hide and Seek A Geocache > Geocache Details

GC3X0PP

Help!! I've Fallen and I Can't Get Up

A cache by Crazy Scout Cacher Hidden : 09/17/2012

Difficulty: ★★★☆☆
Terrain: ★★☆☆☆

Size: (small)

0 Favorites

Related Web Page

N 38° 00.721 W 078° 31.640
UTM: 17S E 717074 N 4210033
Other Conversions

In Virginia, United States
SW 3 mi from your home location

Print: No Logs | 5 Logs | 10 Logs | Driving Directions

Download: Read about waypoint downloads

LOC waypoint file | GPX file | Send to My GPS | Send to My Phone

Please note Use of geocaching.com services is subject to the terms and conditions in our disclaimer.

Log your visit

View Gallery (2)
Watch (0)
Bookmark
Ignore

Admin Tools
Edit
Edit Attributes
Waypoints
Upload Images
Archive
Disable

Geocache Description:

Check near the Redfields nature trail. Park on Swan Ridge at Sunset intersection, near entrance to Nature Trail.

5x5x2 plastic container

Additional Hints (Decrypt)

Svaq zr jurer n gerr bapr fgbbq cebhq naq gnyy.

Decryption Key
A|B|C|D|E|F|G|H|I|J|K|L|M

N|O|P|Q|R|S|T|U|V|W|X|Y|Z
(letter above equals below, and vice versa)

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Geocache Attributes

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- What to expect at cache location
- How hard will it be to find?
- Is parking available? Can you bring your dog?
- Do you need special equipment (boat, scuba gear)
- How long will it take? Is cache available at night?
- Do I need to watch out for ticks or poisonous plants?
- Kid friendly?
- Stealth required?

What are Attributes?

Geocache Attributes

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Below is a list of current attributes available for this cache type. Choose the attributes that apply to your cache and click on the button below to update your cache listing with this information. **You are limited to a maximum of 15 attributes per listing.** If you don't need the attribute just choose N/R (not related) from the list of options. For example, although a snowmobile is not normally required to find a cache in Florida, you do not need to select the "no" option for it.

Conditions	Yes	No	N/R
Scenic view	○	○	◉
Recommended for kids	◉	○	○
Takes less than an hour	◉	○	○
Difficult climbing	○	○	◉
May require wading	○		◉
May require swimming	○		◉
Available at all times	◉	○	○
Recommended at night	○	○	◉
Available during winter	◉	○	○
Watch for livestock	○		◉
Stealth required	○	○	◉
Night Cache	○	○	◉
Park and Grab	○	○	◉

SCOUT

Geocache Terrain and Difficulty

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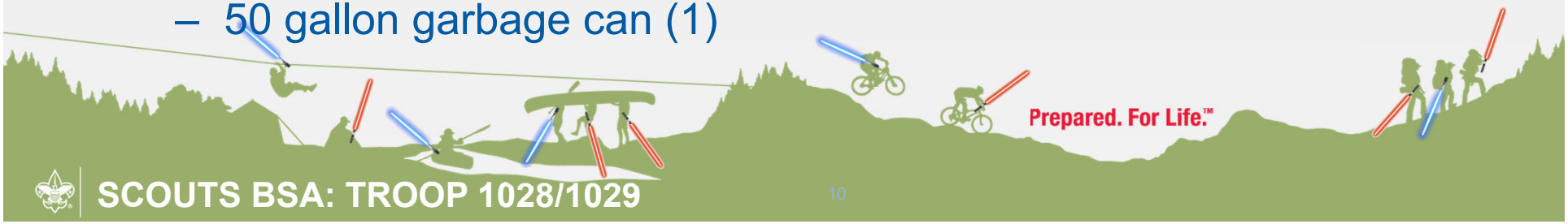
- **Terrain Rating: 1-5 stars**
  - 1 star would be super easy, 5 star is very difficult
  - Harder: Steep terrain, water, cliffs
  - Easier: Paved trail
  - 1 star would be wheelchair accessible
  - 5 star may require special equipment

- **Difficulty Rating: 1-5 stars**
  - 1 star would be super easy, 5 star is evil
  - Nano-cache up in a pine tree (5)
  - 50 gallon garbage can (1)



Example Geocache Log

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24 Logged Visits

19 1 1 1 1 1

Decrypt

View Logbook | View the Image Gallery of 2 images

**Warning! Spoilers may be included in the descriptions or links.

Crazy Scout Cacher
Member
1

Owner Maintenance 10/22/2014

Replacement geocache placed today - original geocache was a total loss (including box, log and all contents). New replacement log included along with a cool trackable. Enjoy !

