

**GEOCACHE ALASKA!** Inc. 

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**Geocaching Outdoor Safety  
FUNdamentals**

presented by  
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Anchorage, Fairbanks,  
Ketchikan, Soldotna & WebEx  
21 August 2014

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**2014 Coins are In!** 

The 2014 Spectacled Eider Coins in silver and gold satin finishes are now available



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**Tonight's Topics:** 

- ▶ Safety Mindset
- ▶ Trip Planning
- ▶ Communications
- ▶ Equipment
- ▶ First Aid
- ▶ Wild Animals
- ▶ Firearms



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**Safety Mindset** 

- ❖ Situational Awareness
- ❖ Stop. Think. Assess the safety of your situation prior to starting the activity. What can go wrong?
- ❖ Ask yourself if you have the skills and all the equipment to accomplish the given task safely.
- ❖ It is always better to avoid an accident or bad situation instead of reacting to things going wrong in the process.
- ❖ Is going after this cache or taking this route really the best option at this time?
- ❖ If you don't have the skill, equipment, and help to do it safely, then just put it on your "to do" list for later.

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**Safety Mindset** 

Situational Awareness?



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**Safety Mindset** 

**Consider some hazards:**

- ❖ Slippery slopes, steep terrain, and dangerous climbs
- ❖ Rapid water currents in streams and rivers
- ❖ Avalanche zones
- ❖ Thin ice & glaciers
- ❖ Campfire safety... Is it Out Cold?
- ❖ Dangerous people... Squatters, poachers, & "crazies"
- ❖ Motorized travel... Getting too far out to walk back
- ❖ Dangerous animals
- ❖ Lack of communication to call for help

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**Safety Mindset** 

Carefully consider this action. What can go wrong here?



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**Trip Planning** 

- Gather info about where you're going and look at maps and online reviews for details
- Put together all the equipment that you will need to bring with you to cover any situation
- Should you bring a friend or two along?
- Tell someone where you're going, how you'll get there and when you'll be back
- Leave a written Wilderness Trip Plan with a trustworthy person *(example on next slide)*

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**Trip Planning** 

*Download this Trip Plan from the AK State Troopers to leave with a trustworthy person (or two) when you go*

		Alaska State Troopers <b>Wilderness Trip Plan</b>	
<b>How to use this Trip Plan:</b>		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Fill out this Trip Plan before you leave home.</li> <li>2. Leave the Trip Plan with someone you trust.</li> <li>3. If you don't come home at the expected time that person should call the Alaska State Troopers and give them this Trip Plan.</li> </ol>	
My name is: _____		Date of Birth: _____	
My address: _____		Phone #: _____	
I will leave on: _____		I will come back on: _____	
I am traveling by: (circle one) Car - Snowmachine - Airplane - Boat - On-foot - Other			
My car/snowmachine/airplane/boat is: (provide a description.)			
The place I am going, and the route I will be taking are:			

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## Communications



- Be able to call for help if you get into trouble
- Cell phones are easy, but coverage is limited
- Satellite phones are very expensive, but you can use them nearly anywhere you go
- Consider a satellite phone rental for extended "off the grid" expeditions into the backcountry
- Messenger devices bridge the gap with lower cost and the coverage of a satellite phone
- These include [SPOT](#) and [inReach](#) text devices

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## Communications



- The **SPOT** satellite messenger has a built-in GPS that will find your current position and send that as a text message or email for you
- Near real time Tracking is also available
- It also has Help and SOS message functions
- You pre-set the actual messages for the Check In and Help functions as well as who gets them
- The SOS function goes to a response center
- The **SPOT** Connect couples to a smart phone
- The **inReach** device couples with a DeLorme GPS and allows real time messaging
- All of these use satellite communications

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## Equipment



- ✗ Shelter
- ✗ Clothing
- ✗ Fire
- ✗ Water
- ✗ Food
- ✗ Signal
- ✗ Light
- ✗ First Aid



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**First Aid**  

- ❖ Always carry at least a basic first aid kit
- ❖ Keep a good first aid kit in your vehicle
- ❖ The most important things are to be able to control bleeding and stabilize joints
- ❖ Outdoors injuries are usually trauma with bleeding, joint injuries, or bone injuries
- ❖ The goal is to stop bleeding and be able to stabilize and move the victim if needed

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**First Aid** 

- ❖ Consider the medical needs of everyone in your group and carry appropriate items
- ❖ For example, if someone is allergic to bee stings, then carry a bee sting kit with an epinephrine auto injector and Benadryl
- ❖ Diabetics should have a meter with some glucose, insulin, and maybe Glucagon inj.
- ❖ Someone with asthma needs an inhaler

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**First Aid** 

- ❖ A basic first aid kit should include band aids, gauze pads, gauze wrap, medical tape, Coban (Vet) wrap, shears, triangular bandages, combo trauma dressings or military battle dressing and a tourniquet
- ❖ Contents should be packed in a sturdy waterproof container that is light and easy to carry or pack into your gear

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**First Aid** 

- ❖ Take CPR and First Aid classes through various public sources at least every other year to keep up to date on procedures
- ❖ Check the contents of your first aid kits prior to every trip and at least annually
- ❖ When traveling with a group, everyone should go through the kits together

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**First Aid** 

- ❖ The first steps during an emergency are to assess the victim to determine the extent of the injuries and call for help
- ❖ Make sure they are breathing adequately
- ❖ Quickly apply a dressing and direct pressure to any bleeding wounds
- ❖ If bleeding cannot be controlled with direct pressure, consider a tourniquet right away

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**Wild Animals** 

- We're in Alaska; wild animals are a given
- Situational awareness is your best defense against an animal encounter
- Keep your head up and looking around, be prepared to abandon your route and leave
- Travel in small groups and making human noises (talking) will scare off most critters before you accidentally surprise them

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**Wild Animals** 

Pop quiz... Which one of these is the most dangerous?



