

Welcome to Geocaching and a little about letterboxing!

The sport where YOU are the search engine™

www.geocaching.com

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for GSEM Leader's Great Escape 2014

and

Girl Scouts Tarheel Triad Council Keyauwee Program Center

What is Geocaching?

- GPS users use coordinates to find caches.
- Once found, the geocacher may:
 - Take something from the cache
 - Leave a small trinket for the next geocacher
 - Sign the logbook
 - Return the geocache to the same location where it was found.
- The 'find' is then logged onto geocaching.com where statistics about found and hidden caches are maintained.



What is Geocaching?



- A geocache is placed at an interesting location, often in the woods but there are “urban” caches which can be fun as well!
- The geocache is hidden from view but is NEVER buried.
- GPS - Global Positioning System



What is Letterboxing?



- Letterboxing is similar to geocaching in that you are looking for a physical box
- You use instructions and a compass to find the box
- Letterboxers have their own personal log book or journal with blank pages.
- Letterboxers also carry a personal handmade stamp and an ink pad
- The letterbox will have a handmade rubber stamp and letterbox log book
- Stamp their stamp in your book and your stamp in their book

How Did it Get Started?

- On May 1, 2000, the GPS signal degradation called Select Availability (SA) was removed and the change allowed GPS units owned by civilians to now be accurate to within as close as 6 feet.
- Someone who letterboxed thought...hmmm maybe you could do something similar with the GPS
- On May 3rd, the first cache was hidden in Oregon. It was visited twice within 3 days and logged in the log book once.
- Mike Teague, the first to find it, built a web page to document the 'caches'.
- Jeremy Irish, the current operator of the Geocaching website, expanded the idea and named it *'geocaching'*.

So, What's the Point?

- It can be deceptively simple or extremely hard!
- It's FUN!
- Some may require searching, experience or even special equipment like four wheel drive!
- You may find interesting places right outside your door you didn't know existed!



So, What's the Point?



- Sometimes just getting to the cache area can be a big part of the adventure.
- It's one thing to see the latitude and longitude plotted on a map, but it can be quite a task to figure out how to get from here to there.

So, What's the Point?

Geocaching can be thought of in two parts:

- The journey to reach the cache area.
- The challenge of actually finding the cache container.

Both can be equally rewarding!



What are we Searching For?



- A geocache container needs to be weather-resistant and animal-proof.
- A regular size cache will have a log book and pen, as well as small trinkets for geocachers to trade.
- Microcaches may not even be big enough to hold a pencil – so bring your own!
- Look for deceptive items like bird houses, electrical boxes, and other objects that don't seem to belong.



What are the Rules?

These are general rules followed by geocachers around the world.

- No caches on land maintained by the U.S. National Park Service or U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (National Wildlife Refuges)
- No caches that are buried.
- No caches placed on archaeological or historical sites.
- No caches placed on private property without land owner permission.
- No caches close to active railroad tracks. 150 feet minimum.
- No caches on military installations.
- No caches near or under highway bridges, dams, government buildings, or airports.
- No caches on school property without permission.

What are the Rules?

