

**B05: Bringing People Back To The Land And
Making It FUN!: Geocaching Events**

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Frontier Airlines Center
Room 203D

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Exploration 101:
Bringing People Back to the Land and Making it FUN!
Geocaching Events

A. Geocaching

1. What is it?

Geocaching is a type of location-based treasure hunt-style game in which players use personal, handheld GPS units to locate treasures, aka “swag”. Typically, swag is of no significant \$\$ value. The fun is in the experience of the “find”.

2. How can it help my organization?

Geocaching can be a singular sport, or the hunt can be shared by a family or group. Creating a geocaching event opens the door for potential members and /or volunteers to explore a land trust’s properties. That first connection with YOUR land might easily transition into membership and support, and from there, the sky’s the limit!

B. Setting Caches

1. containers

Waterproof, preferably animal-proof. Rubbermaid has containers with screw-on lids, Army/Navy Stores have ammo boxes. Whatever you choose for event containers, don’t forget your logo, slogan or identifying feature. Leave the “seekers” with good impressions.

2. swag

Westmoreland Conservancy uses cards for swag in our temporary caches. Business-size cards with information about the location or feature on one side, event date and information on the other.

3. property-savvy guidelines

Just as you want to protect sensitive plants and features from trampling and adjust trail accordingly, geocaching should be similarly addressed. Organizations should create guidelines governing caching on their reserves to protect special features.

C. Creating the Event

1. Community

Creating a “hometown” event generates support from within your own community. This is particularly helpful to localized land trusts. Larger area-encompassing organizations might choose to limit an event to specific areas so as to be manageable and focus on creating enthusiasm for a targeted project.

a. participation

Teaming up with other local community organizations creates an atmosphere of cooperation and promotes the potential for cross-membership. Invite them to represent themselves at the evening wrap-up and perhaps provide some of the refreshments. Also, invite local geocaching organizations. They add layers of information!

b. donations

Promote local business! Suggest that a restaurant be acknowledged for donating a gift card or food tray for the evening wrap-up. Be sure to keep track of any and all donations for your records and acknowledgements.

2. Publicity

NEVER underestimate the power of publicity! The more, the better! Focus on “Family”, “FREE!!” and “Fun!”

a. website/facebook

b. local media

c. geocaching.com

D. Benefits

1. Participant Rewards

Westmoreland Conservancy wraps up a full day of geocaching and related events with an evening picnic. It’s our way of thanking everyone for participating. We usually come away with several new members, many of whom become active volunteers for trail work days and even hike leaders. This is OUR reward, as described under (2). Having the opportunity to have everyone in one place to eat and talk enhances the overall experience.

a. Picnic

Caching With The Conservancy (CWTC) features a full day of localized geocaching, followed by a 5:30 picnic. This gives everyone the opportunity compare notes regarding particular locations or “hides” and generally enjoy one another’s company. It allows the CWTC committee to gather information for the next year’s event as well. And, this is the time during which we raffle prizes for the participants.

Geocaching is meant to be a free sport, so charging admission is a “no-no”. Obviously, providing for this picnic is NOT free, so CWTC seeks the following: Donations from local restaurants, covered dishes provided by members, and RSVPs due a week before the event. We ask that people let us know IN ADVANCE if they’ll be attending the picnic. That way we know how much food to provide. Most responders will offer to contribute. We also set out donation jars with a suggested \$5 donation per person.

b. "Treasure"

Traditionally, the items within cache containers are for trade: you take an item out and replace it with something of similar value. This is “swag”. The temporary caches set for CWTC are filled with cards as described in B.2. above. This allows for everyone to take one and bring it back to “home base”. For each card collected (and they may be kept) by the cacher receives a raffle ticket. The tickets can be put in jars for any of a number of prizes (restaurant gift cards, donated merchandise & equipment) which will be drawn publicly mid-picnic.

c. Affordable family time

“Family Time” should never be undervalued. Great memories of exploring the woods on a family quest never go away. Creating an event allowing families to share time for FREE is always going to be a draw, particularly in today’s economy. It’s not necessary to go out and buy a hand-held gps unit (although many do). Today’s “Smart Phones” usually have an “app” for that.

Remember also that geocaching is usually pet (dog)-friendly! (I haven’t seen cats or ferrets on leashes at our events, but I suppose it COULD happen!) Many take their dogs out to trek through the woods and gregarious, well-behaved dogs are rewarded at CWTC! Yes, we provide treats! We have had local pet-supply stores donate toys and snacks. Don’t overlook local groomers and service-providers for “treasure”!

2. Host Rewards

Benevolent as we might be, there still needs to be something in it for us!

a. Visibility

Having a high profile within your community is respectable. Think about raising it within your REGION!

b. Potential members

Growth is good. Goes without saying.

c. Potential volunteers

Need I say more??

Creating a link with Nature is fun, but also vital to the continued work of any land trust. Without that interest being nurtured, who will be protecting the land in the next generation?

Below is a list of links that we have found invaluable to creating CWTC:

Useful Resources

Content	Web url
Groundspeak geocaching newsletter	http://www.groundspeak.com/
Geocaching home page	http://www.geocaching.com/
Cache containers	http://www.cachingcontainers.com/
Geocaching and outdoor gear	http://www.cache-advance.com/
Pathtags	http://www.pathtags.com/
Geocoins	http://www.geocoinstore.com/
Wooden Nickels	http://adstuit.com/
Geocaching Dog	http://www.dogcacher.com/ http://www.thebark.com/content/geocaching-and-your-dog
Distinctive trackables, coins, pins	http://worldcaching.com/
Geocaching /Meetup Groups	http://geo.meetup.com/ http://www.geocaching.com/organizations/default.aspx