
Title: **Geocaching**

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Purpose:

The purpose of this policy is to guide Wildlife Resources Division (WRD) staff on the allowable use of Division properties for the activity of geocaching.

Policy:

Geocaching is an outdoor, recreational waymarking or orienteering activity using GPS-enabled devices. Participants navigate to a specific set of GPS coordinates and then attempt to find the geocache (ammunition can/container) hidden at that location. If something is taken from the geocache (trading trinket) the rule is to leave something of equal or greater value. Players can log their find in a log book, and can keep score at geocaching.com. Every cache has a descriptive cache page on geocaching.com (or similar platform).

Geocaching is permitted on federally owned WMA's (Corps of Engineers and U.S. Forest Service) subject to federal regulations and guidelines.

Geocaching represents an outdoor recreational activity that is an appropriate and compatible use of most state-owned properties managed by the Division. In some instances, geocaching can be a natural resources-dependent recreational use. Additionally, this activity contributes to, or enhances, the public's understanding and appreciation of a property's natural or cultural resources, and can grow support for and awareness of the Division and our work. On leased properties managed by the Department, the allowance of this activity is subject to the lease agreement and where permissible this activity is subject to the conditions in Section C.

A. **Application of Policy**

Geocaching is permitted on state-owned WRD Wildlife Management Areas (WMAs) and Public Fishing Areas (PFAs) pursuant to the following conditions:

1. Geocaching is not allowed on WRD Fish Hatcheries.
2. Geocaches shall not be placed near or upon archaeological, historical, or ecologically/environmentally sensitive areas. If there is any question as to a geocaches location in this respect, the individual placing the geocache should consult with the appropriate Wildlife Resources Division region supervisor.
3. Geocaches should be hidden from plain view and in a manner that preserves the integrity of the natural resources. Geocache placement shall not exceed 100 perpendicular feet from a road or trail and shall not be hidden in a manner that requires an individual to harm plant or animal life. Geocache containers shall not be less than 1 quart in volume nor exceed the size of a 50 caliber ammunition box or container of similar dimensions.

4. Geocaches shall not be buried or attached to a post, tree, rock or other natural feature.
5. Challenge, puzzle, or gadget geocaches are not allowed. Temporary geocaches and night caching are not permitted.
6. Wildlife Resources Division retains final authority to approve whether geocaches are appropriate for an individual property and the locations of such geocaches on approved properties. Groundspeak, the governing body for geocaching.com, will coordinate with the Division to approve all geocaches and cache pages posted to their site. Groundspeak monitors and coordinates placement of the cache to ensure it is not too close to another and that it meets all requirements of the activity.
7. Geocaches and cache pages shall be monitored and maintained by the geocache owner.
8. Unapproved geocaches found on-site and/or those that do not meet the standards in this policy will be removed.
9. Geocaches shall not contain food, wildlife attractants, weapons, illegal substances, or items in violation of WMA/PFA regulations. Geocaches containing illegal substances shall be referred to the Department's Law Enforcement Division.
10. Organized events that charge a fee to geocache require a right-of-entry agreement between WRD and the event organizer.
11. Geocaching activity is prohibited during all quota and check-in hunts. Geocaching activity is also prohibited daily until after 10:00 AM during turkey season on WMAs. All geocache containers/cache pages shall be clearly marked with this information.
12. WRD Lands Pass requirements apply to all geocaching participants on applicable WMA's and PFA's. All geocache containers/cache pages shall be clearly marked with this information.
13. Geocache containers are required to be labeled as being a geocache along with the GC code and the owner's contact information.