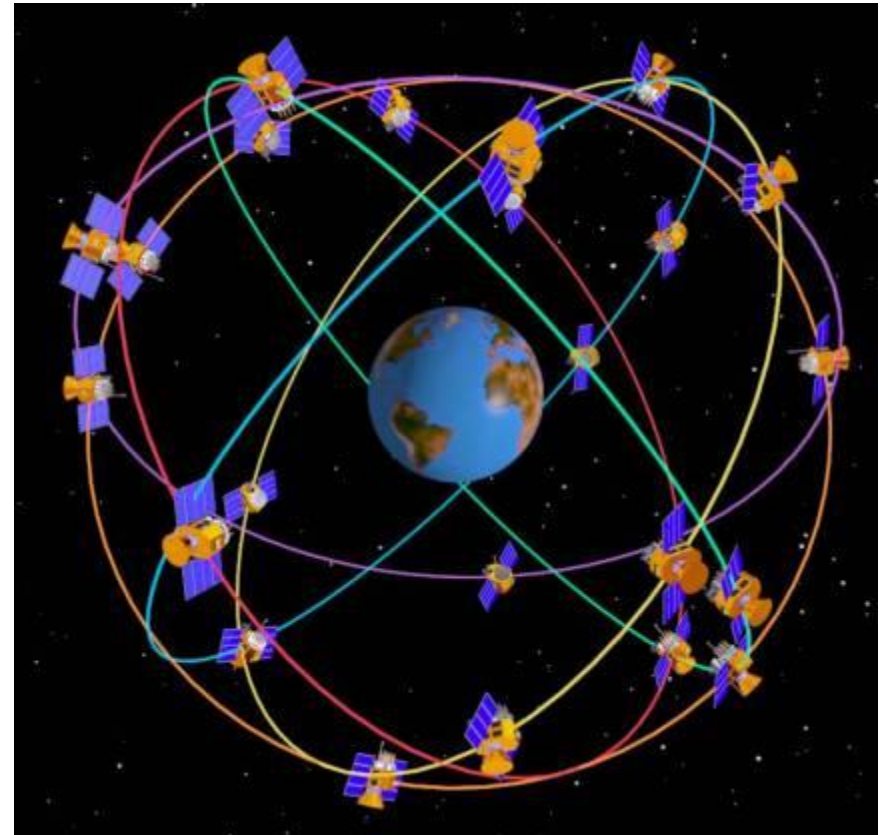


ALL geocaches in the world should follow these simple rules:

- No food
- No weapons (knives, ammunition, explosives)
- No drugs or alcohol
- No adult materials
- No solicitations (business, religious, political)

What is a GPS?

- A GPS (Global Positioning System) unit is an electronic device that can determine your approximate location (within 6-20 feet) almost anywhere on the planet.
- A GPS uses a system of 27 satellites (24 active, 3 reserve) to calculate your position.
- The GPS receiver can 'see' at most 12 of the 24 satellites at any one time.
- Smart phones have both free and pay apps that allow you to geocache



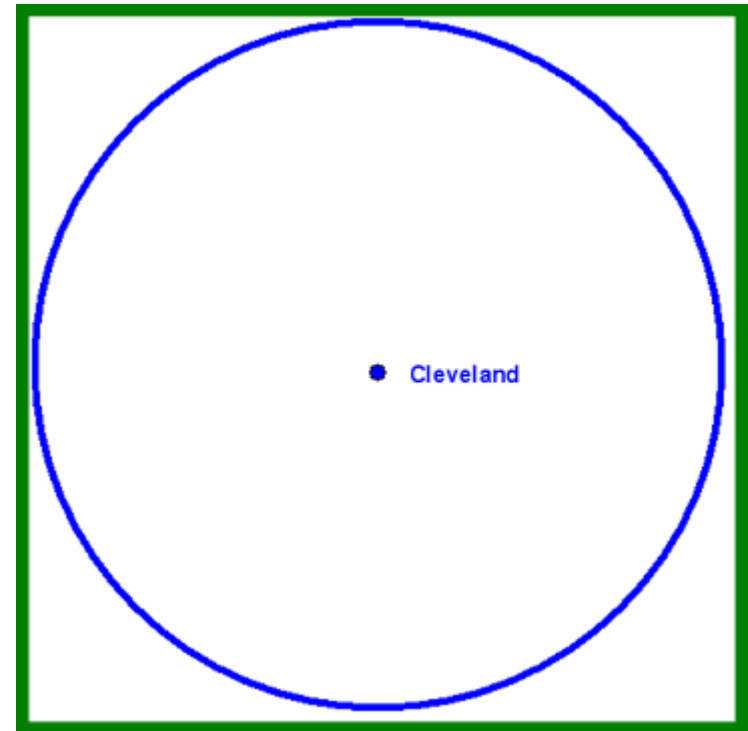
Uses for GPS receivers

- Hiking and backpacking
- Canoeing and marine navigation
- Hunting and fishing
- Bird watching
- Search and rescue
- Exercise progress tracking
- Traveling via car, motorcycle, or bicycle
- **Geocaching!**



