Towamencin Township Geocaching Guidelines

Geocaching is an international recreational activity, similar to a treasure or scavenger hunt, in which people use a GPS receiver or mobile device to find a hidden container, known as a "geocache" or simply a "cache". The cache contains a paper log to prove the searcher found it and sometimes tradeable trinkets. The primary goal of the game is to get people outside to explore their surroundings.

Geocaching is free to play. An account is required and can be created at https://www.geocaching.com/ or via various mobile device apps. The official app is free and alternate apps are available too. An account can be upgraded to a paid subscription to financially support a geocaching organization's activity; upgrades typically enable additional functionality and access.

Towamencin Township permits limited recreational geocaching on township lands

All rules of the game must be followed when hiding or searching for a geocache as outlined on https://www.geocaching.com/play/guidelines.

Searching and Finding a Geocache

- When a cache is found, note the cache size, the degree of difficulty, and the terrain (D/T).
  - Size is an approximation of the dimensions of the cache container
  - Degree of Difficulty may indicate the cache is in a very small space, blends in very well, or involves a puzzle to solve.
  - Terrain indicates the distance to reach the cache or the effort to extract it, for example, climbing a tall tree or requiring a boat will be a higher terrain. Do not over-extend your capability or skills; bring a friend to help.
- Do not dig; caches cannot be buried in the ground.
- Do not move, damage or harm property (e.g. structures, fences, etc.), vegetation, animals, the environment (littering, polluting) to find a cache.
  All players are strongly encouraged to remove trash and litter as a component of their geocache search activities.
- Be fully aware of property boundaries! If you are in a park, do not cross into adjacent private or restricted property. Geocaches are usually on public property. The cache description should clearly indicate if permission was given for it to be on private property.
  - For example, someone may place a cache on their own property. This should be clearly noted in the cache description. If a searcher is uncertain about a location, they should contact the cache owner or property owner/manager via the geocache website or app.
- Most parks do not allow visitors (cache searchers) after dark. The cache description and attributes should indicate whether searching for the cache is limited to daylight hours or if the location is open to searchers all day.
- Logging
  - If you find a cache, sign the paper log.
    - Feel free to bring trinkets to swap with items other found in the container, noting some are "trackables." These are items meant to be transferred from cache to cache (https://www.geocaching.com/track/).
    - Do not leave anything which is edible, scented, can easily melt (crayons), or can easily expand (liquids).
      - ✓ Do not leave items that are inappropriate for children, i.e. adult items.

- ✓ Do not leave items that may be illegal for some searchers to possess (prescription pharmaceuticals, alcoholic beverages, or drugs of abuse)
- ✓ Do not leave items that are potentially dangerous, i.e., sharp or explosive, or toxic.
  - ▪ Log the cache as "Found" on the website or app.
  - ▪ If you do not find a cache and you spent a reasonable amount of time searching for it then you can log a "Did Not Find" on the website or app. It is possible to also message the cache owner to ask a question or even report a problem with the cache if you are certain it is either missing or damaged.

Hiding a Geocache

- o You must follow all rules on https://www.geocaching.com/play/guidelines , notably:
  - • Get permission!
  - • Caches on private property require permission from the land owner or manager. If this is yourself, then clearly note that in description.
  - • Caches on Towamencin Township property require submission of a notification form and have additional rules:
    - ▪ Access/download the notification form from the Township website at https://www.towamencin.org/departments/parks-recreation/
    - ▪ You must complete the notification form on the Township website, provide standard contact information of the owner, and include details of each physical stage of the cache.
      - ✓ The form requires the GC code and a picture of the placed container(s). Therefore, caches must be placed (staged), with a GC page created before submitting the Towamencin form.
      - ✓ On the page, before the geocache is approved, add a Reviewer note like "Please hold – approval from Towamencin Township is pending."
      - ✓ Return the form by emailing info@towamencin.org.
  - • Types – every cache type must follow these rules
    - ▪ Types with a physical stage must follow all container and location rules below:
      - ✓ Traditional
      - ✓ Multi-Cache
      - ✓ Mystery
      - ✓ Letterbox Hybrid
      - ✓ Whereigo
    - ▪ Completely virtual caches are not limited by location and have no container, but must follow guidance regarding digging and property damage:
      - ✓ EarthCache
      - ✓ Virtual
      - ✓ Adventure Lab
    - ▪ Event caches including "CITO" (Cache In, Trash Out) can be hosted anywhere normally permitted but check all applicable Park rules if public facilities/services need to be rented or utilized. https://www.towamencin.org/departments/parks-recreation/parks/

- o Location
  - As of 2025, caches may <u>only</u> be placed in the Township in the following parks; all other parks and Township property are restricted at this time.
    - Bustard Road (1979 Bustard Rd)
    - Butch Clemens (130 Forty Foot Rd)
    - Green Lane (2201 Kriebel Rd)
    - Kibler Meadows (2365 Kerr Rd)
  - Caches should be at least 20' (6.1m) from neighboring properties and from PA Turnpike property (road, walls, spillways, etc.).
  - Each physical stage of a single cache must be 0.1 miles (528' or 161m) from the physical stage of another cache. This is confirmed by the Reviewer.
  - Do not bury a cache. They can be in an accessible cave or crevice or on the ground with coverage, but no new holes should be made. Finders are likewise not permitted to dig.
  - Earth and vegetation should not be impacted, e.g. cache should not be placed in or intrude on any designated natural area, or any area which is fragile or sensitive to foot traffic or otherwise unsafe.
  - Placing caches near or around buildings or structures must not damage or compromise them. Finders trying to retrieve the cache should not be able to easily damage the structure.
  - Do not place nor maintain caches after hours. Follow all park rules and regulations.
  - Container type
    - Ammo boxes/cans or militaristic appearing containers are prohibited.
    - PVC pipe or similar appearing containers are prohibited.
  - Container contents
    - Container should note its "GC" code, if not on the container itself, then at least on the paper log.
    - Contents, besides the log, can include an explanation of Geocaching, tradable items and trackables, but should not include any of the restricted items noted above under Finding a Cache".
- o You must be able to return to maintain your placed caches when finders report any problems or if a Reviewer, Geocaching HQ or the Township informs you of a problem.

Review of All Geocaches Located in Towamencin Township

- o For caches in Towamencin locations, the Geocache Community Official Reviewer(s) will inform each cache Hider(s) to submit the notification form to Towamencin Township as noted above under "Hiding a Geocache". The Township will acknowledge receipt of the notification form to the Hider(s) by email.
- o Reviewer(s) are asked to delay their listing of the cache(s) until the Hider(s) confirm to the Reviewer(s) that the form has been submitted to the Township.
- o The Township may contact the Reviewer or Geocaching Headquarters (HQ) to:
  - request a list of all caches and owners who have stages within the Township; requests may be sent *ad hoc* or on a periodic basis;
  - request a cache to be removed or adjusted https://www.geocaching.com/parksandpolice/ https://www.geocaching.com/help/