

Cache Finding FUNdamentals



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Anchorage, Soldotna, Valdez,
and Cordova
29 September 2011

Before We Begin...



- Geocache Alaska! is YOUR Organization and we need YOUR help!
- We need Volunteers to serve on the Board of Directors and the special Committees that make events such as this one possible.



We Need Your Help



- ❖ A small group of volunteers have built and run this organization for everyone's benefit
- ❖ To share the workload and keep this group moving forward with various projects, we need some more volunteers to help run the Board of Directors as well as serve on the various committees
- ❖ And now, back to your regularly scheduled program...

The Rundown:



- ▶ Getting to Ground Zero (GZ)
- ▶ Sizing Up the Hide Area
- ▶ The Circle of Accuracy
- ▶ Why you should Read the Cache Listing
- ▶ Hints and Past Logs
- ▶ Alternate Coordinates
- ▶ What if you can't find it?
- ▶ Logging your Find
- ▶ Tools of the Trade
- ▶ Cache Pack Inventory

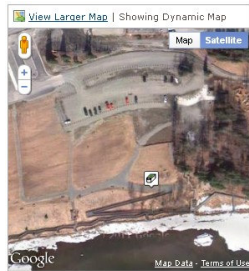
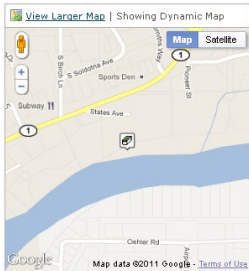


Getting to Ground Zero



- ❖ Load the Coordinates into your GPSr
- ❖ Look at the map and satellite images of the area to figure out the best approach
- ❖ If the cache is off the road system, using the NW Trails overlay in your GPSr can help show you the trails to get there
- ❖ Additional waypoints may have recommended parking or trailheads

Maps & Satellites



Satellite view can get you close to the cache

Sizing Up the Hide Area



- Upon arrival near the cache site, stop and look around, taking an inventory of possible hides
- In the urban environment, stay back for a bit and look for Muggle activity and try to plan your approach so that you don't compromise the hide
- Sometimes it is better to plan on returning during other times of the day, week, or season
- In the wilderness, it's often best to just walk right up to the cache marker on your GPSr (zoom in) and then take a good look around you for all the places that one could hide a cache of that size

Dedication...



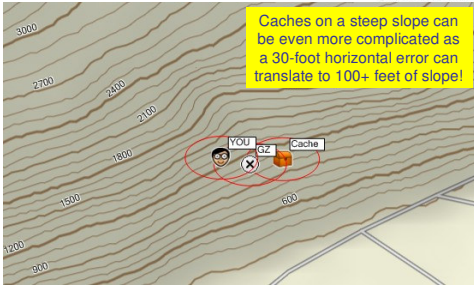
Sometimes you just need to put your gloves on and get down and dirty to start looking!

The Circle of Accuracy



- Remember that the GPS satellites and atmospheric conditions that affect the signals are constantly changing, so you may have a slightly different position than the hider did
- Modern GPSr's are generally accurate within about 30 feet, but if the hider was off by 30 feet one way and today you're off by 30 feet the other way, that can give you up to 60 feet of ground error between the two measurements
- If you don't find the hide right at GZ, increase your search area in a circular pattern outward

Circles of "InAccuracy"



Errors can compound between when the CO saved GZ and You show up to search

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Read the Cache Listing!



- o With all the paperless caching methods available, reading the cache listing in advance has fallen by the wayside with many cachers
- o If the hide is not immediately obvious, you can save yourself a lot of frustration by reading the entire cache listing online or via your paperless device if you have entire cache listings saved in it
- o If the CO was nice, they might give you hints or perhaps even tell you outright where the cache is hidden
- o As CO's, remember that you're hiding the cache from Muggles and you should try to at least give some hints as to where the cache is hidden; spoiler photos in the gallery are also a great idea for really tricky hides

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Hints and Past Logs



- Some like to start the hunt without the hint, but remember to check it if you're having a hard time finding the cache
- If the cache listing and hint don't get you there, try reading through some of the past logs as there can quite often be spoilers and hints that other cachers have left when they found it
- Simple direction and distances are common, such as "found the cache 20 feet north of GZ" are often indicators of "fuzzy" coordinates

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Alternate Coordinates



- ❑ Some finders will take a new set of coordinates when they find a cache seems to be “off” and post them along with their found it log
- ❑ If you look through past logs on the cache listing and see alternate coordinates, consider entering these as a 2nd waypoint when you load the cache to your GPSr before heading out
- ❑ Using a 2nd point allows you to look at both locations, as the alternate coords may not be any better than the CO’s original coords
- ❑ Using programs such as GSAK can make capturing these alternate coordinates easier

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What if you can't find it?



- Step back and look the area over – are you getting “tunnel vision” on where you initially assumed the cache might be hidden?
- Open up the search circle around GZ and look for other possible locations
- Reread the cache listing, hint, and past logs
- It’s perfectly fine to log a “Did Not Find” and come back another day!
- DNF is NOT a failure! It just means you’re trying and you haven’t quite got there yet

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Logging your Find



- When you find the cache, remember to sign the log with at least your “handle” and the date
- With micro and “nano” caches, please write small so the log will last longer
- Trade fair! Pick up and/or drop off your travel bugs and geocoins as appropriate
- Promptly enter your online log, especially if you exchanged a traveler
- Consider entering your own alternate coordinates if the published ones seemed off

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Tools of the Trade



- ✦ Flashlight
- ✦ Screwdrivers
- ✦ Inspection Mirror
- ✦ Magnetic retrieval tool
- ✦ Hemostat, Tweezers
- ✦ Black Light for UV Puzzle or Night Caches
- ✦ Good eyes, glasses, and/or magnifying glass
- ✦ Gloves

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Cache Pack Inventory



- List will vary according to the season and how far you're going off the beaten path; the further you go, the more you should plan your kit:
- Bring your GPSr and some spare batteries!
- Compass and map(s) of the area
- Cell Phone, SPOT, or PLB and leave your travel plans with a friend
- Water and trail snacks
- Bug dope & head net
- Rain gear, warm clothing in layers, hat, extra socks
- First Aid Kit, matches, and emergency signaling devices
- Camera
- Notebook, pens (Space Pen), extra log sheets, Ziploc bags
- SWAG for trading in caches; Bag for TBs & geocoins
- Trash bag (CITO), hand cleaner or wipes
- Pocket knife

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Resources



- GS Knowledge Books:
support.groundspeak.com
- GeocacheAlaska! Forums:
geocachealaska.proboards.com
- Switchback's NW Trails:
www.switchbacks.com/nwtrails/

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