




**GEOCACHE ALASKA!** Inc.   
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**Trackables FUNdamentals**  
 presented by  
 Randy Cler  
 ([cavyguy](#)) 

 Anchorage BP Energy Center  
 & Broadcast over the Internet via WebEx  
 15 March 2012

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*Tonight's Topics:* 

- ▶ What are Trackables?
- ▶ Types of Trackable Items
- ▶ Owning Trackables
- ▶ Moving Trackables
- ▶ Discovering Trackables
- ▶ Trackables Tips



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**What are Trackables?** 

- A uniquely serial numbered item that is registered in the Geocaching.com system
- Can be both physically and “electronically” placed into and picked up from geocaches
- The original trackable item from Groundspeak was the Travel Bug Dog Tag:

**Travel Bug Trivia:**

- Old Style TB had 6 Stamped Numbers
- New Style = Etched Letters and Numbers



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### What are Trackables?



- A Trackable item from Groundspeak has it's own listing webpage at Geocaching.com
- Just like a geocache, it gets a unique ID number and belongs to an individual geocacher
- Any geocacher can enter logs on a Trackable's page similar to entering logs for a geocache
- In order to "retrieve" or "discover" a Trackable, the geocacher must have the serial number to prove that they have actually seen the item
- For this reason, always keep this number secret

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### Types of Trackables



- The Travel Bug Dog Tag can be used all by itself, but it is designed to be attached to another object, aka a "hitchhiker"
- They are sold as a pair of tags; one is a copy that the owner keeps and the other is the original that is released to travel
- Sometimes the serial number is used on another item: For example, it can be written on a vehicle or printed on a T-shirt, hat, walking stick or backpack




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### Types of Trackables



- A rapidly growing segment of trackable items is the Geocoin, which also bears a serial number
- There is no limit to the shape, size, and variety of Geocoins that are available out there
- Many Geocoins have a unique icon that is attached to your profile when you log the coin




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## Types of Trackables



- A number of other “dog tag” style trackables are also available from Groundspeak and others
- These have various characters and designs, but are all designed to be attached to other items



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## Trackable Proxies



- Due to the tendency for shiny coins to go missing, there are more and more “proxy” geocoins appearing in the wilds
- They may be laminated photo copies of the original coin or more permanent items such as the “stunt doubles” produced by [GxProxy](#)



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## Owning Trackables



- Purchased through Groundspeak or one of many Third Party vendors or Geocoin producers (e.g. Oakcoins, Landsharkz)
- A trackable item remains the private property of the registered Owner
- Keeping a trackable without the Owner's permission is stealing – *Move It or Leave It*
- Trackables must first be “**Activated**”

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## Activating Trackables



- The “Owner” of the trackable is the geocaching account that is logged in during the Activation process
- You need a special code from the vendor that must be entered to Activate the item
- Then you will be able to create the listing for the trackable that will be viewable by other geocachers when they find it

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## Activating Trackables



- Like a regular geocache listing, the Owner can edit the Trackable’s listing at any time
- You can also add photos to the listing
- Do NOT include any photos where the Trackable’s serial number is visible!
- Give your Trackable a **Specific GOAL**
- Goals can be nearly anything you can dream up, but keep it fun and doable

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## Trackable Goal



- Trackables without a specific goal often don’t get as much attention or photos
- A Trackable with a well-defined goal that is clearly spelled out on both the online listing as well as durably attached to the Trackable, will often elicit more attention
- If you want photos, ask for specific photos in specific locations or with certain objects

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### Moving Trackables



- If the Trackable is shown in the cache where you picked it up, go ahead and log it using **Retrieved From** log type
- You will have to visit the Trackable's page in order to enter a **Retrieved From** log
- This will move it from the geocache listing into your personal Inventory
- If the Trackable is not listed in the cache, read through some older logs to see if it was just dropped off and not logged yet

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### Moving Trackables



- Give the other cacher a little time to enter their own log to **Drop** the Trackable
- If the Trackable is listed in any other place than where you picked it up, you may use the **Grab It** log type to update the location
- Generally, when you **Grab** a Trackable, you'll want to write in the online log where you found it (cache GC# and location)
- A **Grab** will move it to your Inventory

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### Moving Trackables



- It's a good practice to **Dip** any **Grabbed** Trackable back into the cache where it was found to get the mileage point fixed
- A Trackable accumulates mileage based on the distance between visited caches
- Missing **Drops** or **Dips** skews the mileage
- **Dipping** means to log the Trackable into a cache and then pick it right back up
- There are two methods of **Dipping**...

