

**Division of Ecological and Water Resources  
Scientific and Natural Areas Program**

## **Establishing an EarthCache on a Minnesota Scientific and Natural Area (SNA)**

An [EarthCache](#) is a GPS-based recreational activity focusing on the educational and interpretive features of a site. EarthCaches must provide an earth science lesson. Unlike a geocache, an EarthCache does not place physical objects on a site. Follow these instructions to apply for a permit to establish an EarthCache on a Minnesota Scientific and Natural Area (SNA). *Geocaches are prohibited on all Minnesota Scientific and Natural Areas.*

### **Permit Required**

1. Persons responsible for an EarthCache must have an approved permit. Each EarthCache requires its own permit. EarthCaches may not be appropriate on some SNAs. SNA Staff reserve the right to deny a permit. Some permits may require additional approval on sites managed by other DNR Divisions or organizations.
2. Persons responsible for an EarthCache will be contacted annually to:
  - a. ensure that the EarthCache is still active,
  - b. address any issues that may have arisen,
  - c. and renew the permit.
3. In addition to an EarthCache permit, persons interested in conducting a short-term, sponsored event related to an EarthCache may be required to obtain a [Special Use Permit](#).

### **Selecting a Site**

1. SNA Staff must be consulted to assist in selecting an appropriate site for an EarthCache.
2. EarthCaches must not negatively impact natural and cultural resources, other visitors, or their safety.
3. EarthCache will not be allowed on sites where they could interfere with management activities.

### **Important to Know**

1. The SNA Program retains the right to close or temporarily suspend any EarthCache.
2. Each EarthCache must include the following links:
  - a. Minnesota Scientific and Natural Areas homepage - [www.mndnr.gov/snas](http://www.mndnr.gov/snas)
  - b. Minnesota Scientific and Natural Areas rules - [www.mndnr.gov/snas/rules.html](http://www.mndnr.gov/snas/rules.html)
  - c. A link to the Minnesota Scientific and Natural Area where the EarthCache is found ([list of all sites](#))
4. Each EarthCache must have a statement on the purpose, customized for that EarthCache, and a statement on methods for preventing the introduction of invasive species.
5. Persons responsible for a permitted EarthCache must follow all Minnesota Scientific and Natural Area rules (see link above) and all [EarthCache Guidelines](#).
6. Permitted EarthCaches will be hosted at [www.geocaching.com](http://www.geocaching.com).



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**Application Instructions**

1. Consult with SNA Staff to select an appropriate EarthCache location on an SNA.
2. Obtain GPS coordinates for the location(s) being proposed for review.
3. Mark location(s) on a map of the SNA. Submit coordinates and attach map with application.
4. Complete application and e-mail to [sna.dnr@state.mn.us](mailto:sna.dnr@state.mn.us). Review of permit application may take up to 30 days. Application may also be mailed to: Scientific and Natural Areas Program, Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, 500 Lafayette Road, St. Paul, MN 55155-4025. Review of mailed applications will take longer to complete.
5. Applicant and [www.geocaching.com](http://www.geocaching.com) will be notified of approved permit applications.

*EarthCaches may only be established after permit has been approved and received by applicant.*

SCIENTIFIC AND NATURAL AREAS EARTHCACHE PERMIT APPLICATION	
Person Responsible for EarthCache:	
Address, City, State, ZIP:	
Phone:	Email:
EarthCache Name:	
Scientific and Natural Area where EarthCache will be located:	
Description and location of EarthCache (attach more details if needed):	
Clues (if applicable):	
GPS Coordinates (DDD° MM' SS.S" Latitude):	GPS Coordinates (DDD° MM' SS.S" Longitude):
Signatures	
<i>I certify that the above information is correct to the best of my knowledge. I understand that I must follow all Minnesota Scientific and Natural Area rules and guidelines for EarthCaches.</i>	
Applicant Signature:	Date:
Office use only	
Regional SNA Specialist:	Date:
Management Coordinator:	Date: