

GEOCACHE ALASKA! Inc.

Exploring the Last Frontier • www.geocachealaska.org



Your ALASKAN based Geocaching Organization *“Exploring Alaska One Cache at a Time”*

**Please Join Us to Help Promote
Geocaching in Alaska!**

Visit: **GeocacheAlaska.ORG**

What We Do...



- ▶ Promote Geocaching as an exciting, family-oriented activity that increases awareness of our parks and trails
- ▶ Represent Geocaching interests in public forums and to recreation land managers
- ▶ Increase awareness of Geocaching issues through interaction with other outdoor activity groups and the public

What We Do...



- ❖ Educate Geocachers about low impact Geocaching and promote stewardship of our natural resources, parks, and trails
- ❖ Promote the "Cache In Trash Out" (CITO) program to help with the maintenance of parks and trail systems
- ❖ Encourage individuals and families to get outside and enjoy Alaska's outdoor recreational opportunities

What We Do...



- ✓ Provide opportunities for the Geocaching community to meet and socialize with like-minded Geocachers
- ✓ Maintain an extensive website with local caching information, as well as a lively forum for idea exchange
- ✓ Provide premium members access to extra benefits such as reduced prices on GeocacheAlaska! products and special events, and a free email address, while supporting costs of the website, forums and education

Join Us!



- ▶ Premium Membership is \$20 annually or you can sign up as an Associate Member for free to “try before you buy”
- ▶ Every Membership helps us towards achieving our goals!
- ▶ Membership applications are available online and from the hosts of this Event

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Earthcaching FUNdamentals III

by
Wes Skinner (NorthWes)



Anchorage and Valdez – Alaska

20 March 2014

Outline



- 1. What sets apart EarthCaches from the rest of the type of caches I hunt?
- 2. Logging your EarthCache experience (it's a journey of discovery with a test...)
- 3. Suggested log content – including those pesky photo requirements
- 4. Discover why National Parks have adopted EarthCaching on park lands
- 5. Concrete step by step illustration of how to submit an EarthCache
- 6. Where to go for more information

EarthCaches vs Others



- Virtual – Puzzle – Webcam – Letterbox – Regular Cache
These are caches humankind have hidden or created

- **Earthcaching:**  An Earth Science Lesson -
hunting for “treasures” the **Earth** has stored...

EarthCache Feature Types – based on Geologic Site Classifications:

Cave/Karst – Coastal – Erosional – Fault – Fold – Fossil Site –
Geomorphological – Glacial – Historical Site – Hydrologic –
Igneous (Plutonic) – Igneous (Volcanic) – Impact – Metamorphic –
Mineral Site – Mining Site – Other – River – Sedimentary – Structural

EarthCache Master - *by the Geological Society of America:*



- **Bronze:** Log 3+ EC in 2+ states/countries



- **Silver:** Log 6+ EC in 3+ states/countries & have developed 1 or more Earthcaches



- **Gold:** Log 12+ EC in 4+ states/countries & have developed 2 or more Earthcaches



- **Platinum:** Log 20+ EC in 5+ states/countries & have developed 3 or more Earthcaches



EarthCache Log Content:



- **READ** the cache page for logging requirements!
- Cache must **EDUCATE** you about **GEOLOGY**
- Make note of what you're to learn, observe, measure, identify, etc. **STUDY IN ADVANCE.** Pay special attention to tools needed at site
- Uniqueness of cache learning requirements **MAY INCLUDE** mandating a photograph
- You **MUST** email the cache 'owner' with answers as part of the learning experience or your 'found' log will be deleted



EarthCaches and National Parks




- More than 200 EarthCaches are found within America's National Park System
- First established at Acadia Nat'l Park, Maine
- Recognized as excellent learning tool in the Parks
- Established either by Park Staff, or by geocachers working in close coordination with Park Staff
- Denali National Park's extensive series of EarthCaches feature Park geological highlights



EarthCache



Development & Submittal

- Established in conjunction with Geological Society of America  THE GEOLOGICAL SOCIETY OF AMERICA®
- Now directly reviewed & approved from Groundspeak Special EC Reviewer Staff
- Submittal Form is on “Hide and Seek” tab’s “Report a New Cache” link at geocaching.com
- Just like submitting a regular cache, **except...**