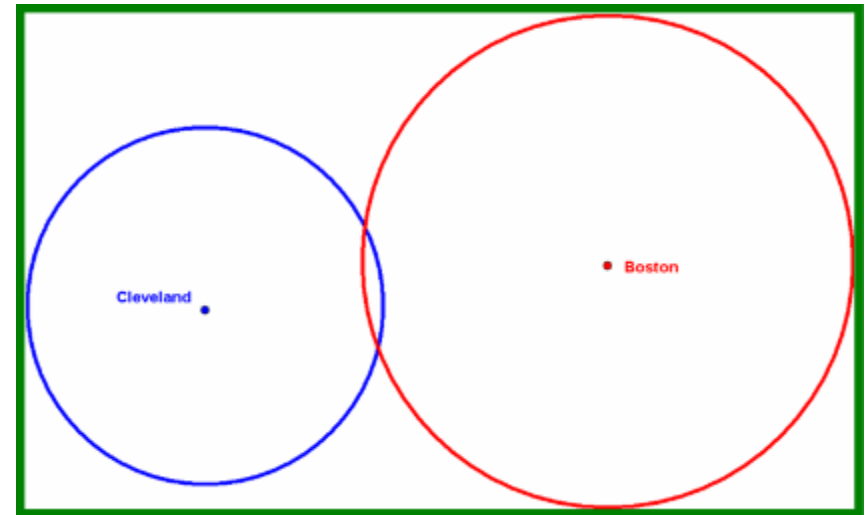
How do GPS devices work?

- Let's say you don't know where you are but a passerby tells you that you're 238 miles from Cleveland.
- That puts you anywhere on the perimeter of a circle around Cleveland!



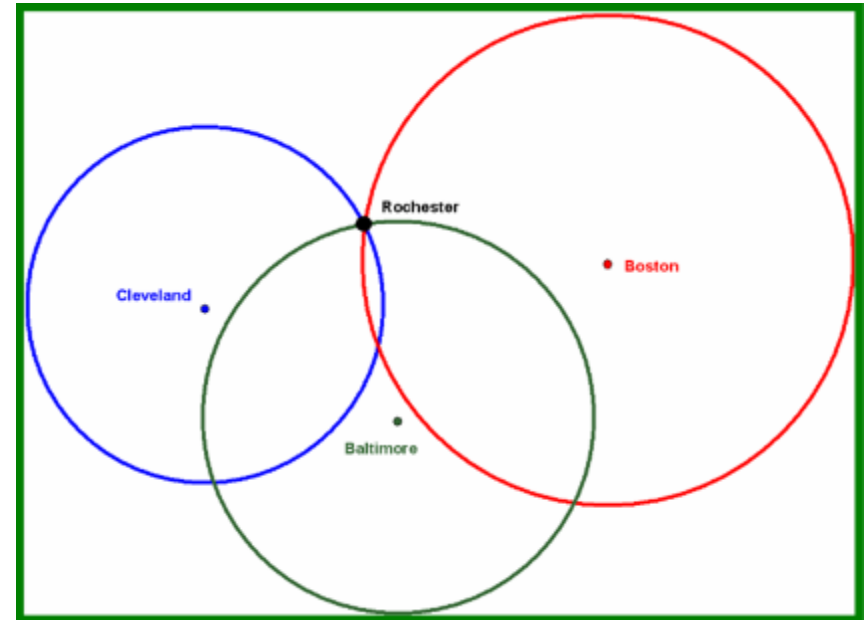
How do GPS devices work?

- Another passerby stops and tells you you're 340 miles from Boston.
- So not only are you on the perimeter of the circle around Cleveland, but around Boston too.
- There are now only two possible locations for you to be!



How do GPS devices work?

- Finally, someone stops and tells you that you're 272 miles from Baltimore.
- You now know right where you are!
- You're in Rochester, because that is where all three circles intersect.
- This is called "triangulation" and it illustrates the point that your GPS must "see" at least 3 satellites to figure your location.



Helpful Hints

- Follow marked trails for as long as possible.
- Read descriptions and hints, many caches are found without leaving the trail at all.
- Watch the terrain and always be aware of your surroundings.
- Follow guidelines in Safety-Wise for hiking and interacting with the public.
- Think about the places where a geocache might be hidden, but never blindly reach into a hole or crevice. You should always use a stick to gently poke around just in case an animal has chosen that spot for a home!
- You know you're getting close to the geocache when the arrow starts leading you in big circles or your distance to the waypoint is within 40 or 50 feet. This is the time to put the GPS in your pocket and start using your eyes!

Helpful Hints

- Start easy – your first few finds should be regular sized caches. Finding them will build your skill.
- Like any other outdoor activity – take a well stocked daypack with water, a flashlight, and other survival gear.
- Always have a basic NON battery operated compass with you.
- Cache in and Trash out.
- Leave the cache with better goodies than you found
- Don't get discouraged and read the hints if you need them!

Help! I Think I'm Lost!



