

JUNE 30, 2003

Park Directive 3220

GEOCACHING -
ARKANSAS STATE PARKS AND MUSEUMS

Geocaching, also known as GPS Stash Hunt or GeoStash, involves “hiding” items, usually containers holding various “treasures” and then providing specific Global Positioning Satellite (GPS) coordinates for each “cache” on a website. Visitors to these websites can choose which “cache” they would like to locate using their own personal GPS device. Cache searchers typically bring along their own “treasures” and make an exchange once the cache has been located.

Virtual Caching involves locating not a cache, but a specific landmark, feature, park sign, etc. These should be encouraged at State Parks and Museums in lieu of physical caches. However, neither geocaching or virtual caching will be permitted at Conway Cemetery, the Herman Davis Memorial, Jenkins’ Ferry, Lake Fort Smith while under construction, the Louisiana Purchase, Mark’s Mill, Parkin, Poison Springs, Prairie Grove Battlefield, the South Arkansas Arboretum, or Toltec Mounds State Parks.

Procedures concerning geocaching in Arkansas State Parks and Museums are as follows:

I. CACHE PERMITS

- A. Placement of a cache on Department property must be secured with a permit. Any cache located on park / museum property that does not exhibit the required affixed permit number is unauthorized and is subject to removal from its location and the owner subject to fines.
- B. The person applying for a permit must provide a valid address, telephone number, email address, driver’s license number, and the website address on which the cache will be posted.
- C. The exact location of the cache must be pre-approved by the Park Superintendent / Museum Director, whose main concern will be public safety and the prevention of undesirable impacts to natural, historical, and cultural resources.

- D. The exact cache location, including GPS coordinates, must be stated on the permit.
- E. All permits will be in effect for a period of twelve (12) months. The exact starting and ending dates will be recorded on the permit. Upon expiration of the initial permit, at the permit holder's request, a cache permit may be extended for up to twelve (12) months.

NOTE: If, during the effective period of a permit, a permit holder wants to change the location of the cache, a new permit must be issued and the effective permit cancelled.

- F. Upon expiration of a permit, the permit holder is responsible for removing the cache and for removing the cache location from all websites and any information source.
- G. If the permit holder fails to remove the cache, it will be removed by park staff and held for ten (10) days, after which staff will dispose of the cache. Confiscation and disposal by park staff will be recorded in an incident report.
- H. If it is determined that a cache has been the cause of adverse environmental damage, the cache may be removed by the Park Superintendent / Museum Director or designee, and the permit cancelled.

II. CACHE CONTAINERS AND CONTENTS

- A. Cache containers must be non-breakable, have some form of latch or other closing mechanism to prohibit content exposure to wildlife, and must be approved by the Park Superintendent / Museum Director or designee.
- B. Each cache container must have an identification label affixed to the outside identifying it as an approved cache and containing the permit number and expiration date.
- C. Caches may not contain inappropriate or dangerous items. Such items include, but are not limited to, food, medications, personal/hygiene products, pornography, weapons of any type, etc. Log books are encouraged in Arkansas State Parks / Museums, over exchange items.
- D. All caches are subject to random inspection by Park Superintendents and Museum Directors. Park staff has the authority to immediately remove any item held in a cache deemed unacceptable or that is violation of this policy.

III. CACHE LOCATIONS:

- A. Physical caches are prohibited inside any state park / museum facility or structure.
- B. The location of a cache must be pre-approved by the Park Superintendent / Museum Director or designee.
- C. Caches may not be placed in locations that may lead to the creation of spur trails.
- D. Caches may not be buried, nor may vegetation or stones be disturbed to place a cache.
- F. Caches may not be placed in dangerous, inappropriate, or protected areas and habitats, on cliffs, underground, or underwater.
- G. Metal detectors may not be used in cache searches.

IV. COMPLIANCE

- A. Failure to comply with this policy directive will result in the revocation of effective geocaching permits. Continued failure to comply with these guidelines will prevent the issuance of any further geocaching permits to the non-compliant group or individual.
- B. If geocaching activities as a whole are found to have a negative impact on park resources or if safety becomes an issue in geocache searches, the Park Superintendent / Museum Director may ban geocaching from certain areas or from the entire park / museum.

Related PD: 3170 - Unlawful Occupancy

APPROVED BY: _____
GREG BUTTS, DIRECTOR
Arkansas State Parks