# OKIC - Maker's Handbook

*"When you go to hide a geocache, think of the reason you are bringing
people to that spot. If the only reason is for the geocache, then find a better spot."*

Finding a great geocache can make for an awe-inspiring adventure, but those adventures do not magically appear on their own. They are concocted inside the brilliant mind of a Geocache Maker. This crazy thing we call geocaching would simply not exist without the people who channel their creativity and innovative spirit into making great experiences for others.

This is a brief guide developed to aid in the Geocache placement process for the OKIC (Ohio, Kentucky and Indiana Cachers) region, Greater Cincinnati.
   *(This guide is mainly focused on hiding geocaches in South West Ohio, with some information on Northern Kentucky and south East Indiana.)*

*Please make sure the FIRST thing you do is read every word of: http://www.geocaching.com/about/guidelines.aspx
Print it out, take notes on it and highlight things you feel are important for you to remember! This will save a lot of time for you, the Volunteer Reviewer, the Site Manager and the Geocaching Community as a whole.

We have done much of the leg work for you but we cannot do it all. If you would like to take the steps beyond just finding Geocaches and you would like to be a "Maker", you may have to step out of your comfort zone.

## What is Geocaching? How-to Describe it!

We have this question asked nearly daily as we have worked hard to raise awareness of the art, history and culture of the Greater Cincinnati Region. Site managers are interested in a few things:
- What is Geocaching?
  - We describe it as "a worldwide scavenger hunt typically using Smart Phones and GPS."
- What will they be looking for or what will be placed here?
  - "The only real requirements is a container with a log paper for them to sign and date, however if the container is large enough kids will tend to leave toys to swap around with other kids to find."
    Always make sure to have a container (or the container you plan to use) on hand to show off.
- If someone gets hurt, can I be sued?
  - Ohio Revised Code 1533.18 & 1533.181 helps protect land owners from the liability of people getting hurt. This is covered in FAQ#1. ***Remember, you cannot legally advise people on legal matters but you can share with them what the Ohio Revised Code says.***
- Can I advertise on your Geocache?
  - Unfortunately, no. However it will increase awareness of your location by participating in the recreation.
- How can I get more information?
  - The best thing to do is give them one of our "Geocaching with a Smart Phone" guides and offer to send them an email of YouTube videos. There are plenty of great videos provided by Geocaching.com!

## Listing your Geocache online!

To start your Geocache listing process use the following link http://www.geocaching.com/seek/ or navigate to it from the menu bar on Geocaching.com: Play > Hide & Seek a Cache

Please confirm your GPS coordinates are correct, a great way to do this is using Google Maps, Satellite View. Once you zoom in, typically can see great detail and can notice if your location is correct or not.
Example: If you are doing a park and grab on a light post in a parking lot, you can almost always see and confirm the exact light post! (But, not always..)
**Pro-Tip:** If you are using a handheld GPS unit to get your coordinates, please give extra time for it to pick up more satellites, this will ensure better accuracy. Also it is wise to use multiple brands of GPS units and then average the location they detect. If you are using Android, "Geocache Placer" by Rocologo in the Google Play Store is a decent app.

Once you have finished your creative masterpiece called a Geocache Description, please include a good write up to the reviewers to explain the details in full. Describe the location to the reviewer, describe the container exactly, and share the name of the person who you spoke with. Here is an example:
*"This geocache is a black magnetic hide-a-key container on the underside of a metal bench. It is not inside of the building and is available 24/7. I spoke with John the site manager for permission."*
This will greatly increase the chances of your listing being published without hang-ups. But, always BE HONEST!

One thing to remember, do not be afraid to flag "NO NIGHTS" or "NOT 24/7". This will grain the respect of the reviewers and the site managers. Consider it this way, would you want someone to come to your business or home in the middle of the night? Unless it is clearly available at night time, be willing to flag it as "NO NIGHTS" or "NOT 24/7".

**Reviewer has a problem with my listing?!**
This happens and really isn't a big deal! Trust me, reviewers are also active Geocachers and would love to earn the smiley on your geocache, but they have guidelines to follow and typically have to use their best judgment. Do not attempt to fight and argue, or spread drama. This helps no one! Be willing to work with them and learn what they expect. We have been able to greatly enhance our Geocache listings thanks to the reviewers that we have worked with!

# Volunteer Reviewers

The list of reviewers for our area has been included as many of them have great information available on their profile.