View / Edit Log / Images Upload Image

IncredibleCache
Premium Member
663

Found it

Meant to log this 2 months ago when I was out caching in Redfields. Confirmed: cache needs some TLC.

JustinJustin
Member
45

Needs Maintenance

Needs to be replaced... In pieces. :(

JustinJustin
Member
45

Found it

Cache destroyed! Container broken and contents scattered. Tried to put back together but the log is pulped from rain... Needs maintenance.

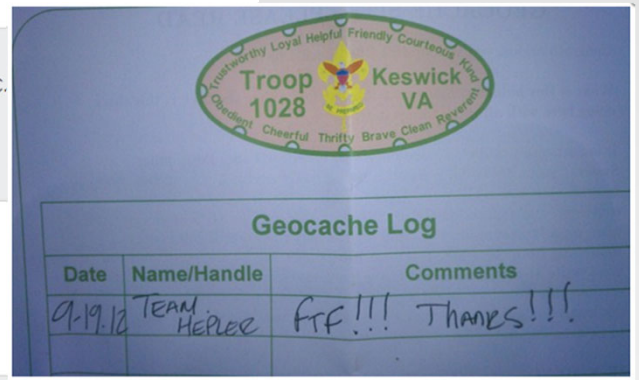
View Log

lindasivey
Member
22

Didn't find it 06/09/2014

no logs for several months. Is this still here?

View Log



Team.Hepler FTF #134 View Log Print Picture

Example Geocache Log, con't

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beehappy Premium Member 367	**Found it** Quick find in a nice neighborhood. TFTC! View Log	08/11/2013
muzzletov Premium Member 1201	**Found it** Quick find. TFTC! View Log	07/27/2013
hedgehoghikers Member 139	**Found it** Visiting relatives in Redfields and decided to bag a couple of caches while we were here. TFTC! View Log	07/23/2013
16PawzVA Premium Member 451	**Found it** TFTC! Did not park in the right place but it worked out! Great trail. Took TB, left Swag! View Log	07/21/2013
annejon9 Premium Member 2546	**Found it** Took a walk with my lovely wife around the pond to get this one. Saw tons of turtles and baby turtles hanging out on floating sticks/logs. We're in town visiting my in-laws from Missoula, Montana. Thanks! View Log	06/27/2013
Crazy Scout Cacher Member 1	**Write note** Dropped off Finding Nemo ??? Trackable View / Edit Log / Images Upload Image	05/22/2013

Trackables Inventory

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Geocaching Merit Badge

- **Crazy Scout Cacher owns five trackables**

Search Trackables

Total Records: **5** - Page: **1** of **1** - < Prev << <[1]> >> Next >

Sort by: ▼ Name △▽ Last Log △▽ Distance

	Name	Last Log	Owner	Location	Traveled
	Aarrgghh Maties !		Crazy Scout Cacher	Crazy Scou...	0 mi
	Finding Nemo ???	05/13/2014	Crazy Scout Cacher	cottonm	685 mi
	I Want My Mummy !!		Crazy Scout Cacher	Crazy Scou...	0 mi
SW 3 mi	Princess Ponies Rule	10/22/2014	Crazy Scout Cacher	Help!! I'v...	0 mi
	Totally Tubular Turtle Dude		Crazy Scout Cacher	Crazy Scou...	0 mi

Example Trackable

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Finding Nemo ???

Owner: Crazy Scout Cacher

Released: Monday, 20 May 2013

Origin: Virginia, United States

Recently Spotted: In the hands of cottonm.

This is not collectible. 10/22/2014

Use **TB5B9YQ** to reference this item.

First time logging a Trackable? Click here.

Current GOAL
There is currently no goal for this item.

About This Item
No additional details available.

