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## EarthCaching FUNDamentals

by  
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Anchorage, Wasilla, Central Kenai Peninsula,  
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15 April 2010

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## EarthCache Outline:



- EarthCaches vs Other Cache Types
- EarthCache Master Program 
- Your EarthCache Log Content
- National Parks & EarthCaches 
- Develop & Submit an EarthCache
- Resources

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## EarthCaches vs Others



- 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

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**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 1 or 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



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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**



- Nearly 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 NP 'owns' 6 of 10 EarthCaches in park area – done by AK Geographic / Murie Learning Center

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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 7,200 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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### Resources



- The Geological Society of America’s EarthCache Program  
<http://www.earthcache.org/>
- EarthCache Masters Program:  
<http://www.geosociety.org/earthcache>
- EarthCache Submittal Guidelines (detail):  
<http://www.geosociety.org/earthcache/guidelines.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, Stacy Byas (Saidbystacy)

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