- If you get lost, don't forget that you marked (or should have marked) your location when you started.
- Search for the Starting Waypoint you marked, select GOTO, and head back to civilization!
- Don't forget to take well-charged & extra batteries with you!
- Let someone know your general plans for caching for the day and when you expect to be back.

Misconceptions About Geocaching

“Geocaches are buried.”



- **FACT:** Geocaches are *not* allowed to be buried in the ground.

Misconceptions About Geocaching

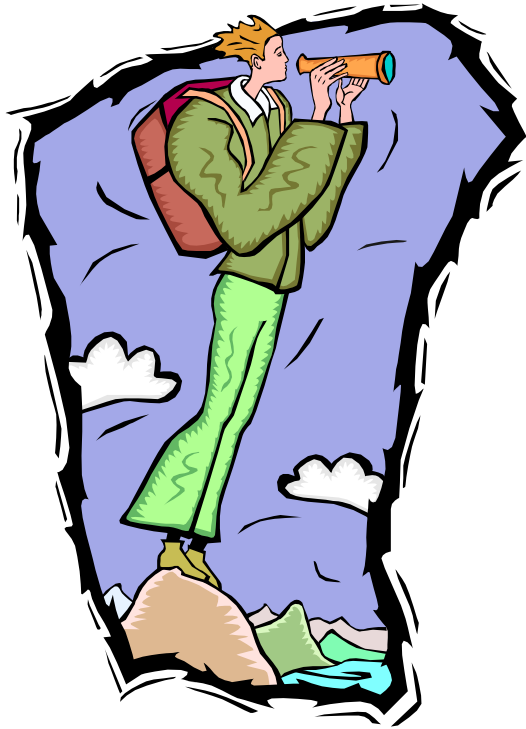
“Geocaches are litter or abandoned property.”



- **FACT:** Geocaches are not litter or abandoned property.

In fact, most geocachers follow the motto “Cache In, Trash Out” and carry a small trash bag with them on their geocaching adventures to pick up any litter they might find along the way.

Misconceptions About Geocaching



“Geocaching will damage the land.”

- **FACT:** Geocaching foot traffic is similar to hiking, trail walking, or bird watching.

Most caches are placed on or near trails and require little bushwhacking.

Geocaching & Girl Scouts



- GSUSA had an Interest Project for older girls called “Hi-Tech Hide & Seek” through Studio 2B once upon a time
- Other Girl Scout Councils like Ohio, have good programs you can often use and buy badges from
- You can often borrow or rent multiple same GPS units from places like REI and Middle Schools are increasingly using them in their math and science programs

Basic GPS Features



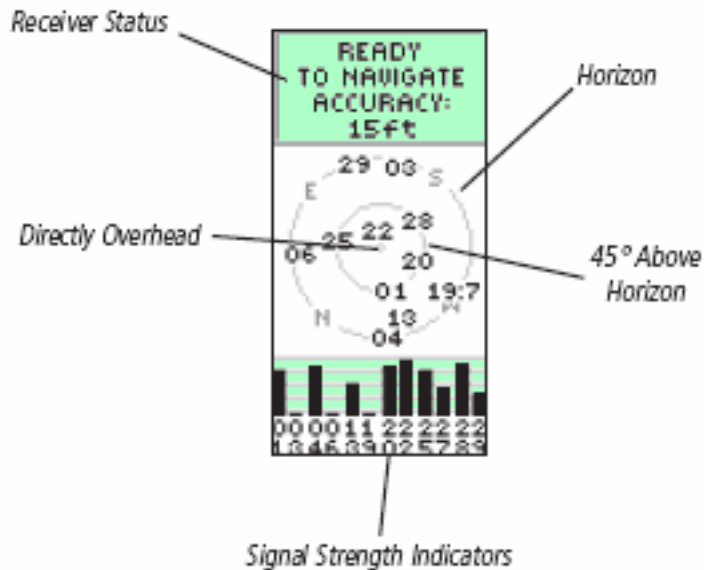
- This is a basic tutorial on the Garmin e-trex legend GPS receiver
- Other GPS units will have different controls and features. Please familiarize yourself with the GPS you'll be using on your geocaching adventure.

Basic GPS Features



- Press the Power button and hold for 1 second to turn it on.
- Press again to turn the backlight on.
- Press again to turn the backlight off.
- Press and hold several seconds to turn the unit off.

