



GEOCACHING PLAYBOOK



GEOCACHING IS A REAL-WORLD, OUTDOOR TREASURE HUNT.

Participants navigate to a specific set of coordinates and then attempt to find a geocache (container) hidden at that location. There are millions of geocaches hidden around the world — there are probably some near you right now. With parent volunteers, GPS systems and this helpful guide; you and your troop can use this timeless activity as a fun tool in your recruitment efforts.

GEOCACHING + SCOUTING

What could be a more natural partnership than Scouting and geocaching? Pathfinding has been part of Scouting from its very beginning. With geocaching, you use GPS technology to navigate through an augmented compass and measuring system. This simple activity develops a sense of navigation and supports it with the accomplishment of finding sharing treasures. Most importantly, geocaching supports scouting's motto of "fun with a purpose," which is paramount to any Scouting activity.





GEOCACHING RECRUITING EVENT OVERVIEW

This playbook will act as your guide for planning, promoting, and carrying out a geocaching event in your area. Your chartered organization, troop, council or district will host a community event for parents and youth ages 11-17 to have the opportunity to learn how to Geocache, led by scouts who are members of the Scout BSA program. Through this simple interaction, you'll aim to share with parents the experience, friendships, and once-in-a-lifetime opportunities that Scouting can offer their children, especially in the outdoors. Scouting leaders, employees, and volunteers will be on-hand to support the scouts who will run the event, answer any questions, and of course, sign up new scouts.

All the details (supplies, snacks, instructors, setup, and promotion) will be taken care of by the troop, council or district.

PLANNING THE ACTIVITY

1. Set a Budget

Geocaching can be done inexpensively or totally free if you use established caches and participants use their own cell phones. You can either purchase or bring your own home-made trinkets that will serve as the treasure during the geocache hunt. Other costs to consider may include the following: event venue, food & drink, awards, and prizes, as well as other miscellaneous event costs.



2. Pick a location and Date

For a list of local geocache's around you, visit Geocaching.com and click on the "Hide and Seek A Cache" link. Enter a Postal Code or Address and click "Search". Choose your desired geocache's from the list.



3. Secure Materials

Materials Needed:

- GPS's
- Caches
- Maps
- Compasses
- Maps
- Compasses
- Maps
- Compasses
- Tables, & Chairs
- Recruitment flyers
- First Aid

PLANNING THE ACTIVITY (CONT.)



4. Provide Hospitality

Plan to have a meal service run throughout the event. Choose something simple such as hotdogs and snacks and be sure to have beverages such as coffee for the adults as well as water and juice for the youth. This is another great opportunity for the scouts in your unit to showcase their cooking skills.

5. Organize Staff and Volunteers

Like most things in Scouts BSA, this event will only work with the help of our dedicated volunteers and professional staff. Be ready with the Troop handbook, copy of the yearly schedule and showcase your website and social media platforms. Scoutmasters should be guiding scouts, as well as answering questions about the Troop program.

6. Safety

Follow all Youth Protection guidelines as outlined in the Youth Protection Training at www.my.scouting.org.

- Have a First Aid kit and someone certified in case of falls, sprains, cuts, etc.



PROMOTING YOUR EVENT

From digital to print; there are many various ways to get the word out about your geocaching event. We've made it easy by compiling some of our favorite tactics from over the years. Remember that these are just examples and to try and think in the context of your local community when promoting the event.



PROMOTING THE EVENT

Current Members

Be sure your current parents and volunteers are aware of the event and are invited to participate. A scout family that brings their friends to an event is one of the most powerful recruiting tools we have.

Social Media

Set up an event on your troop's facebook page. Be sure to promote the event on your council, district and troop's social media channels. Encourage parents and adults to do the same through their personal channels.

E-Mail

Reach out to your network digitally by sending them an email that promotes the event and includes links to learn more about Scouts BSA in their community.

Printed Materials

Go to <https://scoutingwire.org/scouting-tools/> for downloadable resources that can be customized for your council, district or troop event.





SETTING UP THE ACTIVITY

Be sure to read logs on Geocaching.com to be aware of any issues with the condition of the cache. Find the caches and check the log books to be sure there is adequate space to write. Put new pencils and extra swag in if the cache is big enough. Have proper signage ready including any safety considerations such as caution tape or fence to tape off areas full of poisonous plants, water hazards or other dangerous areas. If possible, the day before the event put up signs, lay out stations and deliver portable bathroom facilities (if needed).

HOLDING THE ACTIVITY

The event itself is organized into four different stations that families and their scouts will move through. Provide a scout or volunteer, with proper instructions, at each station to help keep the event moving. Volunteers should arrive early to set up stations with supplies, hang remaining signage and set up hospitality. Remember; this is fun and the environment should reflect that.

Station 1 – Check-in

At the check-in station, families will also be able to ask questions and receive additional information about Scouts BSA and specifically about units in their area if the event is held as a community event. Access to “BeAScout.org” and the unit locator feature will be very helpful to the parents and staff at this station.

Station 2 – Intro To Geocaching

Scouts in the troop who have earned the Geocaching Merit Badge and volunteers at this station will teach the youth and their families about geocaching, GPS usage, caching items, rules of Geocaching and how to begin. For instructions visit geocaching.com.





HOLDING THE ACTIVITY (CONTINUED)

Station 3 – Working a GPS

Scouts in the troop who have earned the Geocaching Merit Badge and volunteers at this station will teach the youth and their families about how to upload the Geocaching app to their smartphones or instruct them on using a GPS unit. Give each youth a chance to enter coordinates and learn to navigate the unit.

Station 4 –Ready-Set-Cache!

Once all of the steps above are completed — you're ready to geocache! Go ahead and team up participants to use the GPS's or those with cell phones can cache on their own. Send them off with all of their needed materials (swag, coordinates, etc.). You'll stagger start locations on the cards to avoid large groups at caches. Have a finishing station where participants can hand in their completed cards and receive a token such as a wooden coin, patch or sticker.



RECRUITING AT THE EVENT

During

As with everything in scouting, recruiting at the event itself should occur naturally and organically. Scouting isn't a sales pitch, but rather an opportunity to better the lives of youth in our communities. It's great to have all of recruiting material on-hand and provide opportunities to sign up - but remember to keep it light and informal.



After

Follow up is key. Send an email to new families thanking them for their time and sharing photos or recaps from the event. Create an Instagram hashtag for easy reference for parents and for them to upload pictures to as well. Every person who follows them will see your information too! Include an invitation to join the troop if they haven't already. The important thing is to follow up and ensure that those who have a desire to become part of Scouts BSA are able to do so.