As for contacting them directly:
- If you are new to Geocaching or a new Maker and you have questions, reach out and connect with the OKIC community via the Facebook Group at **www.goo.gl/3qbjii**
- In the event you could still need help, please feel free to contact one of the reviewers as they typically will be willing to help.
- If you have a Geocache listing submitted and it is in review, please use "POST A REVIEWER NOTE" as these are deleted once the Geocache Listing is published.

**Ohio Reviewers:**

| | | **Kentucky Reviewers:** | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Keystone | http://coord.info/PRHZME | Thunder-Chicken | http://coord.info/PR7V3HT |
| The Brigadier | http://coord.info/PR81RV4 | Bluegrass Reviewer | http://coord.info/PR126E0 |
| Backwoods Reviewer | http://coord.info/PR52MAW | Doctor Teeth | http://coord.info/PR5CGGZ |
| Texas Tornado | http://coord.info/PR1MABM | IronHorseReviewer | http://coord.info/PR1FY22 |

**Indiana Reviewers:**

| | | **Earth Cache Reviewer:** | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Hoosier Reviewer | http://coord.info/PR7B8JH | geoawareCA | http://coord.info/PR3FZZ9 |

Please Remember: The VOLUNTEERS and do have real lives. Also please ALWAYS respect and be willing to work with reviewers! This will always yield the best results in getting your Geocache published!
(Please Note: Also from time to time, volunteers may take a break or retire.)

# Other FAQs

1. Is there legal protection for land owners in Ohio?
   *__We cannot give legal advice__ but we can share with you what Ohio Revised Code (ORC) 1533.18 & 1533.181 says:
   - 1533.181 Immunity. http://codes.ohio.gov/orc/1533.181
     - (A) No owner, lessee, or occupant of premises:
     - (1) Owes any duty to a recreational user to keep the premises safe for entry or use;
     - (2) Extends any assurance to a recreational user, through the act of giving permission, that the premises are safe for entry or use;
     - (3) Assumes responsibility for or incurs liability for any injury to person or property caused by any act of a recreational user.
     - (B) Division (A) of this section applies to the owner, lessee, or occupant of privately owned, nonresidential premises, whether or not the premises are kept open for public use and whether or not the owner, lessee, or occupant denies entry to certain individuals.
   - 1533.18 Recreational user definitions. http://codes.ohio.gov/orc/1533.18
     - (A) "Premises" means all privately owned lands, ways, and waters, and any buildings and structures thereon, and all privately owned and state-owned lands, ways, and waters leased to a private person, firm, or organization, including any buildings and structures thereon.
     - (B) "Recreational user" means a person to whom permission has been granted, without the payment of a fee or consideration to the owner, lessee, or occupant of premises, other than a fee or consideration paid to the state or any agency of the state, or a lease payment or fee paid to the owner of privately owned lands, to enter upon premises to hunt, fish, trap, camp, hike, or swim, or to operate a snowmobile, all-purpose vehicle, or four-wheel drive motor vehicle, or to engage in other recreational pursuits.
2. Q: Does law enforcement have any advice for Geocachers?
   A: Yep! http://blog.geocaching.com/2013/09/advice-to-geocache-hiders-from-law-enforcement/

3. Q: What kind of container is appropriate?
   A: Depends on the use! I will highlight a couple of examples that is good food for thought, however do not let what I say here restrict your creative thought process! So with that being said:
   - If you are placing in parks, some park districts have guidelines on what the container has to be.
   - If you are placing on private property, talk with the owner of the property and get their input.
   - In almost ALL situations, GLASS is not an appropriate container material!
   - It is wise to include the word "GEOCACHE" and the "GC-----" code on the outside of the container.
   - Be creative, but logical!
4. Q: How do I know if my cache should be a "Multi-Cache" or an "Unknown Cache" like a Puzzle?
   A: We have defined it for ourselves as: If you go to the location and retrieve the exact coordinates for the final location or for the next stage, then it is a Multi-Cache. If you go to a location and collect a number to then plug in and find out the coordinates, this is a Puzzle Cache / "Unknown Cache". However this is open for individual interpretation.
5. Q: How do I setup a "Letterbox Hybrid"?
   A: First let us go over what one is. Letterboxing dates back to the 1800 in England. To lead someone to the location you would give them directions such as "15 paces west." Now with a "Letterbox Hybrid" we have the pleasure of playing with multimillion dollar satellites! With that being said it is best to hold true to the traditional form of making a letterbox and do what is called "an off-set." This is where you use GPS coordinates to lead someone to a location, then instruct them in the fashion of "15 paces west." Please note: You must also include a STAMP inside of the letterbox container. (By the way, you do not have to off-set, it could be like a "Traditional Cache" where the coords lead directly to the container.)
6. Q: What if another Geocacher asks me to adjust my Geocache location?
   A: That is purely up to you! Simple PNGs that do not have a relevance to the area and could really be placed anywhere, sure! Why not adjust it to help out? If it is location specific, you can always try to work together and see if you could make a small adjustment so another location could fit there.
7. Q: Are there any "Introduction to Geocaching" guides available that I could share?
   A: Yes, there is! We have developed one based on people being introduced and using their smart phones.
   - Geocaching.com's official Guide Website: www.geocaching.com/guide/
   - AFK's Guide: http://afk.us/get-started/
   - 365Cincinnati has also wrote an "Intro to Geocaching Guide" available at: http://goo.gl/eux8qn
   - Also some great YouTube videos we link people to frequently:
     o http://goo.gl/qpyjzi      "What is Geocaching?"
     o http://goo.gl/g6t3kq      "Beginner's Guide to Finding a Geocache"
     o http://goo.gl/kau940      "Geocaching's iPhone App"
   - Printable PDF brochure to hand out. http://afk.us/get-started/ , look for "Geocaching Brochure."

