



DCNR Geocaching Guidelines for Placing Caches

Geocaching has become a popular recreation on Pennsylvania's state park and forest lands. The idea is to have individuals set up caches and share the locations of these caches through the use of coordinates and clues.

Once found, a cache may provide a wide variety of exchangeable items, clues or scenic/historic sites. The Geocache community uses the Internet extensively for posting cache locations. The Bureau of State Parks charges a \$25.00 fee for placing a geocache on State Park lands.

Sponsoring a CITO event or other volunteer effort can often be arranged with the park manager in lieu of this fee. The arrangement varies from park to park

The following is a list of caches/waymarks found in our State Parks/State Forest Lands that need a Department approval.

- Traditional
- Event/CITO
- Multi-cache
- Mystery
- Letter box
- Webcam
- Virtual/Waymark

The following guidelines apply to all geocaches on State Park and State Forest lands:

If you place the cache on public lands you need to contact the managing agency to find out about their rules. Regulations are intended to protect the fragile environment, and historical and cultural areas.

Placement of geocaches on lands administered by the DCNR requires authorization by the Park Manager / District Forester or designee. This authorization will be considered through a review process, including a Pennsylvania Natural Diversity Inventory search (PNDI) that insures its location is compatible with other park and forest activities.

Scout your location and mark your waypoint(s) for the cache hiding place(s). Consider contacting the DCNR office (state park or forest) in advance... they may suggest good hiding places, and tell you about areas to steer away from. Please use common sense

when choosing a location for your cache. Do not place your cache in any location where it might be confused with something more dangerous.

Obtain the best possible coordinates for your cache to reduce unwarranted wear on the area. Recheck and correct your coordinates if finders report significant errors.

Set up your cache page on Geocaching.com, and submit it for approval, but say in the "Note to Reviewer" field: "PLEASE HOLD.... approval from DCNR is pending." This lets the reviewer know to hold your cache in the review queue until the permit is obtained. He/she will review your cache and let you know right away if they have any questions other than your permit.

Fill out the [Geocache Identification form](#), including the URL for your cache page, its GC number, the coordinates for your cache, etc.

Visit the Park or Forestry office and submit your form or e-mail it to the land manager of your selected site. Your cache application will then be reviewed, which may or may not happen right then, depending on whether you've contacted them in advance.

DCNR staff will then conduct a PNDI review (Pennsylvania Natural Diversity Index) to check for threatened or endangered species in the area of the proposed geocache. If there are no known impacts and the cache location is sustainable (can take the traffic without leaving a beaten path), then the cache is likely to be approved

You'll be advised when your cache is approved. Sign the Geocaching Agreement provided to you at the Park or Forestry Office (State Parks charge a \$25.00 fee, Forestry does not).

They'll also give you a FREE green Geocaching.com sticker to put on your cache container. Caches on DCNR lands are approved for three years, after which they must be removed or reassessed and re-approved.

Place your cache as described in your permit.

Post a new "note to reviewer" saying that your permit was obtained. The cache will then be listed on the geocaching website, assuming it meets all other guidelines.



HIGHLY RECOMMENDED: Use the "placed with permission" logo, approved by DCNR, on your cache page. The html that you should copy and paste into your cache description is ``

You need to remove the spaces after the first `<`.

A geocache contact person responsible for necessary upkeep of the site must be identified prior to approval by the Park Manager / District Forester or designee.

There should be no earth disturbance or vegetative impact to any approved site. Nor should the cache be readily discernable by the general public.

All cache seekers and cache owners must abide by park/forestry hours and all other park/forestry rules and regulations.

Cache(s) shall not be placed in a plastic (PVC) pipe. Park Managers/District Foresters will use their discretion to determine what is a permissible container to house the cache(s) contents.

The cache may not be placed within Natural Areas, Penn Nursery perimeter fence, seed orchards, or Wild Plant Sanctuaries, or on stream banks, riparian zones, wetlands, prehistoric and historic archaeological sites, exemplary natural communities, ecologically sensitive areas, unique geological features, dam structures, or unsafe areas.

You must contact the Park Manager/District Forester for possible additional restrictions or questions concerning the proposed location.

A cache may remain at the approved site for no more than three years at which time it must be removed, the site restored to its original condition, and the Park Manager/District Forester informed in writing of the removal.

This will control cache abandonment and assist in preventing renegade trail development to the site. Certain conditions may constitute the re-approval of an existing cache that has been on State Park or State Forest lands for three years.

If the cache remains a viable attribute to the visitor experience and does not have a current or foreseeable environmental impact on the site, it can be considered for re-approval. Park Managers/District Forest will use their discretion to determine if the cache(s) meets the aforementioned conditions.

Do not place illegal items into a cache or anything that might smell like food to a bear.

Once you place the cache, it is your responsibility to maintain the cache and the area around it. You'll need to return as often as you can to ensure that your cache is not impacting the area, and ensure that the cache is in good repair. If a cache's area is impacted, confer with the land manager on how you will mitigate the impacts, and seek their advice as to whether to relocate the cache.

Unauthorized geocaches on State Park or State Forest lands will be removed and treated as abandoned property, and the responsible person may be cited for littering.

The placement of a "Premium Member only Geocache" will not be permitted on State Park/State Forest lands. These caches require a monthly fee to access their coordinates and therefore make it impossible for the Department to monitor their locations. All caches on public lands shall be available to the public without a fee.

The responsible party shall delete site location(s) from all publications and/or website(s) within seven days of removal.

Virtual caches will no longer be handled as geo-caches, but rather as waymarks.

Discretion must be used by the Park Manager/District Forester to determine whether or not the site of the waymark is a hardened surface due to existing foot traffic or if the waymark is located in an ecological sensitive area in need of protection.

A waymark located in a compacted area will be exempt from an agreement and will be handled at the park/forest level. However, if the waymark presents potential environmental impact, department approval must be sought and a PNDI search must be conducted.