Gallery Images related to Finding Nemo ???
View 1 Gallery Image

Your Inventory
- Aarrgghh Maties !
- I Want My Mummy !!
- Totally Tubular Turtle Dude

You placed Princess Ponies Rule in Help!! I've Fallen and I Can't Get Up

Trackable Options

Add a Log Entry
Edit This Trackable
Upload an Image
Print Info Sheet
View in Google Earth

Tracking Number: **CBFMB3**

Actions

Mark Item Missing Go

Gallery Images
For Finding Nemo ???

04/18/2014

Example Trackable Log

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Tracking History (685mi) View Map

01-10 of 51 records · 01 | 02 | 03 | 04 | 05 | 06 | next › | last »

05/13/2014	cottonm retrieved it from Hi Ho Silver	West Virginia	Visit Log
I'm going to put it back in the park			
04/18/2014	TAB1234 placed it in Hi Ho Silver	West Virginia - 64.41 miles	Visit Log
Found on hatfield McCoy cache help move along			
04/18/2014	MrsScout discovered it		Visit Log
Relocating with TAB1234 and ProScouter today.			
08/17/2013	TAB1234 retrieved it from HMGT #12 Perry Cline Gravesite	Kentucky	Visit Log
TFTC			
08/09/2013	16PawzVA placed it in HMGT #12 Perry Cline Gravesite	Kentucky - .41 miles	Visit Log
Good Luck!			
08/09/2013	16PawzVA took it to HMGT #15 Hanging of "Cottontop" Mounts	Kentucky - .37 miles	Visit Log
Visited HMGT #15 Hanging of "Cottontop" Mounts (GC3QERK)			
08/09/2013	16PawzVA took it to HMGT #13 The McCoy House	Kentucky - .21 miles	Visit Log
Visited HMGT #13 The McCoy House (GC3QEPW)			
08/09/2013	16PawzVA took it to HMGT #11 - The Courthouse Square	Kentucky - .15 miles	Visit Log

Example Trackable Map

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Finding Nemo?? – Roaming Virginia, Kentucky, & West Virginia (685 mi)

Finding a Geocache

Finding a Geocache

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- Step 1: Research
- Step 2: Safety
- Step 3: The Hunt
- Step 4: The Actual Find

Finding, Step 1: Research

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- **Sign up for free account on geocaching.com**
- **Click “Hide and Seek a Cache”, enter a zip code**
- **Select the geocache you want to find**
  - Pay attention to distance, difficulty, terrain, type and size
- **Enter coordinates in your GPS device**
- **Look at map of area to determine your best approach**
  - In the city, use a city map
  - In rural areas, use a topographic map

Preparing to Geocache

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- GPS
- Extra batteries
- Cache page
- Water
- A buddy
- Trinkets to trade with
- Pen/Pencil
- Bug Spray
- CITO bag
- Sense of Adventure

- **What to take with you**

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Finding, Step 2: Safety

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- Bring a buddy
- Tell someone where you are going and when you expect to be back
- Carry a compass, whistle and first aid kit
- Dress for weather and terrain
- Be aware of your surroundings
- During hunting season, wear blaze orange

Geocaching Safety

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How to NOT get lost or run into barriers:

- **GPS gives "where the crow flies" directions**
  - Always look at a map of area first to determine your best route
  - Obstacles: rivers, streams, swamps, cliffs
- **Always carry extra batteries**
- **Mark your car or trailhead**
- **Have map and compass as backup**
  - GPS batteries could go dead
  - Satellite signal reception could be poor
  - You could accidently enter in the wrong GPS coordinates

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Geocaching Safety - Hazards

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- Poisonous plants
- Sunburn
- Heatstroke
- Hypothermia
- Woodticks
- Mosquitoes
- Holes in the ground
- Uneven terrain
- Disorientation

Finding, Step 3: The Hunt

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- **Mark your car and/or trailhead**
- **Stay on the trail**
- **Watch your footing**
- **Use your GPS compass to lead you towards the cache**
- **Slow down when you get to about 300 feet**
- **Once you get to about 30 feet, start your search**
  - Sometimes it helps to just put the GPS away and use your "geosense"