**I would like to take a moment now to say, there has been a great amount of information covered in this handbook.. Please do not let it deter you from hiding your first Geocache!**

**<u>Do and adjust, do and adjust! This is how great Makers are made! So get out there and make your first hide!</u>**

# About the Author

We are a group of Geocachers that work as a team and are part of the Ohio, Kentucky and Indiana Cachers (OKIC) group. Currently we are the official Park Liaison servicing the needs of both the local parks and geocachers.
*You can find OKIC on Facebook at: www.goo.gl/3qbjii

We have also begun to develop geocaching as an outreach program to enhance awareness of the art, history and culture of the Greater Cincinnati Region! We work extensively to build relationships with local parks, organizations and municipalities in an effort to build several local GeoTrails, a large scale GeoTour and planning to build and establish a future MEGA Event in the Greater Cincinnati Region!

We appreciate your interests in becoming a Geocache Maker!
-AFK Staff                          help@afk.us
        Official Website            www.afk.us
        AFKtoGC Event Site          www.afktogc.com
        AFK FB Page                 www.facebook.com/AFKtoGC
        AFK FB Group Chat           www.facebook.com/groups/AFKtoGC

*Disclaimer: This document has been reviewed by the OKIC Steering Committee however was not a commissioned work and we have developed this guide on our own free will to aid and help OKIC cachers while we are the OKIC Park Liaisons. We share this information however use your best judgment as we are not liable for anything that goes wrong! If you use this guide or a modified version please link to: www.afk.us*

# Park Information and Tips

Please remember, we cannot include ALL parks/locations/municipalities/sites. Please be willing to take initiative to connect directly with the staff and discover who the site manager is. Always be willing to explain Geocaching to them when you are asking to place one.

Also, the information included is what the site managers/directors have asked me to input. Many of them have asked us to not share their direct phone numbers or email addresses as they have an established process they use to approve Geocaches. (This is in addition that staff seems to move around frequently and if I share exact details on some, they will be out of date every couple of months.)

*Please note: Information does chance, please always <u>check www.afk.us for</u> the most upto date version of this document! In addition, we can only provide step by step directions in districts that we have the experience! ..and still yet it changes and could be out of date by tomorrow! If you need help with getting the information about a location, feel free to post and ask on OKIC's Facebook Group page, ask a reviewer, contact us or contact the park directly. In addition, as park liaison, we will be adding to this list.. (Thank you to cache-n-out for helping a good deal on building this information!)

## Ohio Historical Society (OHS)
http://www.ohiohistory.org/museums-and-historic-sites/geocaching/placing-your-own-geocache-at-an-ohs-site
Most every historical site and museum in the State of Ohio is part of OHS, and so you must complete the requirements set forth by OHS.
1. Get approval from the site manager.
2. Print and Fill out the Geocache Guidelines (PDF) and the Geocaching Application (PDF)
3. Have the site manager sign off on the application
4. You or the site manager submit it to the OHS
5. Renew your application yearly as instructed.

*Please do not attempt to "honor" a location by placing one nearby. If in the future they would like to have a Geocache, be part of a GeoTrail or part of an Official GeoTour..You could cause a serious issue for the site.
Example: You ask a location if you can place a geocache on their property to bring attention to ___. They say no or not right now. Please do not go next door and place one to get around what they said.

