

GEOCACHING for the **BOY SCOUT** **PROGRAM**



How to use geocaching to promote Boy Scout
Recruiting, Retention and Public Relations

by
Mary E. Stevens, PhD

GeoScouting®: Geocaching for the Boy Scout Program



*“Look well, and even though you have looked,
look again.”*

- Baden-Powell

”

Mary E. Stevens, PhD

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About the Author

Dr. Mary Stevens has been involved in Scouting since 1986. She has been a Tiger Cub Leader, Den Leader and Webelos Den Leader before moving into Boy Scouting and Venturing (where she is currently a Scoutmaster and Crew Advisor). She is on the Marin Council Executive Committee and Board, and has served as Vice President of Program for 5 years as well as her current role of Vice President of Membership and Relationships.

On the National level, Mary brought the sport of geocaching to the forefront. She began by proposing and then creating the Geocaching Event at the 2005 Boy Scout Jamboree, and expanded this in the 2007 World Scout Jamboree. She has written a National Supplemental Training module on geocaching (see www.scouting.org), and developed adult geocaching courses for the National BSA Training Center at Philmont and the Florida Sea Base as well as a session at the National office for incoming BSA professionals. She was on the National Advanced Youth Leadership Experience and led the Philmont Leadership Challenge design team, creating the geocaching module for these courses. She helped create the requirements for and is writing the Geocaching Merit Badge. She and her husband travel around the country helping other councils bring the value of GeoScouting into their program.

As a scientist, Mary worked in education for 16 years, including developing a genetic engineering course for middle school students before moving to an executive role at Bayer Corporation. Now retired, she is an avid geocacher with thousands of “finds”. She continues to geocache under the handle “mousewiz” along with her husband Brad (“scoutboy”). She and Brad have created the website www.GeoScouting.com to be used as a global resource by Scouts and Scouters from any program area.

Forward

Welcome to geocaching with your Scouts!

Geocaching is a wonderful sport for Scouts. It takes them outdoors, on adventures and they get to find prizes. But it is so much more than that!

You can use this simple sport in so many ways to help your Scout, his patrol and troop, the public AND to help the Boy Scouts of America. Simply going outside to find publically hidden geocaches is a healthy alternative to TV and video games, and many public caches have a great deal of interesting background information and/or beautiful locations to discover.

But we take this further – to GeoScouting®. GeoScouting is simply Geocaching combined with Scouting to showcase the value of both programs. For example, if we highlight the sport of using Geocaching with Scouts for service, to help the youth advance, or to help recruit other youth to join your great troop or patrol, that GeoScouting® is at its best.

This book is not designed to be the ultimate geocaching guide. There are many great sources of information on that topic and we don't need to reinvent the wheel. The purpose of this book is to introduce ways to use the sport for Scouting. We have some general information to help the beginning Scout or Scouter get acquainted with geocaching but the main value is in the Scout related ideas and games.

Please use this book to do your best to get kids outside, to improve your patrol or troop, to help others, and most of all to have FUN!

Mary Stevens aka “mousewiz”

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What is Geocaching?



*Photos by
Robert Tong*



A Brief Introduction

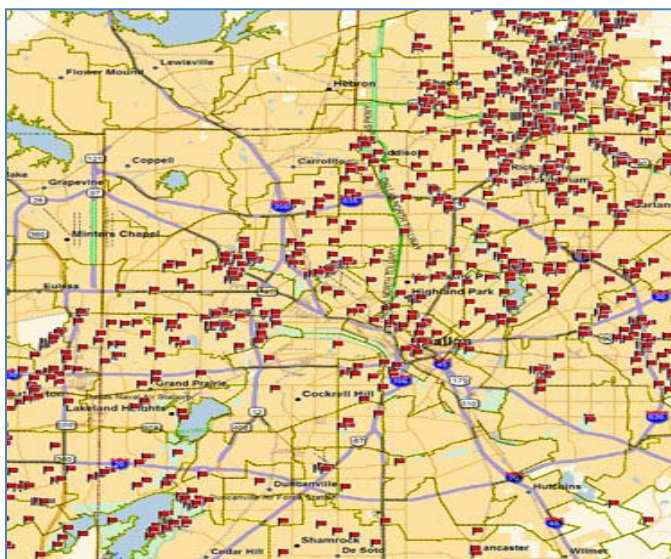
The History of Geocaching and GeoScouting®

The word Geocache comes from the word “geo”, which means “earth” and “cache”, which means “a hiding place”. So Geocaching means a hiding place on the planet Earth – and you can find it using a GPS unit! A GPS unit is a small handheld tool that shows you where to go based on information it gets from satellites in space.



Think of a treasure hunt that uses your GPS unit to find the location of the prize or “cache”.

There are so many public geocaches hidden around where your troop and patrol meet, and there are probably some hidden in your neighborhood very close to where you live.



Many of these will take you on beautiful hikes and/or give you challenging puzzles to solve to find the treasure.

Not only that, but GPS and geocaching can help your patrol or troop! Remember the Scout Oath. Here it is, as written in all the Boy Scout Handbooks:

On my honor, I will do my best, to do my duty to God and my country and to obey the Scout Law; to help other people at all times; and to keep myself physically strong, mentally awake and morally straight.

Geocaching can help the troop, each patrol and every boy follow the tenets of the Scout Oath and Law. Geocaching provides a great opportunity to both have fun and to give Scout goodwill to your community. How?

- Geocaching can add variety and make your patrol and troop meetings more interesting.
- When you go geocaching, it takes you to the outdoors.
- Geocaching allows you to use your brains as well as be outdoors.
- It's a great way to recruit new members and keep the members you have – they will have such a good time that they want to stay in your troop!
- You can earn rank advancement in new exciting ways.
- It's a lot of fun!



**What could be a more natural partnership...
*Scouting and Geocaching!***

What is GeoScouting®?



What could be a more natural partnership – Scouting and Geocaching! Both programs love and support the outdoors, and both get us all away from the TV and video games!

GeoScouting® is a special name given to the sport of geocaching when you use it in Scouting, *especially when used in the many possible ways to support and enhance the Scouting Program!*

We will explain many of these in the pages to come but here is a brief summary of the strengths of the sport by using geocaching for Scouting.

How can such a cool sport actually help the Scouting program? *Geocaching can be used in many ways to make the Scouting Program better.*

- Geocaching is new and exciting –and anything that is fun improves Scouting!
- It takes you to new places that you might not see otherwise.
- *Advancement* – geocaching games make advancement easy.
- *Recruitment* – geocache events are a great way to get more kids to visit your patrol or troop.
- *Retention* – this means that boys who are in your patrol stay in Scouting. They love the