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**Wild Animals** 

Moose are your mostly likely dangerous encounter!



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**Wild Animals** 

- Moose are amongst the most dangerous of our Alaskan Big Game animals
- They are generally not afraid of people and they'll allow you to get far too close
- If they feel threatened, they will charge, knock you over and stomp on you
- Give a cow with calves a very wide berth
- They don't maneuver quickly; use a tree

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**Wild Animals** 

- Black bears are generally skittish and will usually avoid people or run away
- A black bear following or attacking a person is hunting you for food and would be the most dangerous of encounters
- In a black bear attack, stand your ground, yell, wave your arms and fight back
- Forget the trees; they are great climbers

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**Wild Animals** 

- Brown bears typically look at people with curiosity, but usually not as prey
- Brown bear attacks are generally defensive when you invade their space
- In most brown bear attacks, your best action is to lower your profile and back away; if knocked down, "play dead"
- If possible, climb a tree to get out of reach

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**Wild Animals** 

- Your best defense is avoiding encounters
- Travel in groups of 3 or more will usually keep bears at bay; make noise as you go
- Pepper spray is a good defense against most bears. Wait until they are within 10-15 feet and spray directly into their face
- Immediately leave as the scent of the pepper spray is actually a bear attractant

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## Wild Animals



➤ A curious bear will quickly leave when hit with pepper spray in the face; however an aggressive and charging bear might not



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## Firearms



- When considering a firearm to defend your life, you must first practice to proficiency
- You must select the right tool for the job
- The ammunition must perform the required task
- You must be able to quickly and under enormous stress, draw, aim, and accurately shoot at a moving target's vital zone
- You must understand what the bullets will do and where they must hit the given threat
- Are you ready to take on these responsibilities?

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## Firearms



- If you choose to carry a firearm, you **MUST** adhere to the **Safety Rules:**
- **1** – All guns are always loaded
- **2** – Do not let the muzzle cover anything you are not willing to destroy
- **3** – Keep your finger off the trigger until your sights are on target and you're ready to fire
- **4** – Be sure of your target, as well as its surroundings and beyond

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**Firearms**

- The right tools!
- Most DLP bear shootings are with a handgun
- The revolver offers 5 or 6 trouble free shots with very few things that can malfunction
- A semi-auto pistol offers more ammo, but with safeties and many moving parts, they can fail, especially when the fight “goes to the ground”
- Big bore pistols have more power, but they are heavy, recoil more, and harder to get a 2<sup>nd</sup> shot
- Consider calibers from .357 Magnum and up

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**Firearms**

- Shotguns are often carried as bear guns
- A pump shotgun can hold 4 to 8 rounds of ammo
- Various types of ammo are available, but bear defense should always be with hard-cast slugs
- A short, or pistol grip stock coupled with a short barrel is more manageable than a rifle
- For bear defense, use only 10 or 12 gauge

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**Firearms**





- Rifles offer the most effective bullet delivery
- Ammunition performance is far better
- The disadvantage is that they are larger, slower to bring into action and awkward to carry
- A lever action is more compact, easy to use, and carries more ammunition than a bolt action
- Open sights beat optics for “panic shooting”

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**Firearms**



- Shot placement is the key!
- If you shoot a bear, you **MUST** kill it! It is far worse to wound a bear and have it run off
- Do not shoot at a charging bear's head as it is armored
- You need to hit the heart and lungs by shooting at the chest
- A charging bear is a very small target. Shoot below the head.



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**Firearms**



- While the state allows for you to defend your Life or Property from bears, you must immediately report a DLP shooting to the State Troopers
- You must skin the bear and deliver the hide and usually the skull to the Troopers
- You will be required to complete reports and be investigated by the Troopers to verify the DLP
- You run the risk of being charged with Poaching
- Therefore, carrying a firearm for personal defense should never be taken lightly

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**Resources**



- GS Knowledge Books: [support.groundspeak.com](http://support.groundspeak.com)
- GeocacheAlaska! Forums: [geocachealaska.proboards.com](http://geocachealaska.proboards.com)
- GeocacheAlaska! Website: [www.geocachealaska.org](http://www.geocachealaska.org)
- AK Fish & Game: [www.adfg.alaska.gov](http://www.adfg.alaska.gov)
- Bear Smart website: [www.bearsmart.com](http://www.bearsmart.com)
- Gun Safety: [en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gun\\_safety](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gun_safety)
- Join or Renew GeocacheAlaska! Sourdough Membership: [www.geocachealaska.org/join\\_geocachealaska.htm](http://www.geocachealaska.org/join_geocachealaska.htm)

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