



## Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District “How-to” and Tips for Geocaching on the Preserves

- Acquire a hand held GPS device or download an app to your Smartphone (note: GPS devices are thought to be more accurate)
- Create an account at [www.geocaching.com](http://www.geocaching.com) where you will choose your user name
- Use the ‘play’ / ‘hide and seek a cache’ feature on Geocaching.com to locate caches you plan to search for
- Bring a small item for trading if you plan to take anything. (Many caches hold small trinkets of little to no monetary value for fun trading)
- Bring a pen or pencil to sign the cache log (cache pencils can sometimes go missing)
- Use your GPS device and other navigational tools to locate the cache (maps, compasses, etc.) Your GPS device directs you toward the cache coordinates, but can not take into account obstacles that may be between you and the cache –streams, cliffs, etc. Trails bend and curve; do not go ‘the way the crow flies’ to get to the cache, instead use trail maps to find an appropriate route (don’t fight a new path through heavy brush just to come out back on the same trail). Remember to respect the environment and obey any posted signs. Keep your eyes on the terrain!
- As you near the cache, *you* will need to do the searching – your GPS device can only get you so close! Inspect the immediate area and look for obvious hiding places such as a hollow in a tree, a rotted tree stump, a pile of rocks, etc.
- Be aware of possible hazards where you search. Learn to identify poison oak, ticks, and rattlesnakes. Don’t put your hands where you can’t see. Use a stick or similar object to search.
- Once you find the cache, take note of how it has been hidden. You will need to replace it in an identical fashion. (Do not try to ‘hide it better’ or move it to where you think your GPS unit indicates the coordinates are.)
- Be stealthy; don’t reveal the cache and it’s location to “muggles” (a term used to describe the uninitiated who don’t know about geocaching and may take or move a cache)
- Open the cache, sign the log, and trade any trinkets you may have brought. Animals have a keen sense of smell, never place food or other strongly scented items in the cache. If you are traveling with a “Preserve Circuit Passport”, stamp the corresponding preserve cache page with the game piece stamp found in the cache. Some caches may have “trackable” items in them; take these items only if you will move them along and log their movement online.
- After you find a geocache (or attempt to locate and could not find), log on to your account at [www.geocaching.com](http://www.geocaching.com) and share your experiences from the trails!

For a thorough guide to geocaching, please refer to [www.geocaching.com/guide/](http://www.geocaching.com/guide/)  
For more information about geocaching on District preserves, please visit [www.openspace.org/geocaching](http://www.openspace.org/geocaching)