

Geocaching is Hot in Michigan!

Geocaching is an exciting new adventure in the Michigan outdoors. *Written by Dean Combs, an avid Michigan geocacher.*



The sport of geocaching is a relatively new sport that has quickly become a favorite among outdoor enthusiasts.

The first cache was placed May 3, 2000 in the State of Oregon by Dave Ulmer, as an experiment using the Global Positioning Satellites (GPS) that had been opened to selective availability. It has rapidly caught on and there are now close to 1 million caches placed around the world. Michigan with its great outdoors has become a hotbed with approximately 15,500 caches available to cachers. From the

UP to metro areas all have caches placed in them.

Personally, living in northern Michigan, I have close access to caches in places from The Pigeon River State Forest area to the cities of Petoskey, Cheboygan, and Gaylord. For instance, a search for caches in my zip code produces 435 caches, within a 25 mile radius. My name for it is "The Great Adult Easter Egg Hunt".

Who does caching? Caching ages are inclusive from children to retiree, caching is a true family sport. The caches seeked usually contain what is called "swag". Swag is a term that covers anything in a cache from a small child's toy to travel bugs. A lot of swag is geared toward the younger set, children really get a kick out of finding a cache. One photo is a cache in an ammo box being placed. The other photo is of a cache found. The cache placer used a Tupperware container for that one.

The idea is when you find a cache you may take an item and replace it with one of your own items. When trading items cachers should remember equal value, you then sign the cache log to record your visit. Then go to "Geocaching.com" and record your find and comment about your find, how your day caching went, general comments about the day. As with other sports, we have abbreviated responses **TNLN** - took nothing left nothing, **SL** - signed log, **TFTC** - thanks for the cache, plus many more. In addition, when you find a cache that is in need of maintenance (water leak, etc) you also report that so the cache owner can take care of it.



Geocaching is a relatively inexpensive sport, Internet access and a GPS receiver (available at local retailers) are the only items needed. For cache coordinates, go to "Geocaching.com" and

follow their search directions to locate caches near you or to an area you may be visiting. Seasoned cachers even load caches into their GPS units that are near a route they are taking while driving to a vacation spot. The beauty part of caching is there are no restrictions on time or accompaniment. If today, you “want to be alone” have at it. Tomorrow you may feel differently. There are numerous groups formed, some formally and others who simply have a passion for geocaching. These groups at times sponsor bashes or Mega Events that bring a number of cachers together to do their favorite thing - geocaching. I am a member of a group that sponsors a bash each year, usually in September. A statewide organization, “[Michigan Geocaching](#),” also sponsors programs and events for geocachers. I would suggest that you take a look at the two websites “already noted” and sign in so you can receive up to date information for events and goings on in the Geocaching world.

Now let’s go caching!