Basic GPS Features



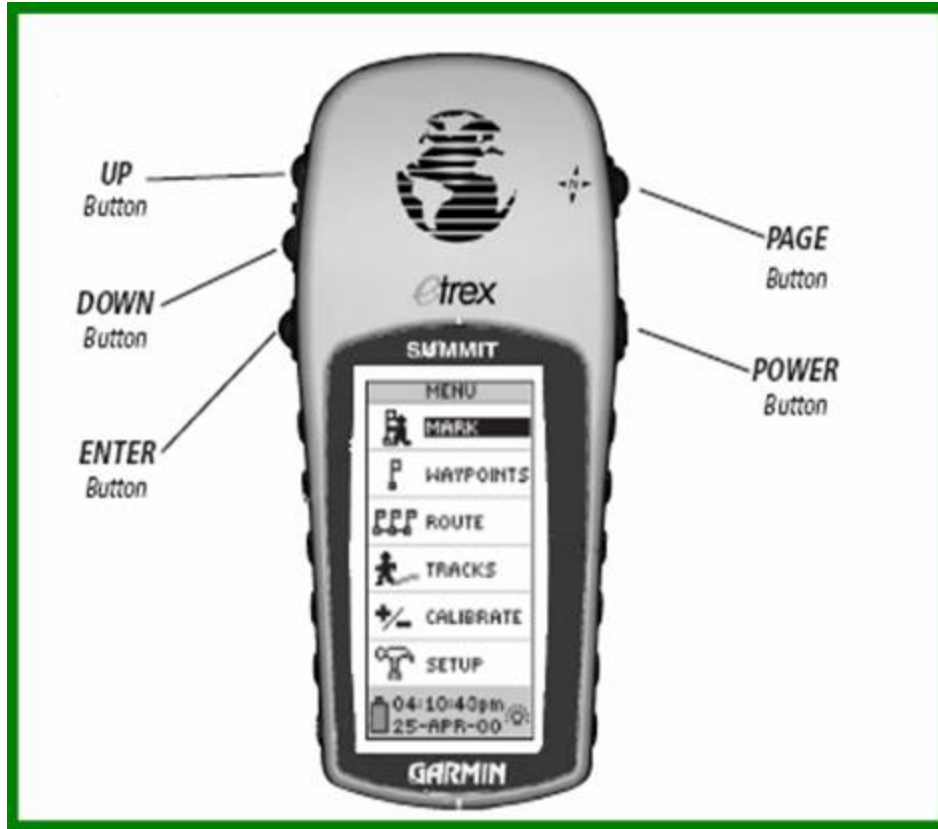
- After powering it up, the unit will attempt to 'lock' onto the satellites.
- You must be outdoors with a clear view of the sky to get a signal. Keep this in mind if you're trying to go geocaching on an overcast day or in really densely wooded areas.
- Once locked on, you're ready to navigate!

Basic GPS Features



- The first thing you ALWAYS want to do is to mark your starting location (CAR).
- Press and hold the Enter button until the Mark Waypoint window appears.
- Use the Up/Down buttons to move to the various fields. Then press Enter when you're at the OK field. You can name your starting point from here too.

Basic GPS Features



- To locate a previously stored waypoint, use the Page button to get to the Menu page.
- Use the Up/Down buttons to move down to the Waypoints category and press Enter.

