Trackables FUNdamentals

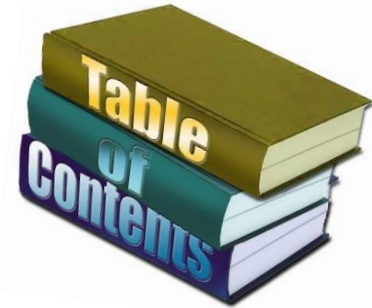presented by

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Tonight's Topics:

- ▶ What are Trackables?

- ▶ Types of Trackable Items

- ▶ Owning Trackables

- ▶ Moving Trackables

- ▶ Discovering Trackables

- ▶ Trackables Tips

What are Trackables?

- A uniquely serial numbered item that is registered in the Geocaching.com system

- Can be both physically and "electronically" placed into and picked up from geocaches

- The original trackable item from Groundspeak was the Travel Bug Dog Tag:

Travel Bug Trivia:

- Old Style TB had 6 Stamped Numbers

- New Style = Etched Letters and Numbers

What are Trackables?

- A Trackable item from Groundspeak has it's own listing webpage at Geocaching.com

- Just like a geocache, it gets a unique ID number and belongs to an individual geocacher

- Any geocacher can enter logs on a Trackable's page similar to entering logs for a geocache

- In order to "retrieve" or "discover" a Trackable, the geocacher must have the serial number to prove that they have actually seen the item

- For this reason, always keep this number secret

Types of Trackables

- The Travel Bug Dog Tag can be used all by itself, but it is designed to be attached to another object, aka a "hitchhiker"

- They are sold as a pair of tags; one is a copy that the owner keeps and the other is the original that is released to travel

- Sometimes the serial number is used on another item: For example, it can be written on a vehicle or printed on a T-shirt, hat, walking stick or backpack
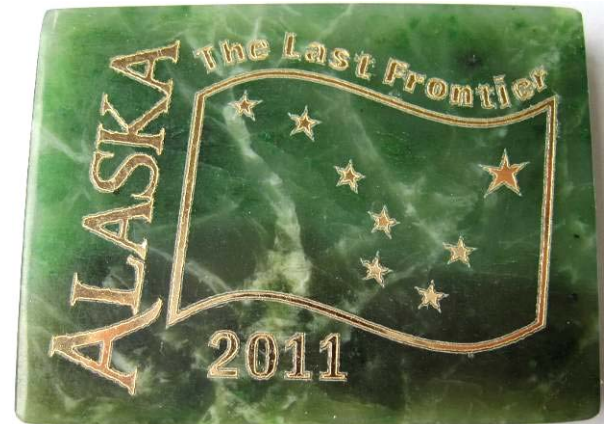
Types of Trackables

- A rapidly growing segment of trackable items is the Geocoin, which also bears a serial number

- There is no limit to the shape, size, and variety of Geocoins that are available out there

- Many Geocoins have a unique icon that is attached to your profile when you log the coin

Types of Trackables

- A number of other "dog tag" style trackables are also available from Groundspeak and others

- These have various characters and designs, but are all designed to be attached to other items

Trackable Proxies

- Due to the tendency for shiny coins to go missing, there are more and more "proxy" geocoins appearing in the wilds

- They may be laminated photo copies of the original coin or more permanent items such as the "stunt doubles" produced by GxProxy

Owning Trackables

- Purchased through Groundspeak or one of many Third Party vendors or Geocoin producers (e.g. Oakcoins, Landsharkz)

- A trackable item remains the private property of the registered Owner

- Keeping a trackable without the Owner's permission is stealing – *Move It or Leave It*

- Trackables must first be "**Activated**"

Activating Trackables

- The "Owner" of the trackable is the geocaching account that is logged in during the Activation process

- You need a special code from the vendor that must be entered to Activate the item

- Then you will be able to create the listing for the trackable that will be viewable by other geocachers when they find it

Activating Trackables

- Like a regular geocache listing, the Owner can edit the Trackable's listing at any time

- You can also add photos to the listing

- Do NOT include any photos where the Trackable's serial number is visible!