Finding, Step 4: The Actual Find

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- **Once you find it, write about it in logbook**
  - Use your geocaching name (handle) and date
- **Take something, leave something**
- **Only take a trackable if you intend on moving it**
  - Trackables are geocoins, travel bugs and tracked on geocaching.com
- **Put geocache back better than how you found it**
  - Many times, geocaches “move”, get “Muggled” by a non-geocacher, or camo disappears
  - Make sure lid is on tight
- **Log your find on geocaching.com**

Leave No Trace & CITO

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- **Leave No Trace: 7 Principles**
  - (1) Plan ahead and prepare, (2) Travel and cache on durable surfaces, (3) Dispose of waste properly, (4) Leave what you find, (5) Minimize campfire impacts, (6) Respect wildlife, and (7) Be considerate of other visitors
- **CITO: Cache In Trash Out**
  - Always carry a bag with you to pick up trash on your way out
  - CITO Event: Group of geocachers getting together to clean up a park or other geocaching friendly area
- **DIPO - Dog In Poop Out**
  - Make sure you clean up after pets

CACHE IN TRASH OUT™

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Hiding a Geocache

Hiding a Geocache

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- **Read the guidelines on geocaching.com**
- **Many parks and cities have special rules**
- **Same steps as finding:**
  - Step 1: Research
  - Step 2: Safety
  - Step 3: The Hunt
  - Step 4: The Actual Find

Hiding, Step 1: Research

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- **Where would be a good place to hide a geocache?**
  - Geocaches must be 0.10 miles (528 feet) away from others.
  - Think “Where would I like to **FIND** a geocache?”
- **Hide geocache where there will be minimal risk to the environment**

Hiding, Step 2: Safety

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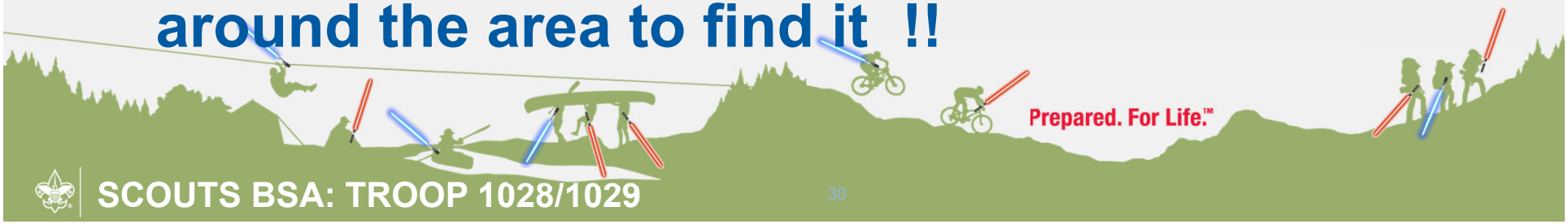
- Geocaches must be safe to get to
- If on private property, obtain permission
- Geocaches are not allowed near railroads, bridges, school property or military bases
- Remember geocachers will have to wander around the area to find it !!



Hiding, Step 3: The Hunt

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- **Pick a good location and make sure coordinates are accurate**
  - Example - don't hide it in or near your yard unless you want people walking around your yard at any time of day
- **Supply a hint – should be encrypted**
- **Write "geocache" on outside of container**
- **You want to be sure geocachers can find it**

Hiding, Step 4: The Actual Find

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- **Be sure to use a watertight container**
  - Lock N Locks
  - Ammo Cans
  - Special purpose cache containers
  - Do not use “gladware”, they do not hold up to winters
- **Put a “Cache Note” in the geocache**
  - This can be printed off Geocaching.com
- **Put logbook in a plastic baggie**
  - Leave the pencil out, they tend to poke holes in the baggie
- **Load the cache up with swag**
  - Do not put in food, fireworks, or other dangerous materials

Hiding, Step 4: Sample Cache Note

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GEOCACHE SITE - PLEASE READ

Congratulations, you've found it! Intentionally or not!

What is this hidden container sitting here for? What the heck is this thing doing here with all these things in it?

