

# GEOCACHING for the CUB SCOUT PROGRAM



How to use geocaching to promote Cub Scout  
Recruiting, Retention and Public Relations

by  
Mary E. Stevens, PhD



# GeoScouting®: Geocaching for the Cub Scout Program



*“Bagheera showed him a square box...so cunningly hidden in the jungle.”*

- Rudyard Kipling, *The Jungle Book* 1894

**Mary E. Stevens, PhD**

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- ❖ Leave No Trace [www.LNT.org](http://www.LNT.org)
  
- ❖ Geocaching guidelines
  - Guide for Finding Caches  
<http://www.geocaching.com/about/finding.a.spx>
  - Guide for Hiding Caches  
<http://www.geocaching.com/about/hiding.a.spx>
  - Guide for Posting Caches on Geocaching.com
  - Guide for buying a GPS units  
<http://www.geocaching.com/about/buying.a.spx>
  - Glossary of Geocaching terms  
<http://www.geocaching.com/about/glossary.aspx>

## References and Useful Website links

### **Books:**

- ❖ Geocaching for the Boy Scout Program
- ❖ The Boy Scout Handbook
- ❖ The Boy Scout Fieldbook
- ❖ National Youth Leadership Training Syllabus
- ❖ The Tiger Cub Handbook
- ❖ The Wolf Handbook
- ❖ The Bear Handbook
- ❖ The Webelos Handbook
- ❖ Geocaching to Promote Scouting
- ❖ The Complete Idiot’s Guide to Geocaching
- ❖ Geocaching for Dummies

### **Websites**

- ❖ General resource information  
[www.GeoScouting.com](http://www.GeoScouting.com)
- ❖ The Geocacher’s creed <http://geocreed.info/>
- ❖ Geocaching description  
<http://www.geocaching.com/faq/>
- ❖ Cache In Trash Out  
<http://www.cacheintrashout.org/>
- ❖ <http://www.bsafieldbook.org/>

## About the Author

Dr. Mary Stevens has been involved in Scouting since 1986. She has been a Tiger Cub Leader, Den Leader and Webelos Den Leader before moving into Boy Scouting and Venturing (where she is currently a Scoutmaster and Crew Advisor). She is on the Marin Council Executive Committee and Board, and has served as VP of Program and VP of Membership and Relationships.

Mary brought the sport of geocaching to the forefront in the BSA. She began by proposing and then creating the Geocaching Event at the 2005 Jamboree, and expanded this in the 2007 World Scout Jamboree. As creator and Chair of Technology Quest at the 2010 Jamboree, she worked with Geocaching.com to bring geocaching to 44,000 Scouts. She has written a National Supplemental Training module on geocaching and developed geocaching courses for Philmont and the Florida Sea Base as well as a session at the National office for incoming BSA professionals. She was on the National Advanced Youth Leadership Experience and led the Philmont Leadership Challenge design team, creating the geocaching module for these courses. She helped create the Geocaching Merit Badge pamphlet. She and her husband travel around the country helping other councils bring the value of GeoScouting into their program.

As a scientist, Mary worked in education for 16 years, including developing a genetic engineering course for middle school students before moving to an executive role at Bayer Corporation. Now retired, she is an avid geocacher with thousands of “finds”. She continues to geocache under the handle “mousewiz” along with her husband Brad (“scoutboy”). She and Brad have created the website [www.GeoScouting.com](http://www.GeoScouting.com) to be used as a global resource by Scouts and Scouters from any program area.

## Forward

Welcome to geocaching with your Scouts!

Geocaching is a wonderful sport for Scouts. It takes them outdoors, on adventures and they get to find prizes. But it is so much more than that!

You can use this simple sport in so many ways to help your Scout, his Den and Pack, the public AND to help the Boy Scouts of America. Simply going outside to find publically hidden geocaches is a healthy alternative to TV and video games, and many public caches have a great deal of interesting background information and/or beautiful locations to discover.

But we take this further – to GeoScouting®. GeoScouting is simply Geocaching combined with Scouting to showcase the value of both programs. For example, if we highlight the sport of using Geocaching with Scouts for service, to help the youth advance, or to help recruit other youth to join your great Pack or Den, that GeoScouting® is at its best.

This book is not designed to be the ultimate geocaching guide. There are many great sources of information on that topic and we don't need to reinvent the wheel. The purpose of this book is to introduce ways to use the sport for Scouting. We have some general information to help the beginning Scout or Scouter get acquainted with geocaching but the main value is in the Scout related ideas and games.

Please use this book to do your best to get kids outside, to improve your Den or Pack, to help others, and most of all to have FUN!

Mary Stevens aka “mousewiz”

### **Travel bug®**

This is an item that travels from cache location to cache location. It has a trackable number written on a metal tag so that you can record on the geocaching.com website where you picked it up and where you dropped it off. Travel bugs often have a “mission” – like getting to a certain state, or visiting National parks.

### **UTM**

The "Universal Transverse Mercator" coordinate system. UTM uses grids overlaying specific areas of the Earth's surface and divides the Earth into 60 zones.