Basic GPS Features



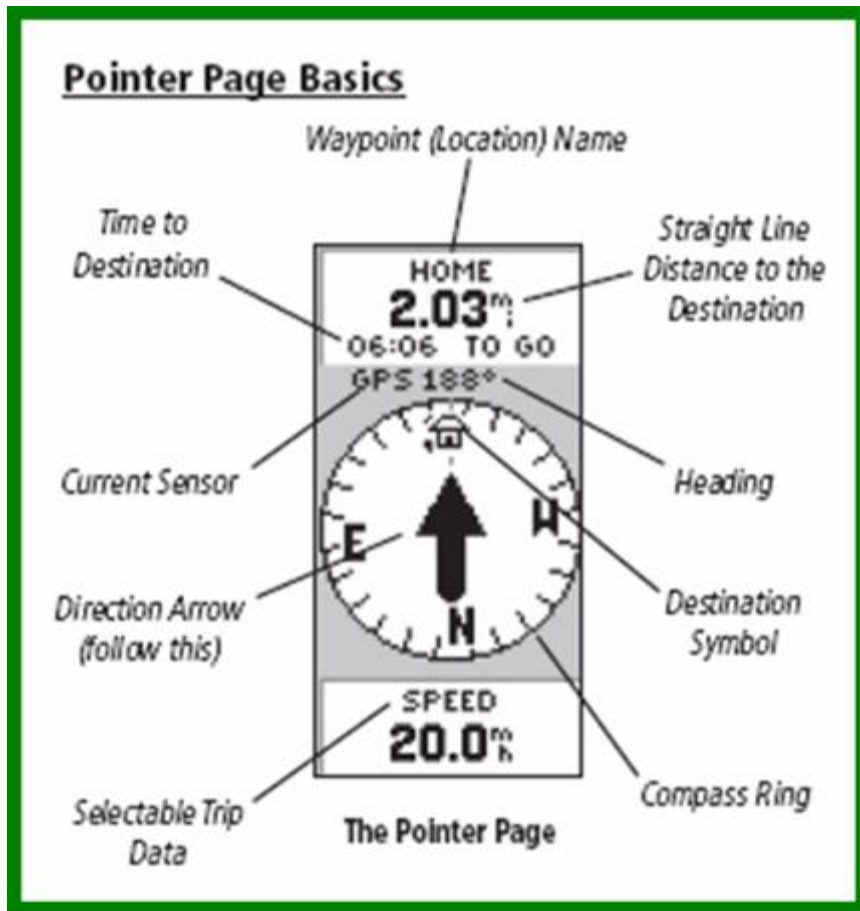
- Then, using the Up/Down buttons, move down to the desired Waypoint Group and press Enter.
- Now move down to the desired Waypoint and press Enter.

Basic GPS Features



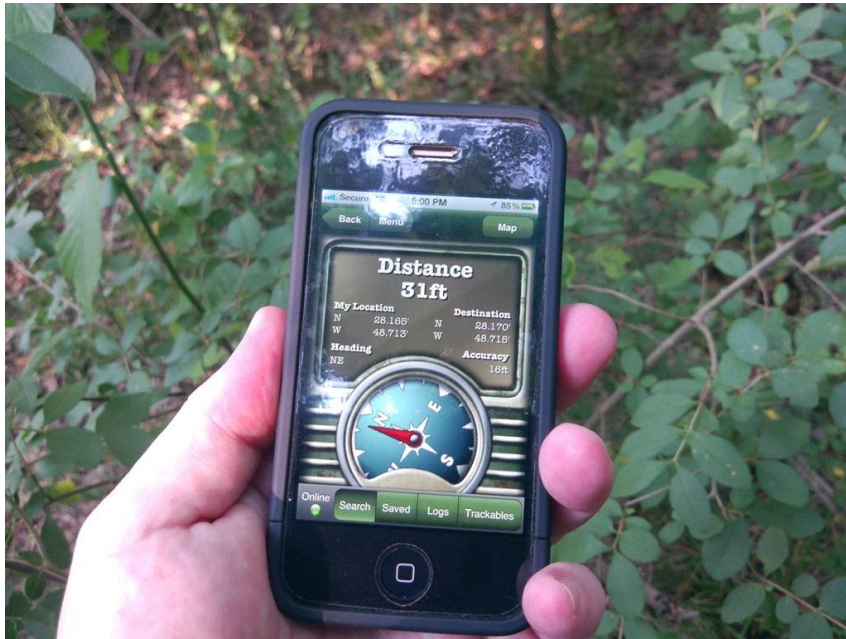
- Now you can either use the selected waypoint or you can edit it.
- To go to the waypoint, move down to the GOTO selection and press Enter.

Basic GPS Features



- The GPS unit now displays the basic Pointer Page.
- This page is used to navigate to the chosen waypoint by following the pointer arrow.

Using your Smart phone



- C:Geo is a free phone app.
- Geocaching.com has a pay app.
- Watch your battery consumption – your phone should also serve as an emergency device.

Resources

- More detailed information about geocaching can be found at the official site: www.geocaching.com
- www.letterboxing.org is your reference point for letterboxing
- Stamping supplies include linoleum cutters and rubber by speedball. Art supply places like Blick or Amazon are your best bet.



The text is surrounded by five decorative circles. The top row has three circles: a white circle with a light green outline, a solid light green circle, and another solid light green circle. The bottom row has three circles: a solid light green circle, another solid light green circle, and a white circle with a light green outline.

Happy Geocaching!

Good Luck and Have Fun!

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