- Give your Trackable a **Specific GOAL**

- Goals can be nearly anything you can dream up, but keep it fun and doable

Trackable Goal

- Trackables without a specific goal often don't get as much attention or photos

- A Trackable with a well-defined goal that is clearly spelled out on both the online listing as well as durably attached to the Trackable, will often elicit more attention

- If you want photos, ask for specific photos in specific locations or with certain objects

Example Trackable Listing

This is the Owner's view of this listing.

Note that the editing options, actual serial number, and the ability to "Mark Item Missing" are available to the Owner, but not to any visitors.

Print Info Sheet Example

This is no ordinary geocaching trading item!

Alaskan Sled Dogs is a Travel Bug Dog Tag Travel Bug, traveling from geocache to geocache on a very specific mission.

If you do not intend to log your visit on the Geocaching.com web site, please DO NOT TAKE THIS ITEM. Its travels and its progress requires you to log that it is being taken from this geocache. You will also need to log when you place it in another geocache. It's easy!

If you are willing to log your part of this Trackable's journey and place it in another geocache as soon as possible (*after* you log your find), grab it from this geocache.

My Current Goal:

Travel cache to cache via the wilderness trails. I especially like the winter caches, but you've got to keep training through the summer time, too. Dog Sled, ski, snowshoe, snowmobile, hike, bike, or ATV those trails from cache to cache.

If you click the "Print Info Sheet" link in the Trackable Options list, you'll get a printable page that looks like this one.

This can be cut out and placed with the trackable item in a zip-baggie or laminated and attached via the ball chain.

Don't expect this sheet to last very long in the wild!

Example Trackable Listings

A visitor to a trackable page would have an options menu similar to this:

Trackable Options

- Found it? Log it!
- Watch This Trackable Item
- Print Info Sheet
- View in Google Earth

There are **4** users watching this listing.

Gallery Images

For DOGGONE

09/29/2011 — Dylan 1966

09/29/2011 — Dylan 1966

02/19/2011 — Cache - the geo-dog - on Christmas Eve 2010

02/19/2011 — Cache - the geo-dog - 3 months old

02/13/2010 — Magpie T. Crow playing in the snow near the cache

02/13/2010 — The Snowy Park

02/13/2010 — Magpie T. Crow w/ DOGGONE & the cache

02/06/2010 — Gold mine at the Lost River Cave near the cache

02/06/2010 — Magpie T. Crow & DOGGONE with the Lost River cache

12/24/2009 — Little Joe

12/19/2009 — "BEAR"

A sample of an image gallery from a TB with a Goal to post a favorite dog picture of a former best friend

TB218KK

Example Trackable Listings

This logbook shows the various log types:

Collecting Trackables

- What does "Collectible" mean?
- There are 3 classifications for Trackables
  - **Owned**: These belong to you, regardless of current location
  - **Inventory**: These are in your caching bag, traveling with you
  - **Collection**: These are "on a shelf" at home, out of circulation
- While editing the listing for your trackable, if you check the box "Make this Trackable collectible", then any cacher can move the item from Inventory to Collection
- In someone's Collection, the Trackable will not appear on the Inventory list in their profile or be available for placing into any geocaches while entering logs
- A Trackable can be easily moved back to Inventory if you want to start traveling with it again
- You must have the serial number to Move to Collection

Moving Trackables

- When you Retrieve a Trackable from a geocache, you'll need the serial number to Log it
- Record this number if you Drop the Trackable off prior to entering your logs, or you can't move it
- While you are viewing the geocache listing for where you picked up the Trackable, you should see it listed on the cache inventory (right side)
- If the Trackable is not shown in the cache, look at its listing to see if it is still in the inventory of the cacher who might have dropped it off and they just haven't entered the log online yet

Moving Trackables

- If the Trackable is shown in the cache where you picked it up, go ahead and log it using Retrieved From log type

- You will have to visit the Trackable's page in order to enter a Retrieved From log

- This will move it from the geocache listing into your personal Inventory

- If the Trackable is not listed in the cache, read through some older logs to see if it was just dropped off and not logged yet

Moving Trackables

- Give the other cacher a little time to enter their own log to Drop the Trackable
- If the Trackable is listed in any other place than where you picked it up, you may use the Grab It log type to update the location
- Generally, when you Grab a Trackable, you'll want to write in the online log where you found it (cache GC# and location)
- A Grab will move it to your Inventory

Moving Trackables

- It's a good practice to Dip any Grabbed Trackable back into the cache where it was found to get the mileage point fixed

