

MAY 30, 2008

PARK DIRECTIVE 3220

GEOCACHING AND WAYMARKING
IN ARKANSAS STATE PARKS

Geocaching, also known as GPS Stash Hunt or GeoStash, involves “hiding” items, usually containers holding various “treasures”, and then providing specific Global Positioning Satellite (GPS) coordinates for the “cache” on a website. Visitors to these websites can choose which “cache” they would like to locate using their own personal GPS device. Cache searchers typically bring along their own “treasures” and make an exchange once the cache has been located.

Waymarking involves locating a specific landmark, facility, geographical feature, etc., based on its coordinates. These should be encouraged at State Parks in lieu of physical caches.

Park staff may place “caches” or assign “waymarks” for educational and promotional purposes at *any* Arkansas State Park, obtaining the appropriate permits.

Procedures concerning geocaching in Arkansas State Parks are as follows:

I. CACHE AND WAYMARK PERMITS

- A. Geocaches or waymarks established by the public will not be permitted at Conway Cemetery, the Herman Davis Memorial, Jenkins’ Ferry, the Louisiana Purchase, Mark’s Mill, Parkin, Poison Springs, Prairie Grove Battlefield, the South Arkansas Arboretum, or Toltec Mounds State Parks.
- B. Placement of a cache on Department property must be secured with a permit. Any cache located on park property that does not exhibit the required affixed permit number is unauthorized and is subject to removal from its location and the owner subject to fines.
- C. The person applying for a permit must provide a valid geocache user name, address, telephone number, email address, driver’s license number, and the website address on which the cache will be posted.
- D. The exact location of the cache / waymark must be pre-approved by the Park Superintendent, whose main concern will be public safety and the prevention of undesirable impacts to natural, historical, and cultural resources.
- E. The geocache / waymark name and number and exact cache location (including GPS coordinates) must be stated on the permit.

- F. All permits will be in effect for a period of twelve (12) months. The exact starting and ending dates will be recorded on the permit. Upon expiration of the initial permit, at the permit holder's request, a cache permit may be extended for up to twelve (12) months.

NOTE: If, during the effective period of a permit, a permit holder wants to change the location of the cache, a new permit must be issued and the effective permit cancelled.

- G. Upon expiration of a permit, the permit holder is responsible for removing the cache and for removing the cache location from all websites and any information source.
- H. If the permit holder fails to remove the cache, it will be removed by park staff and held for ten (10) days, after which staff will dispose of the cache. Confiscation and disposal by park staff will be recorded in an incident report.
- I. Park staff should periodically review websites (such as geocaching.com and waymarking.com) to ensure that all caches and waymarks identified in a State Park are permitted. If a non-permitted cache / waymark is discovered, the Superintendent will contact appropriate personnel and have those coordinates removed from the web-site.
- J. If it is determined that a cache / waymark has been the cause of adverse environmental damage, the cache may be removed by the Park Superintendent or designee, and the permit cancelled.

II. CACHE CONTAINERS AND CONTENTS

- A. Cache containers must be non-breakable, have some form of latch or other closing mechanism to prohibit content exposure to wildlife, and must be approved by the Park Superintendent or designee.
- B. Each cache container must have an identification label affixed to the outside identifying it as an approved cache and containing the permit number and expiration date.
- C. Caches may not contain inappropriate or dangerous items. Such items include, but are not limited to, food, medications, personal/hygiene products, pornography, weapons of any type, etc. In Arkansas State Parks, log books are encouraged over exchange items.

- D. All caches are subject to random inspection by Park Superintendents. Park staff has the authority to immediately remove any item held in a cache deemed unacceptable or that is violation of this policy.

III. CACHE / WAYMARK LOCATIONS:

- A. Physical caches are prohibited inside any state park facility or structure.
- B. The location of a cache must be pre-approved by the Park Superintendent or designee.
- C. Caches may not be placed in locations that may lead to the creation of spur trails.
- D. Caches may not be buried, nor may vegetation or stones be disturbed to place a cache.
- D. Caches may not be placed in dangerous, inappropriate, or protected areas and habitats, on cliffs, underground, or underwater.
- E. Metal detectors may not be used in cache searches.

IV. COMPLIANCE

- A. Failure to comply with this policy directive will result in the revocation of effective geocaching permits and online cache / waymark listings. Continued failure to comply with these guidelines will prevent the issuance of any further permits to the non-compliant group or individual.
- B. If geocaching or waymarking activities as a whole are found to have a negative impact on park resources or if safety becomes an issue in geocache / waymark searches, the Park Superintendent may ban geocaching from certain areas or from the entire park.
- C. The Park Superintendent will determine the number of manageable caches and waymarks at each location.

Replaces PD 3220 dated June 30, 2003

Related PD: 3170 - Unlawful Occupancy

APPROVED BY: _____
GREG BUTTS, DIRECTOR
Arkansas State Parks