It is part of a worldwide game dedicated to GPS (Global Positioning System) users, called Geocaching. The game basically involves a GPS user hiding "treasure" (this container and its contents), and publishing the exact coordinates so other GPS users can come on a "treasure hunt" to find it. The only rules are: if you take something from the cache, you must leave something for the cache, and you must write about your visit in the logbook. Hopefully, the person that hid this container found a good spot that is not easily found by uninterested parties. Sometimes, a good spot turns out to be a bad spot, though.

IF YOU FOUND THIS CONTAINER BY ACCIDENT:

Great! You are welcome to join us! We ask only that you:

- Please do not move or vandalize the container. The real treasure is just finding the container and sharing your thoughts with everyone else who finds it.
- If you wish, go ahead and take something. But please also leave something of your own for others to find, and write it in the logbook.
- If possible, let us know that you found it, by visiting the web site listed below.

Geocaching is open to everyone with a GPS and a sense of adventure. There are similar sites all over the world. The organization has its home on the Internet. Visit our website if you want to learn more, or have any comments:

http://www.geocaching.com

If this container needs to be removed for any reason, please let us know. We apologize, and will be happy to move it.

SCOU

Submitting your Geocache

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- Go to geocaching.com
- On “Hide and Seek” page, click on the Online Form
- Complete all information on the form and Submit
- Add Attributes
- Volunteer reviewers will review your listing
  - If there are questions/problems, they will email you
  - If no questions and all guidelines were followed, they will publish your new geocache on geocaching.com

- Wait for that first geocacher to log the “FTF” (First to Find)

Maintain it!

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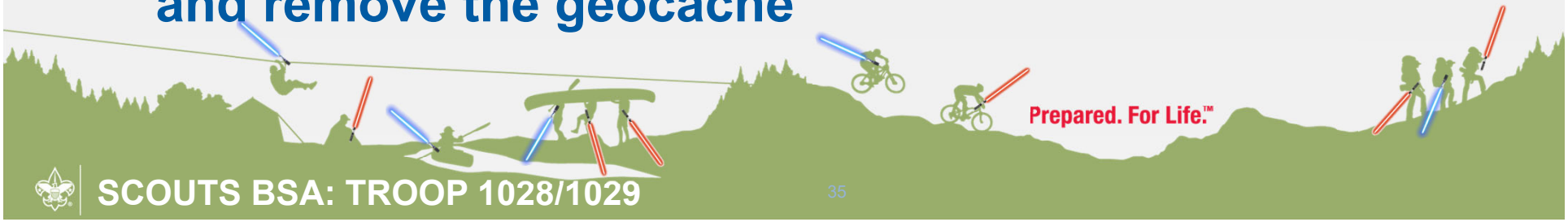
- **When you hide a geocache, you are obligated to maintain it**
- **Read the logs that geocachers will send you, e.g.**
  - They will tell you if your geocache is “wet” or the logbook is full
  - If you get a few “DNF” logs (Did Not Find), you may want to check to see if the geocache has been “Muggled” (a non-geocacher may have found it and removed it)
- **When you visit the area, make sure environment around isn’t being damaged in any way**
- **If you can no longer maintain, you need to “archive” and remove the geocache**



Completing the Geocaching Merit Badge

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Completing the Merit Badge

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Geocaching Merit Badge

- **Get and read the merit badge book**
- **Print and complete the merit badge workbook**
  - http://usscouts.org/mb/worksheets/Geocaching.pdf
- **We have done one of the hardest requirements:**
  - 9. Create a geohunt for your Troop with at least four waypoints
- **Another hard requirement is 8, the most exciting option is:**
  - 8c – set up and hide a public geocache, and share with your counselor a six-month maintenance plan for the geocache
- **Have fun – this is a cool merit badge**

Additional Resources

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Geocaching
Merit Badge

- **www.geoscouting.com**
- **www.geocaching.com**
- **www.cacheintrashout.com**
- **www.mngca.org**

- **References:**
  - Geocaching Merit Badge Handbook
  - http://geocaching.coollibrarian.com
  - http://egsc.usgs.gov/isb/pubs/factsheets/fs07701.html
  - http://www.maptools.com/UsingUTM
  - http://www.geocreed.info/index.html

Questions?

~~Mr. Eric~~. BB-8. For Life.™