

## GEOCACHING BASICS by franklylynne

When I want some fresh air or if I have time to explore a new place, I usually include some geocaching. It can be an extra element added to a family road trip when it is time to stretch our legs! Sometimes though, geocaching IS the purpose of my trip.

Geocaching is a treasure hunting game using a hand-held gps or smart phone. It is played by millions of people world-wide, people of all ages and abilities. It is free to join, free to play.

Caches are hidden primarily in the great outdoors in almost any setting; urban, rural, in the water and even on mountaintops!

The geocache, often a weatherproof container, stays where it is found. The geocacher signs the log sheet inside and maybe trades some trinket or swag. They also record this on the Geocaching.com website for virtual accounting and souvenirs.

There are many types of geocaches including earthcaches, multi-caches, puzzle caches... CITO events are when we meet and do a co-ordinated clean-up of a park. At home, I can still play by working out 'Puzzle Caches' with paper, pencil and the internet! I might be happy just to check some FB geocaching groups or to watch some YouTube videos by my favourite vloggers; Cache the Line and Canada Cachers.

To join up, go to [www.geocaching.com](http://www.geocaching.com) It is free! Set up an account and hit 'search.' In South Bruce there are dozens of geocaches in a 10km radius. Your local Bruce County Public library can loan you a hand-held GPS kit too!

Click on a cache from the list. Lots of information is provided. GPS co-ordinates, physical attributes, maybe a HINT and a short write up. The cache type and 3 Ratings are included. The ratings are important clues; Terrain, Difficulty and Container size. A "T1 D5 and C ? " will tell you this is wheelchair accessible but very tricky to find! A C3 might be a large plastic box, (the assumption being there is lots of swag and trinkets to trade for).

There is no shame in not finding a geocache. Some are very tricky or too obvious, or gone! Geocaching is a great excuse to spend time outdoors alone or with a crew. You might be surprised by what you find in your own community!