## Cincinnati Parks
*They have requested all cache placements to please be put "ON HOLD."

## Great Parks of Hamilton County (GPHS), formally known as Hamilton county Parks (HCPD)
http://greatparks.org/activities/geocaching
GPHC Have worked very hard to refine their longtime regulations to make the recreation more enjoyable!
1. Review the Great Parks Geocache/Letterbox Policies (PDF) provided on their website.
2. Find your location you would like to place it, check to make sure that there is not another Geocache within 528 foot of it. Please do not proceed to Step #3 until you are confident about the location.
3. Submit your application online at the provided website..Wait for approval or other response. (This could take a couple of weeks.)
4. Once you are approved, place your container then submit your Geocache listing to reviewers for publication. (Please remember: GPHC Have strict guidelines on container use.)
5. Follow the correct renewal process.

## Clermont County Ohio Park District (CCOPD)
http://www.clermontparks.org/
CCOPD currently does not have regulations in place about Geocaching and plans to keep it that way, as long as they feel they are not abused! Please verify the coordinates and written description of its location would work.
Email: <u>krobinson@clermontcountyohio.gov</u>
- Please do not attempt to monopolize an area.
- Do NOT place a Geocache at Crooked Run Nature Preserve.
- Please use a plastic container that is clearly labeled. Do not use an ammo can.
- Try to keep the cache close to a trail, so people do not have to create a trail to reach it.
- Do not place in sensitive areas areas or areas with invasive species.

## Ohio State Parks (OHDNR - Ohio Department of Natural Resources)
https://ohiodnr.gov/BusinessServices/BGPermits/BGGeocaching/tabid/16090/Default.aspx
https://www.dnr.state.oh.us/tabid/22203/default.aspx

OHDNR Currently has worked to keep Geocaching open and available at their parks, as long as people received the proper approval from Park Management. (There is an application, we are working on making this available.)

1. Find the location you would like to place your geocache and make sure it is more than 528 foot from the next nearest geocache then contact the park management. If the park management is not sure of who to talk to, please direct your questions to:
   phil.hoffman@dnr.state.oh.us
   Good to Know: Items that you should submit when looking for approval would be: GPD Coordinates, Google Map Satellite photos of the area, detailed description of the container and the placement.
2. Once you receive approval, you may place your container then submit your Geocache listing for approval.

*Little Miami/Loveland Maderia Bike Trail (officially named Little Miami Scenic Trail) is a State Park and follows the same guidelines.*

*Park specific rules and regulations coming soon! Depending on the park manager is how they run Geocaching and park managers move around a bit. The above provided information is their "official public information."*

**Indiana State Parks (INDNR – Indiana Department of Natural Resources)**
- http://www.in.gov/dnr/7488.htm
- http://www.in.gov/dnr/7692.htm

**Anderson Township Park District**
- http://www.andersonparks.com/uploads/GeocacheRegistrationForm.pdf

## *Many more to come, once our team isn't AFK and can type them up!*

If you have additional information and resources that could be added to this guide, or would like to have a specific park added, please contact us thought the Facebook Group for OKIC or use the Contact form on **www.afk.us** website.

# Updates to Document

**Beta Publication #3 released.2014.03.31**
- Added gc blog post from Law Enforcement
- Added YouTube links to "addition information" in FAQs.
- Updated Park section to be called "Park Information and Tips"
- Added in a "Please Note" paragraph in the Park Info and Tip area.
- Added in information in reference to a number of park districts.
    - Cincinnati Parks
    - Great Parks of Hamilton County (GPHS), formally known as Hamilton county Parks (HCPD)
    - Clermont County Ohio Park District (CCOPD)
    - Ohio State Parks (OHDNR - Ohio Department of Natural Resources)
    - Indiana State Parks (INDNR – Indiana Department of Natural Resources)
    - Anderson Township Park District
- Added "If you have additional information" verbiage at the end of the Park Info and Tip area.
- Misc minor verbiage tweaks and typo errors.
- Added disclaimer.
- Changed "try, fail and adjust" to "do and adjust, do and adjust"
- Added in note that "More to come.."
- Added in "Guides". Geocaching.com, 365Cincinnati, AFK's Get Started, AFK Brochure.

**Beta Publication #2**
- Significant revision, too much to detail.

**Beta Publication #1**
- Initial test of documents information. Shared with OKIC Group and some local GC Reviewers for feedback.