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### Moving Trackables



- The easiest method to **Dip** a Trackable is to simply select “**Visited**” in your Inventory list while you are entering your cache log
- A **Visiting** Trackable is automatically given the mileage point for the cache visit
- The old method of **Dipping** involved **Dropping** the Trackable into the cache while you entered your cache log
- Then you had to visit the Trackable’s page and enter a separate **Retrieved From** log

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### Moving Trackables



- If you’ve already entered your cache log, or have previously found the cache, then you can still **Drop** or **Dip** any Trackables by entering a **Write Note** log on the cache
- It is perfectly acceptable to revisit caches simply for moving Trackables, just make sure that you use the **Write Note** log type
- For example, a **Travel Bug Hotel** is a cache intended to get lots of Trackables moving in and out with many repeat visits

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### Moving Trackables



- When you leave a Trackable in a cache, you must enter a log on the cache page and select “**Dropped Off**” next to the Trackable in your Inventory list, located below the text entry box
- Be prompt in entering a log when you **Drop** a Trackable as another cacher could have picked it up just minutes after you left
- Some will try to enter a **Write Note** log within a couple hours to **Drop** the Trackables off, and then come back and enter their **Found It** logs at a later time, when you’re in a hurry

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### Discovering Trackables



- If you see a Trackable in a cache, but do not take it, you may record the serial number and enter a **Discovered It** log
- You will still get credit on your profile for the number of **Trackables Moved or Discovered** and add any custom coin icon
- This also lets the Trackable Owner know that their item is still safe and that it is still physically present in the listed cache

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### Discovering Trackables



- At Events, Trackables are often shared in a Show-and-Tell setting where people will write down the serial numbers and enter a **Discovered It** log after the Event
- If you do pick up a Trackable at an Event, please log a **Retrieved From** or **Grabbed It** log to move it to your own Inventory ASAP
- Events are scary to Trackable Owners as they often go **Missing** when picked up without anyone entering a **Retrieved** log

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### Missing Trackables



- The Trackable Owner or the Cache Owner where a Trackable is listed in Inventory can "**Mark Item Missing**" to change the location to Unknown
- This corrects the cache inventory so that it does not show missing Trackables
- Cache Owners should check their cache inventory listings periodically and move Trackables to Missing as needed
- You can **Grab** a Missing item, if found

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### Missing Trackables



- If you visit a cache and find that a listed Trackable is not in the cache, please mention this in your cache log for the benefit of the CO
- Also, consider entering a [Write Note](#) log on the Trackable to let the Owner know it is not in the cache where it is listed (no serial # needed)
- After a reasonable amount of time with logs stating the item is Missing, either the Cache Owner or Trackable Owner can then move the Trackable to the Unknown location
- Trackables have been known to sneak into the bottom of cache packs and pop up months or years later and move thousands of miles

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### Trackable Tips



- Respect the Goals and always move a Trackable toward its listed Goal
- When taking photos of Trackables, either hide the serial number while taking the picture or black out the number afterward
- Never post photos that show the number or write the number in the physical logbook or in your online log entries
- You may use the TB# as a reference

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### Trackable Tips



- Try to move any Trackable that you pick up within two weeks if you can
- If you will hold a Trackable more than that, Write Note to the Trackable or send the Owner a message to let them know
- Ask permission before doing anything unusual with a Trackable, such as sending it through a Stargate, mailing it, or making any repairs or modifications to it

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### Trackable Tips



- Avoid placing Trackables in caches that have a high risk of being Mugged
- Do not place Trackables in extremely remote caches that get few visitors
- Avoid trapping Trackables in caches that will soon be inaccessible due to winter
- Move Trackables often and Dip them into all the caches you visit in between pick up and finding the right place to Drop Off

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### Join GeocacheAlaska!



- Your *Cheechako* Membership is vital & free!
- Your paid *Sourdough* Membership is appreciated
- Please visit our online [Forums](#) and post something; a question, tip, geocaching story, or just feedback on other topics



**Please... Join Us**

How could you possibly say no?

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### Resources



- Geocaching.com Trackables Page: [www.geocaching.com/track](http://www.geocaching.com/track)
- Groundspeak Help Center: [support.groundspeak.com](http://support.groundspeak.com)
- GeocacheAlaska! Forums: [geocachealaska.proboards.com](http://geocachealaska.proboards.com)
- Geocoin Information Page: [www.geocaching.com/track/geocoin.aspx](http://www.geocaching.com/track/geocoin.aspx)

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