

Geocaching: A High-Tech Scavenger Hunt

EEASC
June 2026



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Who Am I?

John Ratterree

- Retired High School Science Teacher
- Work at the Watershed Ecology Center at USC Upstate
- Eagle Scout
- Frustrated Tech Nerd
- Started Geocaching in 2001



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Tools:

- Smartphone that can run the Geocaching App



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Scavenger Hunts – A History

Also Known As:

- Treasure Hunts

Early Origins:

- Thought to have evolved from ancient folk games intended to teach hunting and gathering skills

Adaptations:

- Used as ways to
 - Reinforce orienteering skills,
 - For team building,
 - As rights of passage,
 - Educational activities.



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Scavenger Hunts – A History

Jazz Age Phenomenon:

- Credited to Elsa Maxwell with the 1st one held in Paris, 1927
- A distraction for the New York elites
- Participants would receive a list of items to track down and return to the party without buying them such as a live squirrel, dance hall girl's shoe, etc.
- The hunts were followed by the news media like a big sporting event



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Scavenger Hunts – A History

Hunts Become Mainstream:

- Summer Camps, Schools, Party Games
- Institutional Traditions –
 - University of Chicago Scavenger Hunt runs annually since 1987 and includes building complex machines and conducting scientific experiments



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Scavenger Hunts – A History

Letterboxing:

- Started in 1854 in Dartmoor UK
- Low Tech – based on clues and maps
- Finders leave record in the log by using a unique stamp
- Find has its own stamp
- <https://www.letterboxing.org/>



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Scavenger Hunts – A History

Hunts Go High-Tech:

- GPS allows for specific locations and wide-ranging types of hunts
- Smartphones allow for mobile apps to assist in the hunt
- Augmented Reality allows for advanced games like Pokémon Go
- QR Code Hunts



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Scavenger Hunts – A History

Waymarking:

- Similar to Geocaching/Letterboxing but there is no cache just a notable landmark .

<https://waymarking.com/>



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Scavenger Hunts – A History

Hunts Go High-Tech - Geocaching:

- Originated using handheld GPS
- Coordinates posted online
- Find location by tracking to those coordinates

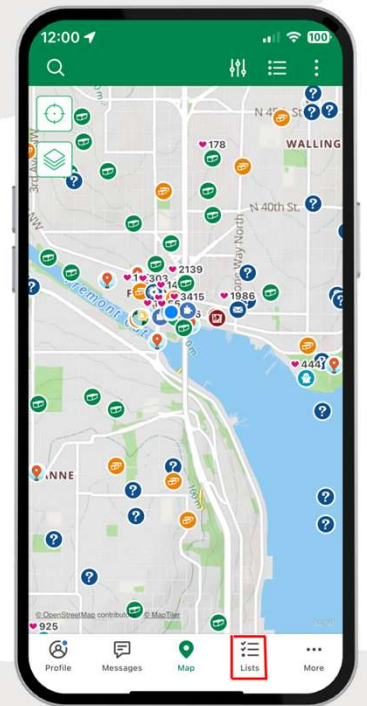


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Scavenger Hunts – A History

Geocaching History:

- Started in 2000 in Oregon
- Based on exact coordinates
- Find contains “Swag” that can be exchanged
- Equipment – Smartphone with app and a pen
- <https://www.geocaching.com/>



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The Geocachers' Creed:

When placing or seeking geocaches, I will:

1. Not endanger myself or others.
2. Observe all laws & rules of the area.
3. Respect property rights and seek permission where appropriate.
4. Avoid causing disruptions or public alarm.
5. Minimize my and others' impact on the environment.
6. Be considerate of others.
7. Protect the integrity of the game.



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Geocaching Terminology

Like anything else, Geocaching has developed its own jargon and acronyms

- **Muggles** – people in the vicinity of a cache who are not caching
- **Archive** – when an owner permanently removes a cache from the search results
- **Bug** (Travel Bug, Trackable) – a coded item that can be registered
 - **Non-Collectable** - moves from cache to cache
 - **Collectable** – finder keeps as a souvenir



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Geocaching Terminology

Like anything else, Geocaching has developed its own jargon and acronyms

- **TFTC** (Thanks For The Cache) – quick log entry
- **TFTH** (Thanks For The Hide) – quick log entry
- **BYOP** (Bring Your Own Pencil/Pen) – for small caches, you will need to bring your own way to sign the log
- **CITO** (Cache In Trash Out) – cachers are encouraged to carry out any trash they find in the area



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Geocaching Terminology

Log

- The physical record of everyone who has signed the geocache logbook.
- Also, the physical **logbook** inside a cache
- Also, the online record of everyone who has interacted with a geocache.
- Also, the online record of anyone who has interacted with a trackable.
- Also, the act of recording a find, as in, "I am going to log this cache".
- Logs record finds, DNFs, notes, requests for cache maintenance, etc.

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Geocaching Terminology

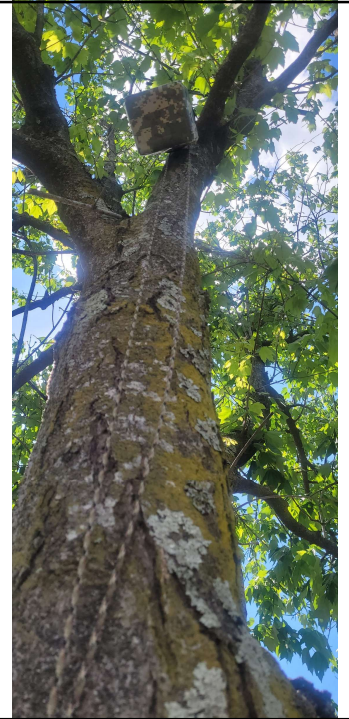
Like anything else, Geocaching has developed its own jargon and acronyms

- **TNSL** (Took Nothing, Signed Log) – quick elog entry (TNLNSL)
- **DNF** (Did Not Find) – quick elog entry 
- **FTF** (First To Find) – pride of place
- **GZ** (Ground Zero) – when you are standing where the GPS says the cache is located
- **Signal the Frog** – Official Mascot
- **WGS84** – World Geodetic System of 1984 is the set of conventions and data used by civilian GPS and Geocaching



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Cache Examples -



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Hide Your Own

"When you go to hide a geocache, think of the reason you are bringing people to that spot. If the only reason is for the geocache, then find a better spot."

briansnat, Charter Member

Read the guidelines thoroughly

<https://www.geocaching.com/play/guidelines>

This will save a lot of time during the review



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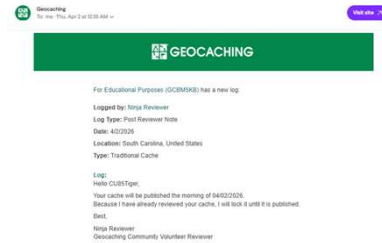
Placing Your Own Cache

Be prepared to revise your listing

Put it in a place that will be easy for you to maintain

Monitor the logs to see if there is an issue

Enjoy the comments!



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Let's Go Find a Cache!

- Download the Geocache App or find a friend with the app
- Open the App
- Can you find – For Educational Purposes Only?
- Let's Go!

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