- A Trackable accumulates mileage based on the distance between visited caches

- Missing Drops or Dips skews the mileage

- Dipping means to log the Trackable into a cache and then pick it right back up

- There are two methods of Dipping…

Moving Trackables

- The easiest method to Dip a Trackable is to simply select "Visited" in your Inventory list while you are entering your cache log

- A Visiting Trackable is automatically given the mileage point for the cache visit

- The old method of Dipping involved Dropping the Trackable into the cache while you entered your cache log

- Then you had to visit the Trackable's page and enter a separate Retrieved From log

Moving Trackables

- If you've already entered your cache log, or have previously found the cache, then you can still Drop or Dip any Trackables by entering a Write Note log on the cache

- It is perfectly acceptable to revisit caches simply for moving Trackables, just make sure that you use the Write Note log type

- For example, a Travel Bug Hotel is a cache intended to get lots of Trackables moving in and out with many repeat visits

Moving Trackables

- When you leave a Trackable in a cache, you must enter a log on the cache page and select "Dropped Off" next to the Trackable in your Inventory list, located below the text entry box

- Be prompt in entering a log when you Drop a Trackable as another cacher could have picked it up just minutes after you left

- Some will try to enter a Write Note log within a couple hours to Drop the Trackables off, and then come back and enter their Found It logs at a later time, when you're in a hurry

Discovering Trackables

- If you see a Trackable in a cache, but do not take it, you may record the serial number and enter a Discovered It log

- You will still get credit on your profile for the number of Trackables Moved or Discovered and add any custom coin icon

- This also lets the Trackable Owner know that their item is still safe and that it is still physically present in the listed cache

Discovering Trackables

- At Events, Trackables are often shared in a Show-and-Tell setting where people will write down the serial numbers and enter a Discovered It log after the Event

- If you do pick up a Trackable at an Event, please log a Retrieved From or Grabbed It log to move it to your own Inventory ASAP

- Events are scary to Trackable Owners as they often go Missing when picked up without anyone entering a Retrieved log

Missing Trackables

- The Trackable Owner or the Cache Owner where a Trackable is listed in Inventory can "Mark Item Missing" to change the location to Unknown

- This corrects the cache inventory so that it does not show missing Trackables

- Cache Owners should check their cache inventory listings periodically and move Trackables to Missing as needed

- You can Grab a Missing item, if found

Missing Trackables

- If you visit a cache and find that a listed Trackable is not in the cache, please mention this in your cache log for the benefit of the CO

- Also, consider entering a Write Note log on the Trackable to let the Owner know it is not in the cache where it is listed (no serial # needed)

- After a reasonable amount of time with logs stating the item is Missing, either the Cache Owner or Trackable Owner can then move the Trackable to the Unknown location

- Trackables have been known to sneak into the bottom of cache packs and pop up months or years later and move thousands of miles

Trackable Tips

- Respect the Goals and always move a Trackable toward its listed Goal

- When taking photos of Trackables, either hide the serial number while taking the picture or black out the number afterward

- Never post photos that show the number or write the number in the physical logbook or in your online log entries

- You may use the TB# as a reference

Trackable Tips

- Try to move any Trackable that you pick up within two weeks if you can

- If you will hold a Trackable more than that, Write Note to the Trackable or send the Owner a message to let them know

- Ask permission before doing anything unusual with a Trackable, such as sending it through a Stargate, mailing it, or making any repairs or modifications to it

Trackable Tips

- Avoid placing Trackables in caches that have a high risk of being Muggled

- Do not place Trackables in extremely remote caches that get few visitors

- Avoid trapping Trackables in caches that will soon be inaccessible due to winter

- Move Trackables often and Dip them into all the caches you visit in between pick up and finding the right place to Drop Off

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- Your paid *Sourdough* Membership is appreciated
- Please visit our online Forums and post something; a question, tip, geocaching story, or just feedback on other topics

Please… Join Us

How could you possibly say no?

Resources

- Geocaching.com Trackables Page:
www.geocaching.com/track

- Groundspeak Help Center:
support.groundspeak.com

- GeocacheAlaska! Forums:
geocachealaska.proboards.com

- Geocoin Information Page:
www.geocaching.com/track/geocoin.aspx