Development & Submittal:



- EarthCache sites must provide Earth science lessons
- EarthCache sites must be educational - written to a reading age of a middle school (14 year old) student
- EarthCaches can be a single or multiple-point site
- EarthCaches must highlight a unique geological feature
- Follow the geocaching principles and adhere to the principles of Leave No Trace outdoor ethics
- Logging **MUST** involve visitors undertaking some educational task related to the Earth science at the site.
- All EarthCache sites developed **MUST** have **prior approval of the landowners** before submission



Development & Submittal:



- **From the detailed submittal guidelines:**
*When applicable you must have written approval with the appropriate owner or land-managing agency. The name and contact details of the person from who you received approval **MUST** be given at time of submission in the “Note to Reviewer”. The developed text should be sent to the landholder/manager for approval.*

Remember these 3 Principles:

- **Location** – make it memorable – dramatic – worthy
- **Lesson** – teach a major geologic concept that will be remembered for a lifetime – via the KISS principle...
- **Logging** – make sure the questions are clear



Development & Submittal:

- Commitment – Are you willing to take care of the cache indefinitely & answer finder email in a timely fashion?
- D/T – Rate accurately using Clayjar’s tool on gc.com
- Difficulty should be at least a 2, but remember this is a learning experience – NOT a puzzle!
- Have you listed accurate attributes for the EarthCache?
- Are your logging requirements ‘armchair-cacher’ proof?
- Have you ‘peer-reviewed’ and spell-checked your work?

Development & Submittal:



- **Find** EarthCaches *before* developing your own
- **Visit** EarthCache.org and scan the more than 11,000 EarthCache listings for ideas on style, presentation, questions, logging requirements, and cache page design – ***model excellence!***
- The world is our playground – let the Earth be our teacher. Your task is to take the visitor **beyond** reading signs and websites, into a learning interaction with our planet



Avoid the Most Common EarthCache Issues



- Provide an Earth Science lesson. Biological, ecological, or archeological features will not be published (Guideline #1).
- Properly attribute the source(s) of information on your cache page (Guideline #3).
- Provide the answers to your logging tasks (Guideline #6).
- Include logging task(s) that includes a field observation which help the visiting cacher learn about the geology/Earth Science lesson you are trying to teach (Guideline #6)
- Make your photo requirement(s) optional (Guideline #7).
- Provide the name, title, and contact details of the Land Manager who authorized this EarthCache (Guideline #8).

Resources



- **GeocacheAlaska! Education page:**
<http://www.geocachealaska.org/education.htm>
- **GeocacheAlaska! Related Links:**
<http://www.geocachealaska.org/relatedlinks.htm>
- **GeocacheAlaska! Forums:**
<http://geocachealaska.proboards.com/index.cgi>
- **Geocaching.com Resources:**
<http://www.geocaching.com/resources/default.aspx>
- **Geocaching Glossary of Terms:**
<http://www.geocaching.com/about/glossary.aspx>
- **Geocaching Knowledge Books:**
<http://support.groundspeak.com/index.php?pg=kb.book&id=1>
- **Geocaching.com Forums**
<http://forums.groundspeak.com/GC/>
- **Geocacher University:** <http://www.geocacher-u.com/>

Resources



- The Geological Society of America's EarthCache Program
<http://www.earthcache.org/>



- EarthCache Masters Program: <http://www.geosociety.org/earthcache/ecMasters.htm>
- EarthCache Submittal Guidelines (detail):
<http://www.geosociety.org/earthcache/guidelines.htm>
- EarthCache Knowledge Books
<http://www.geosociety.org/earthcache/knowbook.html>
- EarthCache Frequently Asked Questions
<http://www.geosociety.org/earthcache/faq.htm>
- Geocaching.com Forums – look for EarthCache listing:
<http://forums.groundspeak.com/GC/>
- Alaska Land Manager/Permit information:
<http://www.geocachealaska.org/landmanagers.htm>



Questions? Contact Advocacy Committee Chairperson, Randy Cler (Cavyguy)