### **Virtual (cache)**

A virtual cache is a cache that has no container, but that exists in a form of a location that you visit, find out information and send that information to the cache owner to get credit for the find. These are no longer allowed as new caches but many still exist.

### **WAAS**

WAAS stands for Wide Area Augmentation System, and is a combination of satellites and ground stations that increase GPSr accuracy.

### **Watch List**

A watch list is a list of users that are watching a specific travel bug or cache.

**Waypoint** – A waypoint is a reference point for a physical location on Earth. Waypoints are defined by a set of coordinates that typically include longitude, latitude and sometimes altitude.

## Reviewer

Volunteers from all over the world who check new listings for a variety of issues (for example making sure the cache follows the guidelines) and then publish the cache listings on geocaching.com.

## Signature Item

An item unique to a specific geocacher that is left behind in caches to signify that they visited that cache. These often include personal geocoins, tokens, pins, craft items or calling cards.

## Spoiler

A spoiler is information that gives away the location of the find.

## SWAG

SWAG stands for 'Stuff We All Get' and refers to the toys and other trade items in a cache.

**Terrain** – how hard is the cache to get to. If you can get there in a wheelchair, it is a rating of 1. A 1 rating means flat and easy and not too far. A 5 rating probably means you shouldn't do it as it will likely require special equipment, like SCUBA gear or mountaineers ropes.

## TFTC

TFTC stands for "Thanks For The Cache", which is often written in logs. Other acronyms include TFTH (Thanks for the Hide)TNLN (Took Nothing Left nothing, TNSL (Took Nothing Signed Log)

## Traditional Cache

The original cache type consisting of a container and a logbook.

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## Letterbox(ing)

Letterboxing is similar to Geocaching, but you use a series of clues to find a container. Once you find the container (or letterbox), you use the stamp from the box, stamp your personal logbook and return that stamp to the letterbox. Do not take the stamp, it is not a trading item. You then use your own stamp and stamp the letterbox's logbook. See [www.letterboxing.com](http://www.letterboxing.com) for more information.

## Log-In Name or “Handle”

When you sign up for a geocaching.com account to use the public website, you need to create an ID to use as your geocaching name or “handle”. Pick a name you like and if its not already taken, that will be who you are to the rest of the geocaching community!

**Marking a waypoint** – This is how you put a location into your personal GPS unit. If you are standing still, you will be at a specific latitude and longitude. If you go to the screen that says “mark” or “mark waypoint”, it will add these coordinates into the list in your GPS memory. That way you can come back to this same exact spot later.

**Muggle** – someone who doesn’t know about the sport of geocaching. When you are looking for public geocaches you want to be careful that people don’t see what you are doing, as they might just take the cache. When someone has broken into a cache and ruined it, that is called “being muggled”.

## Multi-Cache (offset Cache)

A multi-cache (“multiple”) involves two or more locations, the final location being a physical container.

## Mystery or Puzzle Caches

A cache that involves a puzzle that you will first need to solve to determine the coordinates.



## **GC Code**

The code assigned to public geocache listings. Each one is unique.

## **Geocache**

A container hidden at specific coordinates that includes, at minimum, a logbook for geocachers to sign.

## **Geocaching**

Geocaching is a worldwide game of hiding and seeking treasure.

## **Geocoin**

Geocoins are trackable coins with unique ID numbers engraved on them. They can be collected or travel the world from cache to cache.

## **GeoScouting**

Term and website dedicated to the synergy between geocaching and scouting. See [www.GeoScouting.com](http://www.GeoScouting.com)

**Go to** – The entry in your GPS unit that will take you to the screen with the compass arrow

## **GPS**

GPS stands for Global Positioning System. It is a system of satellites that work with a GPS receiver to determine your location on the planet.

## **GPSr**

A GPS receiver.

## **Ground Zero (GZ)**

The point where your GPS device shows that you have reached the cache location. In practice, you almost never reach true “Ground zero” with zero feet remaining. The “Bee Dance” starts when you approach ground zero..

## **Hide**

Hide is a shortcut term for a cache that is hidden.

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**Clue or Hint**

Clues (or hints) give the person seeking the cache a bit more information to help find it. The cache name, part of the description or an official hint can all be clues. We recommend you always leave a hint. Hints for geocaches are encrypted on Geocaching.com using a simple format where each of the letters are rotated 13 characters up or down in the alphabet.

**Decryption Key**

A|B|C|D|E|F|G|H| I| J| K| L|M

N|O|P|Q|R|S|T|U|V|W|X|Y|Z

(letter above equals below, and vice versa)

**Difficulty**

A ranking system used by geocaching.com to describe how hard is the cache to find. A cache that is easy and can be found quickly will be a 1 for the easiest to find whereas a cache that is really well hidden is a 5 (hardest)

**DNF**

Did Not Find. An acronym used by geocachers to state that they did not find a cache. If you get many DNF logs in a cache you won, time to check on it!

**EarthCache**

An EarthCache is a cache that promotes geoscience education. For more information about EarthCaches, visit <http://www.earthcache.org/>.

**Event Cache**

Events are gatherings set up by local geocachers and geocaching organizations to meet players and to discuss geocaching.

**FTF**

First to Find. An acronym used when logging cache finds to denote being the first to find a new geocache.