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The Leave No Trace Seven Principles for Geocaching

Plan Ahead and Prepare

- Know and comply with the geocaching policies of the land owners or land management agencies where you wish to seek or place caches.
- Prepare for your trip with proper equipment and clothing for the weather, terrain and environmental conditions, and for emergencies.
- Be safe. Let someone know where you will be going and when you expect to return.
- Know how to use your GPS. Carry extra batteries, a map and compass as backup.

Travel and Cache on Durable Surfaces

- Travel on designated trails and roads. Comply with posted signs.
- If permitted and you must travel off-trail, choose durable surfaces such as rock, sand, gravel and dry grass, and spread out to avoid creating new paths.
- Use maps to find a route that will minimize impacts. Note waypoints during your journey to assist you on your return trip.
- After you've finished searching for a cache, the area should look as though you were never there.
- Do not place a cache in sensitive locations such as fragile vegetation or soils, critical wildlife habitat, wetlands, lakeshores, alpine areas or caves.
- Do not place a cache in special areas such as designated Wilderness Areas, Wild and Scenic River Corridors or near historic and cultural sites.
- If you notice a path has started to wear in the vicinity of a cache, notify the cache owner to move the cache.

Dispose of Waste Properly

- Cache In Trash Out. Carry an extra trash bag for trash, leftover and dropped food, and litter left by others.
- Use established bathrooms when available. If not available, deposit solid human waste in catholes dug 6 to 8 inches deep at least 200 feet from water sources, campsites, trails and caches.
- Pack out toilet paper and hygiene products in a double plastic bag.

Leave What You Find

- Preserve the past: observe, but do not touch, cultural or historic structures and artifacts. Never use artifacts as cache items.
- Leave rocks, plants and other natural objects for others to enjoy.
- Practice the “lift, look, replace” technique – if you lift a rock to look under it, replace it exactly as you found it.

Minimize Campfire Impacts

- If you plan to have a fire, know the fire regulations and current guidelines for the area you plan to visit.

Respect Wildlife

- Observe wildlife from a distance. Do not follow or approach them.
- Never feed wild animals. Feeding wildlife damages their health, alters natural behaviors, and exposes them to predators and other dangers.
- Protect wildlife and your food by storing rations and trash securely.
- Never leave food of any kind in a cache. Wildlife may find and destroy the cache and may be harmed by consuming food wrappers.
- Respect wildlife when traveling to and from cache locations. Avoid locations where there is significant traffic from wildlife, such as water sources.
- Keep pets on a leash for their safety and the safety of wild animals. Consider leaving pets at home.

Be Considerate of Other Visitors

- Be courteous. Yield to other users on the trail.
- Take breaks on durable surfaces away from the trail.
- Let nature’s sounds prevail. Avoid loud voices and noises.
- Geocaching is one of many outdoor recreational activities. Respect the rights and experience of other visitors.
- When traveling to and from caches, take notice of private property signs and don’t trespass.
- The future of geocaching lies in the hands of geocachers. Practice the principles of Leave No Trace.

For more information on Leave No Trace, please visit www.LNT.org or call 1.800.332.4100.

Mission

The Leave No Trace Center for Outdoor Ethics teaches people how to enjoy the outdoors responsibly.

About the Leave No Trace Center for Outdoor Ethics

The member-driven Leave No Trace Center for Outdoor Ethics teaches people of all ages how to enjoy the outdoors responsibly, and is the most widely accepted outdoor ethics program used on public lands. As the leader in sustainable recreation practices, the Center is training a nation of outdoor advocates to put Leave No Trace principles into action. Through relevant and targeted education, research and outreach, the Center will ensure the long-term health of our natural world. www.LNT.org.