Geocache Challenge

Girl Guides of Canada, Newfoundland and Labrador Council

Background:

Geocaching is a real-world, outdoor treasure hunting game using GPS-enabled devices. Participants navigate to a specific set of GPS coordinates and then attempt to find the geocache (container) hidden at that location.

Objectives:

The Newfoundland and Labrador Geocaching Challenge is designed to get Girls & Guiders to learn about geocaching and GPS technology in a fun way.

To get you started, there is some information included about the history of Geocaching, types of geocaches and how to search for, find, and set up geocaches. There is also information about trackables and how to use a GPS for geocaching.

If there are no geocaches in your area, set up a few for the girls to find using a GPS. Be sure to remove them after completing the challenge. This type of hide can be done using the guidelines found at www.geocaching.com *Note: Caches set up for a geocache hunt meeting can be temporarily set up without being logged.*

There are many sites available to learn how to use a GPS. If you have a particular brand, Garmin, Magellan, etc. go to that website. For general usage notes information can be found here.

Challenge Requirements:

To earn the Geocaching Challenge crest, complete all sections of the challenge for your branch. When you have completed the required activities, crests can be ordered by emailing Provincial Office (nl-provoffice@girlguides.ca). Crests are priced at cost, $1.25 each.

Please share your feedback to the NL Programing Facebook page.

Branch	Section A	Section B
Sparks Do all activities	**Learn about Geocaching & GPS units -When did it begin?** - What are the different types of geocaches?	**Go Geocaching...** - Find a geocache in your neighbourhood and log your finds onto www.geocaching.com.
Brownies & Guides Do all of Section A **and** 2 from Section B	**Learn about Geocaching & GPS units -When did it begin?** - Who created the term geocaching? - Where is the very first geocache located? - How do GPS work?	**Go Geocaching...** - Find two different types or sizes of caches in your neighbourhood. Log each of your finds onto www.geocaching.com. - Learn how to create and maintain a geocache **or** - Learn about a trackable (geocoin or travel bug) using www.geocaching.com, look at the history to follow where it has traveled, what are its goals, if possible find a trackable in your area and move it to a new location.
Pathfinders Do all activities in both sections	**Learn about Geocaching & GPS units -When did it begin?** - What is Selective Availability and why was getting rid of it important to geocaching? - Where is the very first geocache located? - How do GPS's work?	**Go Geocaching...** - Find at least three different types or sizes of caches in your neighbourhood. Log each of your finds onto www.geocaching.com. - Learn about a trackable including its goals and where it has traveled, if possible find a trackable in your area and move it to a new location. - Create a geocache with your Unit and post it OR send out a trackable into the world and track its progress on www.geocaching.com.
Rangers & Adults Do all activities in both sections	**Learn about Geocaching & GPS units -When did it begin?** - What is Selective Availability and why was getting rid of it important to geocaching? - Where is the very first geocache located? - How do GPS's work?	**Go Geocaching...** -Find at least three different types or sizes of caches in your neighbourhood. Log each of your finds onto www.geocaching.com. - Create a geocache with your Unit and post it OR send out a trackable into the world and track its progress on www.geocaching.com. - Create a geocache hunt meeting for a local Spark, Brownie, or Guide or Pathfinder Unit. *-OPTIONAL*: Send out your own trackable item or create your own geocache.

A Brief History Of Geocaching:

The Global Positioning System (GPS) originally known as the Navstar Global

Positioning System was first launched in 1978 and was designed, built, and is operated by the U.S. Department of Defense. By the mid-1990s the system was fully operational with 24 satellites, and about the same time the first commercial GPS units became available on the market.

The Department of Defense didn't want their technology used against them so they instated a process called Selective Availability, where they introduced some "noise" into satellite signals, which affected satellite signals and reduced their accuracy to only about 15 meters. May 1st, 2000 President Bill Clinton decided to turn off Selective Availability, which made commercial GPS units accurate up to about 3m.

On May 3rd, 2000, Dave Ulmer, hid the first geocache in the woods near Beaver Creek, Oregon, near Portland (N 45 17.460 W 122 24.800) and posted it on an internet GPS users' group. It was a black bucket with a logbook, pencil, and various prizes. Mike Teague, the first person to find Ulmer's stash, began gathering the online posts of coordinates around the world and documenting them on his personal home page. The "GPS Stash Hunt" mailing list was created to discuss the emerging activity.

The term Geocaching was first coined by Matt Stum on the "GPS Stash Hunt" mailing list on May 30, 2000. Jeremy Irish, a web developer for a Seattle company, after stumbling upon Mike Teague's web site in July decided to create a tool to improve the cache-hunting experience, and on September 2nd, 2000 www.Geocaching.com was launched. As of February 2016 there are 2,776,441 active geocaches and over 15 million geocachers worldwide. The world has truly become a geocachers playing field!

How is the game played?

At its simplest level, geocaching requires these 8 steps:

1. Register for a free membership at www.geocaching.com
2. Visit the Hide & Seek a Cache page.
3. Enter your postal code and click "search."
4. Choose any geocache from the list and click on its name.
5. Enter the coordinates of the geocache into your GPS Device.
6. Use your GPS device to assist you in finding the hidden geocache.
7. Sign the logbook and return the geocache to its original location.
8. Share your geocaching stories and photos online!

There are many other levels to the game. Read the guide at www.geocaching.com to learn more!

Types Of Geocaches:

There are 6 basic types of geocaches that you can create.

