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Earthcaching FUNdamentals II
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EARTHCACHE MASTER
PLATINUM LEVEL

Anchorage and Valdez
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Outline

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- 1. What sets apart EarthCaches from the rest of the type of caches I hunt?
- 2. Logging your EarthCache experience (it's a journey of discovery with a test…)
- 3. Suggested log content – including those pesky photo requirements
- 4. Discover why National Parks have adopted EarthCaching on park lands
- 5. Concrete step by step illustration of how to submit an EarthCache
- 6. Where to go for more information

EarthCaches vs Others

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- Virtual – Puzzle – Webcam – Letterbox – Regular Cache
  These are caches humankind have hidden or created

- **Earthcaching**: An Earth Science Lesson - hunting for "treasures" the **Earth** has stored…

EarthCache Feature Types – based on Geologic Site Classifications:
Cave/Karst – Coastal – Erosional – Fault – Fold – Fossil Site –
Geomorphological – Glacial – Historical Site – Hydrologic –
Igneous (Plutonic) – Igneous (Volcanic) – Impact – Metamorphic –
Mineral Site – Mining Site – Other – River – Sedimentary – Structural

EarthCache Master - *by the Geological Society of America*:

- **Bronze:** Log 3+ EC in 2+ states/countries
- **Silver:** Log 6+ EC in 3+ states/countries & have developed 1or more Earthcaches
- **Gold:** Log 12+ EC in 4+ states/countries & have developed 2 or more Earthcaches
- **Platinum:** Log 20+ EC in 5+ states/countries & have developed 3 or more Earthcaches

THE GEOLOGICAL SOCIETY OF AMERICA®

EARTHCACHE MASTER PLATINUM LEVEL

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EarthCache Log Content:

- **READ** the cache page for logging requirements!
- Cache must **EDUCATE** you about **GEOLOGY**
- Make note of what you're to learn, observe, measure, identify, etc. **STUDY IN ADVANCE.** Pay special attention to tools needed at site
- Uniqueness of cache learning requirements **MAY INCLUDE** mandating a photograph
- You **MUST** email the cache 'owner' with answers as part of the learning experience or your 'found' log will be deleted

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EarthCaches and National Parks

- More than 200 EarthCaches are found within America's National Park System
- First established at Acadia Nat'l Park, Maine
- Recognized as excellent learning tool in the Parks
- Established either by Park Staff, or by geocachers working in close coordination with Park Staff
- Denali National Park's extensive series of EarthCaches feature Park geological highlights

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EarthCache Development & Submittal

- Established in conjunction with Geological Society of America

- Now directly reviewed & approved from Groundspeak Special EC Reviewer Staff

- Submittal Form is on "Hide and Seek" tab's "Report a New Cache" link at geocaching.com

- Just like submitting a regular cache, *except…*

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Development & Submittal:

- EarthCache sites must provide Earth science lessons
- EarthCache sites must be educational - written to a reading age of a middle school (14 year old) student
- EarthCaches can be a single or multiple-point site
- EarthCaches must highlight a unique geological feature
- Follow the geocaching principles and adhere to the principles of Leave No Trace outdoor ethics
- Logging **MUST** involve visitors undertaking some educational task related to the Earth science at the site.
- All EarthCache sites developed **MUST** have **prior approval of the landowners** before submission

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Development & Submittal:

- **From the detailed submittal guidelines:**
  When applicable you must have written approval with the appropriate owner or land-managing agency. The name and contact details of the person from who you received approval **MUST** *be given at time of submission in the "Note to Reviewer". The developed text should be sent to the landholder/manager for approval.*

Remember these 3 Principles:

- **Location –** make it memorable – dramatic – worthy
- **Lesson –** teach a major geologic concept that will be remembered for a lifetime – via the KISS principle…
- **Logging –** make sure the questions are clear

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Development & Submittal:

- Commitment – Are you willing to take care of the cache indefinitely & answer finder email in a timely fashion?

- D/T – Rate accurately using Clayjar's tool on gc.com

- Difficulty should be at least a 2, but remember this is a learning experience – NOT a puzzle!

- Have you listed accurate attributes for the EarthCache?

- Are your logging requirements 'armchair-cacher' proof?

- Have you 'peer-reviewed' and spell-checked your work?

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Development & Submittal:

- **Find** EarthCaches *before* developing your own

- **Visit** EarthCache.org and scan the more than 11,000 EarthCache listings for ideas on style, presentation, questions, logging requirements, and cache page design – ***model excellence!***

- The world is our playground – let the Earth be our teacher. Your task is to take the visitor **beyond** reading signs and websites, into a learning interaction with our planet

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Avoid the Most Common EarthCache Issues

- Provide an Earth Science lesson. Biological, ecological, or archeological features will not be published (Guideline #1).
- Properly attribute the source(s) of information on your cache page (Guideline #3).
- Provide the answers to your logging tasks (Guideline #6).
- Include logging task(s) that includes a field observation which help the visiting cacher learn about the geology/Earth Science lesson you are trying to teach (Guideline #6)
- Make your photo requirement(s) optional (Guideline #7).
- Provide the name, title, and contact details of the Land Manager who authorized this EarthCache (Guideline #8).

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Resources

- **GeocacheAlaska! Education page:**
  http://www.geocachealaska.org/education.htm
- **GeocacheAlaska! Related Links:**
  http://www.geocachealaska.org/relatedlinks.htm
- **GeocacheAlaska! Forums:**
  http://geocachealaska.proboards.com/index.cgi
- **Geocaching.com Resources:**
  http://www.geocaching.com/resources/default.aspx
- **Geocaching Glossary of Terms:**
  http://www.geocaching.com/about/glossary.aspx
- **Geocaching Knowledge Books:**
  http://support.groundspeak.com/index.php?pg=kb.book&id=1
- **Geocaching.com Forums**
  http://forums.groundspeak.com/GC/
- **Geocacher University: http://www.geocacher-u.com/**

Resources

- The Geological Society of America's EarthCache Program
  http://www.earthcache.org/
- EarthCache Masters Program: http://www.geosociety.org/earthcache/ecMasters.htm
- EarthCache Submittal Guidelines (detail):
  http://www.geosociety.org/earthcache/guidelines.htm
- EarthCache Knowledge Books
  http://www.geosociety.org/earthcache/knowbook.html
- EarthCache Frequently Asked Questions
  http://www.geosociety.org/earthcache/faq.htm
- Geocaching.com Forums – look for EarthCache listing:
  http://forums.groundspeak.com/GC/
- Alaska Land Manager/Permit information:
  http://www.geocachealaska.org/landmanagers.htm
  Questions? Contact Advocacy Committee Chairperson, Randy Cler (Cavyguy)