

Title: Policy on Geocaching on Saskatchewan Provincial Park Lands Approved 2007

INTENT

To provide direction for geocaching on/in provincial park lands

DEFINITIONS

Geocaching is an outdoor recreational skills activity that uses the global positioning system (GPS). Individuals and organizations set up caches all over the world and share the locations of these caches on the internet at www.geocaching.com. GPS users can then use the location coordinates to find the caches. Once found, a cache may provide the visitor with a wide variety of rewards. In return the visitor leaves something for the cache for the next group or individual to find.

Global Positioning System (GPS) is a technology that aids people in navigation through the use of satellite signals and geography. It relies on 24 satellites that rotate around the earth every 12 hours and send signals down to earth 24 hours a day. These signals can be picked up by a hand held GPS Unit.

GPS (Global Positioning System)Unit is a hand held device that receives signals from satellites that can pinpoint exact locations. It uses these signals to find geographical positions anywhere in the world.

CONSIDERATIONS

- Provincial park lands contain rare and endangered plant species and historical and cultural artifacts that may be disturbed by geocaching.
- Many wild fauna and flora species may be affected by off-trail travel, specifically at certain times of the year when they are nesting or breeding.
- The placement of geocaches may increase traffic off-trail and develop new unofficial trails.
- The placement of geocaches may place the public at risk.
- The contents of geocaches may lead to littering or attracting wildlife.
- Geocaching is a recreational activity that attracts visitors to parks and encourages them to explore park areas.
- The geocaching community strives to maintain a respectful attitude towards nature and to promote responsible behavior.

POLICY

1. Geocaches may be placed on provincial park lands subject to the prior written approval of Park Management.
2. Park management in determining if a cache will be permitted will use the following considerations:
 - a) Proposed location:
 - i. poses no risk to rare or endangered species, or cultural features
 - ii. avoids sensitive ecological and cultural areas

- iii. creates a low likelihood of new trail developments and/or the time frame for placement is such that there is a low likelihood for the development of new trails
 - iv. poses low risk to public safety
 - v. has minimal to low impact on others using the area
 - vi. avoids disturbing the earth, impacting shrubs, tree growth or other vegetation
 - b. the cache contains no food, scented items or other products that may attract wildlife to the site.
 - c. the cache contains educational/interpretative messages relating to the park.
 - d. the group/individual placing the cache agrees to monitor regularly, to ensure no litter is in the area and the cache is placed and maintained within the terms of the agreement to place the cache
 - e. the group/individual placing the cache agrees to a liability clause providing indemnity for Saskatchewan Environment
 - f. the agreement holder includes with the cache
 - i. a notice for participants not to leave scented or food items
 - ii. a notice of authorization from the park manager
- 3. Park management may remove a cache if
 - a. it was put in place without prior permission
 - b. the cache no longer meets the considerations indicated in point 2.
- 4. Park management will attempt to contact groups who placed caches prior to removal.
 - a. The groups will be advised of why removals are to take place and will be given an opportunity to address the reasons for removal.
 - b. For any cache removed for which an organization could not be contacted the cache is to be held and managed as lost property.
 - i. park management is to place a notice on the web site that it has been removed by the land administrator and to please contact park management for further information.

EVALUATION:

This policy will be evaluated on:

- a) impact of growing number of geocaches on park natural and cultural resources
- b) the cooperation and reaction of organizations in the permitting of geocaching
- c) the administrative ease/staff time to implement

ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION

1. Legislation Reference/Authority

The Park Regulations 1991

- *Sec. 38: Littering Prohibited:* No person shall leave or dispose of any glass, bottles, cans, cartons, bags, garbage, paper, dirt, gravel, tree limbs, or similar refuse on park land except in a place or receptacle provided by the minister for the purpose.
- *Sec 59 General prohibition:* No person shall: (a) take, damage or destroy a flower, plant, shrub, tree or any other natural vegetation on park land without the

prior written consent of the minister; (b) alter the natural state of any part of park land without the prior written consent of the minister;

The Heritage Property Act

- Section 64: sites of special nature
- Section 67: no person can disturb archaeological or palaeontological objects without a permit from the department responsible for the act

2. Reference Material

Leave No Trace Camping Ethics