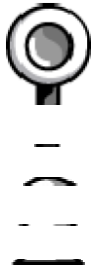|	
	### Traditional Geocache This is the original type of geocache and the most straightforward. These geocaches will be a container at the given coordinates. The size may vary, but at minimum, all of these geocaches will have a logbook. Larger containers may contain items for trade and trackables.
	### Multi-Cache These geocaches involve two or more locations, with the final location being a physical container with a logbook inside. There are many variations, but typically once you're at the first stage, you will receive a clue to the whereabouts of the second stage. The second stage will have a clue for the third, and so on.
	### Mystery or Puzzle Caches The "catch-all" of geocache types, this type may involve complicated puzzles that you will first need to solve to determine the correct coordinates. Mystery/Puzzle Caches often become the staging ground for new and unique geocaches that do not fit in another category.
	### EarthCache An EarthCache is a special geological location people can visit to learn about a unique feature of the Earth. EarthCache pages include a set of educational notes along with coordinates. Visitors to EarthCaches can see how our planet has been shaped by geological processes, how we manage its resources and how scientists gather evidence. Typically, to log an EarthCache, you will have to provide answers to questions by observing the geological location. For more information about EarthCaches visit http://www.earthcache.org/.
	### Event Cache An Event Cache is a gathering of local geocachers or geocaching organizations. The Event Cache page specifies a time for the event and provides coordinates to its location. After the event has ended, it is archived. (*Tip - Could be done as a Guiding event.*)

Cache In Trash Out Event (CITO)

	### Cache In Trash Out is the environmental initiative supported by the geocaching community. The main aim of this program is to clean up and preserve the natural areas that we enjoy while geocaching. These events are larger gatherings of geocachers that focus on litter clean-up, removal of invasive species, planting trees and vegetation and trail building. *(Tip - Could be done as a community service project.)*

Grandfathered Cache Types:

These are geocache types that are still available to find, but no longer available for creation on Geocaching.com. The reasons for why each of these types was retired varies.

	### Virtual Cache A Virtual Cache is about discovering a location rather than a container. The requirements for logging a Virtual Cache vary—you may be required to answer a question about the location, take a picture, complete a task, etc... In any case, you must visit the coordinates before you can post your log. Although many locations are interesting, a Virtual Cache should be out of the ordinary enough to warrant logging a visit.
	### Webcam Cache These are geocaches that use existing web cameras that monitor various areas like parks or business complexes. The idea is to get yourself in front of the camera and save a screen capture from the website where the camera is displayed in order to log a find.

Trackables:

Trackables are a special type of object found within geocaches that contain unique tracking codes and have special missions they are trying to complete, which another geocacher has released for others to find. They are not to be kept, but instead discovered, logged and moved to another geocache!

There are two main types of trackables: travel bugs and geocoin. Travel bugs resemble dog tags and are usually attached to small objects. Geocoins resemble coins though there are many variations.

Travel Bug

Geocoin

How To Create And Hide A Geocache:

1. Search for existing geocaches before trying to create your own and hide it. Try to find a variety of cache types and sizes in various terrains and locations and covering the spectrum of difficulty levels. This will allow you to determine which things work well and help you form wise choices in this endeavor.

2. Pick the type of geocache to set up. While the traditional caches might be the first that come to mind to set up, EarthCaches are a great idea to set up to encourage others to visit a geological feature, Event Caches can be done as a one-time Guiding event, and the Cache In/Trash Out could be set up as a community service project.

3. Find a good spot for your geocache. A quality geocache will be hidden near something of natural, human, historic, or scenic interest or at least at the end of a pleasant walk. Try to make it a place that people would enjoy visiting even if the cache wasn't there.

4. Make certain geocaches are allowed there. If it is private property, obtain permission from the land owner. Some park systems require permits and some do not allow geocaching, so check with park management to make sure geocaching is allowed, and then obtain a permit if required.

5. Select an appropriate container. Geocache containers should be waterproof and durable. A good seal is important, because, if water leaks in, the cache will be ruined.

6. Label the outside. Clearly labeling your container as a geocache and with the proper contact information may reduce the chances of your cache being reported as a suspicious package.

7. Stock the cache. Include a letter explaining what it is, just in case a non-geocacher finds it. Also, if the geocache is large enough, include a logbook, a pen or pencil and trinkets for finders to trade out. Keep cache contents family friendly and do not include food or scented items. (Tip – Your local dollar store should have everything you need to set-up a geocache.)

8. Hide your cache. Your cache is more likely to last if you choose a low traffic area where it is not likely to accidentally be discovered and where searchers won't be spotted. Please make sure your cache location doesn't damage any wildlife, public or private property.

9. Use your GPS to obtain the coordinates. Make sure you have a good satellite signal, and then let your GPS settle at the cache site for a minute or two before marking. Check your owners' manual for the section on how to mark a waypoint if you don't yet know.

10. List and maintain your cache. Units can decide if they want to post their cache on www.geocaching.com so other geocachers can obtain the coordinates. Consider maintaining your cache for the rest of the Guiding year as a service project or program requirement. Once posted, be ready to respond promptly to reported problems such as missing containers and wet or full logbooks. However, once you place a cache you don't need to maintain it forever. If you lose interest or are unable to maintain it, remove your cache and archive the listing.

Program Connections:

Wondering how the activities in the Newfoundland and Labrador Geocaching Challenge fit into the Girls First Program? Below are the connections between the Challenge and the Girls First Platform Program. If you find other connections to your program, please feel free to give your girls credit for them. This is not a comprehensive list, feel free to apply your activities to other parts of the program as you see fit. Remember that each activity you complete can accomplish multiple parts of the program.

If this event is organized by a District or Area, then the activities will involve bridging and count for program requirements.

All Branches:

Guide Together:
- **Camping and the Great Outdoors**
- **Spirit of Guiding**

Experiment and Create:
- **Design Space**

Into The Outdoors
- **Nature Discoveries**
- **Camping Skills & Adventures *(why not tackle outdoor cooking and compass work for added programming?)***