



Guidelines for Geocaching/Letterboxing In Minnesota State Forests

Minnesota Department of Natural Resources - Division of Forestry

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

This document is intended to provide guidelines for management of geocaching & letter-boxing activities on lands administered by the Division of Forestry.

Geocaching is a recreational activity involving the use of a hand-held GPS (Global Positioning System) unit to locate “caches” whether virtual, now called “waymarks” (a scenic overlook), or real (a container including a logbook.) The most common form of geocaching involves individuals placing caches and sharing the locations of these caches on the Internet (www.geocaching.com). Participants use the location coordinates to find the caches. Once found, participants sign the logbook found in the cache container. They also post their “find” on the on-line logbook. They may also place or remove appropriate items from the cache. Letterboxing is similar but involves using only clues to find a hidden container.

2.0 PERMITS USUALLY ARE NOT REQUIRED IN STATE FORESTS EXCEPT:

- Groups who want to conduct a short-term, sponsored event may be required to acquire a Special Event Permit if the event involves enough people to disrupt normal use of the forest lands or cause significant environmental effects.
- Generally a cache may be placed in a state forest without receiving a permit from DNR, providing that no significant damage is caused to commercial or protected species of flora or fauna. All natural resource regulations must be observed including restrictions on off highway vehicles, rutting prohibitions, etc.
- A cache should be camouflaged to minimize visual impacts.

3.0 CACHE PLACEMENT SUGGESTIONS

1. DNR is not responsible for the protection of caches placed in areas subject to active resource management like prescribed burns, timber harvest, or in areas planned for facility development. If in doubt, contact a local DNR forester for advice.
2. Caches are not allowed in Scientific and Natural Areas or areas identified as restricted. Caches may not be buried, nor may vegetation or cultural features be damaged in the process of placing, accessing or maintaining the cache.
3. DNR- Forestry retains the right to remove, or have removed, a cache it feels is in an inappropriate location, is causing undo impact on forest resources or for other reasons deemed inconsistent with the mission and statutes of the MN State Forest System.

4.0 CACHE CONTAINERS & CONTENTS

1. Maximum size of cache containers is approximately 8” x 12” x 4” or a container not exceeding 400 cubic inches of capacity.
2. The container must be marked with the following information: the text “Geocache”, and the name of the cache as it appears on the website.
3. Caches may only contain a logbook in which to record visits, a description of geocaching and non-perishable, family-friendly items.

5.0 APPLICABLE STATUTES & RULES

State statutes and rules which support these geocaching guidelines are listed below.

- 6100.0900 Environmental Protection Subparts 1 and 3.
- 6100.0650 Restricted Areas
- 6100.1650 Storage and Abandonment of Personal Property Subparts 2 & 3
- 6100.0550 Special Event

For more information contact: Keith Simar (218) 833-8703 or Curt Cogan (218) 833-8697, Division of Forestry or contact the nearest DNR Area Forest Supervisor.