



# Michigan Geocaching Organization

## Michigan Geocaching Organization

An affiliate club of the Michigan United Conservation Clubs.

MiGO is a nonprofit group that was established in 2002 with this mission:

*MiGO's goal is to serve as a forum for communication between Michigan geocachers, the general public, and land management officials, in a cooperative effort to promote the sport of geocaching, an appreciation of the outdoors, and good stewardship of the land and environment.*

With more than 1,100 members state-wide, MiGO has become the "go to group" for land managers with questions about geocaching. We have prepared this information to help you become more familiar with geocaching. If you have additional questions, we invite you to contact us and we will work to assist you in any way possible.

## What Is Geocaching?

Geocaching is a family-friendly activity that combines the use of technology with the exploration of our world including parks, streets, fields, streams, and more!

A Geocache is a container ranging in size from a 35mm film canister to medium and large sized Tupperware. The Geocache contains at a minimum a log book and usually an assortment of various "treasure" for the finder.

The rules of seeking a Geocache are easy: Sign the log, if you take something - leave something of equal or greater value in trade, and return the container exactly as you found it.



Geocaches are hidden by players all over the world. The hider will list the Geocache on a listing site on the internet for others to see. Before being listed on a listing site, the Geocache listing is reviewed using a criteria set by the listing site. Common guidelines include no buried caches, proximity to railroad tracks, proximity to dangerous features, and appropriate content (knives among other things are not allowed). The most prominent listing service is [www.Geocaching.com](http://www.Geocaching.com) which plays host to the largest database of Geocaches available.

May 2008 marks the 8<sup>th</sup> anniversary of geocaching.

There was over 550,567 caches placed in 222 countries worldwide as of January 2008, with 8,676 placed around Michigan locations.

## Some Demographics

A recent study illustrates the diverse nature of participants in Geocaching. Respondents (all 18+) ranged in age from 23 to 70 years old, averaging 40 years old. 48% of respondents indicated that they typically Geocache with family members. Geocachers also enjoy a variety of other activities including Hiking (90%), Camping (76%), Bicycling (72%), Photography (68%), Driving for Pleasure (64%), Fishing (49%) and Hunting (22%) among others.

## What Do I Need?

All you need is a GPS Receiver (GPSr) and a sense of adventure. A GPSr is an electronic device that uses satellites to determine your location on the planet, accurate to around 10-20 feet. Your location is given as coordinates in degrees latitude and longitude. A GPSr also helps to navigate from your current location to another location. Some may have maps, electronic compasses and even voice navigation, depending upon the complexity of the device. You won't need to know the technical mumbo-jumbo about GPSr's in order to geocache. You only need to be able to enter the "waypoint" coordinates where the geocache is hidden and then follow them to the cache.

## Cache In – Trash Out (CITO)

Help clean up the forests, one cache at a time! CITO is the unofficial creed of geocaching. When you go out geocaching take along a small trash bag and pick up some trash along the way. Every little bit helps. Many geocaching organizations sponsor CITO events in conjunction with Earth Day each April.



## The Geocacher's Code

### Safe, Legal, Ethical

When placing or seeking geocaches, I will:

- Not endanger myself or others.
- Observe all laws and rules of the area.
- Respect property rights and seek permission where appropriate.
- Avoid causing disruptions or public alarm.
- Minimize my and others' impact on the environment.
- Be considerate of others.
- Protect the integrity of the game piece.

## Travel Bugs

Sometimes called hitchhikers, these are items that travel from cache to cache. Most have a small metal tag with a unique identification number that allows you to log it online so the owner of the travel bug can follow its journey. Many of them have specific goals that were given to them when the owner released them. Travel bugs come with an obligation, do not pick them up from a cache unless you are willing to move it to another cache and log the journey online



## Quick Start Guide

Itching to get out there and cache yet? Here's a quick start guide to get you going.

1. Buy or borrow a GPS unit. You could also try finding an experienced cacher to go with on your first outing.
2. Make a free account at [www.geocaching.com](http://www.geocaching.com) and click the "Hide & Seek a Cache" link on the upper left hand side.
3. Type in your zip code and hit search. A list of caches in and around your zip code will come up.
4. Find one you think looks interesting. Each cache is rated for difficulty and terrain. We suggest you try a 1 difficulty / 1 terrain traditional cache first.
5. Click on the link to open the page. At the top will be the coordinates for the cache. They will be similar in format to Nxx° xx.xxx Wxxx° xx.xxxx
6. Read the information on the cache page. You will want to print a copy of the cache page to take with you on the hunt as well.
7. Also, you will find links to several mapping services from the cache page. It wouldn't hurt to print one off or get driving directions to help you make your way to the general area of the cache.
8. Dress for the adventure you've chosen and it's always smart to be prepared with first aid
9. Now, you're ready to set out! Read the user manual for the GPS unit you've chosen and learn how to input the coordinates for the cache you're going to seek. Input the coordinates from the cache page and use the GPS unit's "goto" feature to set the GPS into seek mode.
10. Using the seek mode, you should be able to make your way toward the cache. When the distance to the cache is less than 30 feet, begin to look around for the hiding spot. (Remember, accuracy on a GPS unit is only 10-20 feet).
11. You may think this will be easy, but it can be very challenging. While looking, be sure to be gentle. Remember, caches aren't buried. You do not need to dig holes or break branches to find it.
12. Find the cache, enter your log into the logbook, trade some trinkets if you wish and re-hide it exactly as you found it.
13. When you return from your adventure, go back online to your account on Geocaching.com and log your find online.

## Additional Resources

Today there is more information available about geocaching than ever before! In addition to the expertise at your disposal in MiGO, there are a variety of other web sites, books and other media available.

[www.geocaching.com](http://www.geocaching.com) 

The main database for all Geocaches. There are some other sites that contain lists but this is by far the largest.

[www.mi-geocaching.org](http://www.mi-geocaching.org) 

Created by Michigan geocachers to serve the needs of the Michigan geocaching community. MiGO's lively forums are a great place to meet and chat with others that share your interests. The members there are more than happy to help out a 'newbie'.

[Geocacher University](http://www.geocacher-u.com/) 

<http://www.geocacher-u.com/>

A great website with lots of Geocaching information for Novices to Experts. Updated regularly by an experienced Geocacher.

[The Complete Idiot's Guide To Geocaching](#) 

Jack W. Peters & The Staff of Geocaching.com  
Very comprehensive book on geocaching, covering everything from the basics to events to organizations.

[Geocaching: Hike and Seek With Your GPS](#) 

Eric Sherman

Rated as a good introduction written by an experienced geocacher.


[The Essential Guide to Geocaching](#) 

Mike Dyer

Another good introduction book.

[The Geocaching Handbook](#) 

Layne Cameron, foreword by Dave Ulmer  
Covers all the basics and includes a foreword by the "father of geocaching", Dave Ulmer.

[Geocaching For Dummies](#) 

Joel McNamara

A typical "dummies" book with info on choosing a GPS unit, downloading coordinates and more.

[The Complete Guide To Geocaching](#) 

DVD introduction with many special features like interviews with geocaching pioneers Dave Ulmer, Jeremy Irish, Jon "Moun10Bike" Stanley and more.