



Dog Scouts of America Evaluation Criteria

Geocaching 1, 2 & 3

PURPOSE: The geocaching badges are intended as a way for handler/dog teams to get outdoors and explore trails while searching for caches. The dog and handler must locate, photograph and record the required number of caches with the dog under pack. Additionally, the dog and handler must prepare, plant and record the required number of caches. Each of the geocaching badges require a different number of found and planted caches. Totals for these badges are cumulative and build towards the ability to earn geocaching titles.

DOG REQUIREMENTS: The dog must wear his pack containing the required items per the Backpacking badge. He must hike under control with the handler, never creating a disturbance or chasing wildlife. The dog must stay while the handler signs into geocaches without getting into any trouble, like eating the container or contents, getting into something that he shouldn't or wandering away. The dog may 'sign in' with his own name and signature trinket. The dog must be still while the handler takes a photograph of the dog with the cache. The dog must carry his own supplies including tradable items and a logbook.

HANDLER REQUIREMENTS: The handler must know and demonstrate the 'leave no trace' principles for outdoor activities. The dog should never be allowed to display poor manners on the trail or cause a disturbance that detracts from the geocaching experience. The handler must obey all local laws, including leash laws and should only use trails and search for geocaches in locations where dogs are allowed.

The handler must understand how to use geocaching.com to find coordinates and clues for caches to search for. The handler must also demonstrate that he/she knows how to use a GPS unit properly in order to search for caches.

The handler will need to understand how to build and place a proper geocache, record coordinates and clues and submit the cache for publication on geocaching.com. Badges are not considered complete until the evaluator has determined that the coordinates and clues recorded are appropriate and likely to lead others to find the geocache.

EQUIPMENT NEEDED: The dog needs to wear his backpack containing the required items as per the Backpacking badge. Additionally, he needs to carry his own tradable items and a logbook for geocaching. Additional items needed for geocaching include an accurate GPS unit, a pen to sign logbooks, and supplies like extra baggies and log sheets to repair caches where needed, and a bag or pouch to carry all of the items in. The team needs a trail name and this needs to be registered at geocaching.com. This site is also where the handler gets the coordinates and clues when the team is ready to begin searching for geocaches.

PROCESS: On the team's first outing, an experienced geocacher needs to accompany the pair and sign off on the log form indicating that the handler and dog both behaved appropriately on that first geocaching outing. For evaluation the handler needs to provide photographic evidence of found and placed caches, as well as printouts for placed caches.



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Special rules apply to geocaches planted on the Michigan Camp property. No cache may be placed closer than 100 yards from the lodge or behind the line of the trees if the woods are closer than 100 yards. Before considered complete, all caches placed require a \$5 fee and coordinates and clues must be typed into the camp computer in the correct location. Once the clues are printed, the handler and dog must find a very experienced letterboxer, give him/her the coordinates for the cache and accompany the person out as he/she verifies that the coordinates are sufficient to lead a searcher to the cache.

Caches planted at camp are NOT to be posted as available to the general public. This keeps the general public from hunting for caches on private property belonging to Dog Scouts of America.

Any caches that fail to follow the rules for placing geocaches on the property will be removed and returned to the handler. Badges may be revoked for any team that does not follow rules for placing geocaches at camp or best practices for placing anywhere else.

ALLOWED:

- Logging miles toward Trail Dog titles consecutively with Geo badges
- Using homemade or store bought logbooks
- Dog does not need to wear his pack if the cache is located within sight of the handler's vehicle and only requires a short walk (drive-up cache)

NOT ALLOWED:

- Logging miles towards the Backpacking badge consecutively just because the dog is wearing a pack
- Rough handling of the dog
- Any disruption created by the dog
- Doing anything or searching anywhere that may endanger either dog or handler