

## How to hold a geocaching event

This page will describe the steps to plan a geocaching event. Mostly, these are common sense and are written to help “newbies” with their first event. The steps focus on planning for a simple “Meet N Greet” type event. Other events would be similar.

### 1. Choose a location.

The general location will have a fairly big impact on attendance. Some geocachers will travel a long ways for an event. Most wont. Your local or state geocaching group may be able to tell you how many members it has in your particular area.

In nice weather, meeting at a park shelter is great. The rest of the year, anyplace that serves food is a good choice. A pizza place, family restaurant or coffee shop with a meeting room will work nicely. Another good location is an outdoors shop with a meeting room.

### 2. Talk to the shop manager or park ranger

Businesses and, for the most part, parks want people to visit them. Talk to the person in charge and explain what you want to do.

For businesses, especially businesses that are not outdoors-related, simply saying you would like to hold a meeting is usually enough (they probably don't care anything about geocaching). They will likely want an estimate of how many people will attend. Some businesses may want a guarantee that every person will make a purchase, but most will understand that you are bringing a bunch of extra people to their store and most will buy something. Be aware that events *requiring a purchase as a condition to logging the event* will likely be denied listing on geocaching web sites that have a “no commercial caches” rule. One way around this is to charge a small registration fee for the event and include a small (purchased on their behalf) item in their registration.

There are very few park managers or rangers that don't know anything about geocaching. If you come across one of these folks, start by explaining geocaching in a way that will show them the benefits to their park (more visitors, outdoor-friendly visitors, CITO). Your local or state geocaching organization can help with this. They will probably have people who have done this before, and they may have other park managers that the new manager can be referred to. Getting off on the right foot with park managers is very important.

Some park managers/rangers have heard about geocaching and don't want it in their parks. You may be able to change their mind, but likely there is some bad past-incident that caused them to take the position. If they seem open to changing their position, you can discuss what you want to do. However it is often better to leave these discussions for your local or state geocaching group. Not only will they likely have the experience and resources to hold good discussions, but they may have more influence because they represent a group of geocachers, not just an individual.

The best are the parks that welcome geocaching. They allow geocaching in the park and will usually be excited to have an event held there. They may offer “extras” such as waiving the rental fee or insurance requirement, doing a naturalist presentation or suggestions on areas of the park to see great wildlife.

### 3. Pick a date

Once you have the okay, work with the manager to pick a date (or pick one and check back to make sure there are no conflicts).

### 4. Promote

With the date and location set, begin promoting.

Make up some flyers and see if you can leave them on the counter at stores where outdoor gear is sold. For parks, see if they will list the event in their newsletter. Don't forget to post the event info in online forums for geocaching and other outdoor groups.

Get the event listed on a geocaching website. Different sites will have different rules about how long in advance an event can be listed. A minimum of two weeks is a pretty good rule. For small, informal gatherings a maximum of four weeks is good. For large events with lots of activities, 2-3 months is okay, even longer may be warranted for events that have "special circumstances" (such as being held on a holiday weekend, or events that coincide with other activities in the area).

## 5. Prepare

For a basic Meet N Greet event there doesn't need to be much in the way of preparation. One very simple thing you can do is bring a package of name tags and some pens. This will help people strike up a conversation, for example, when they spot the person who hid that cache that drove them crazy last week.

If the event is not at a restaurant, you might consider providing some snacks. You could also make the event a potluck and ask everyone to bring a snack to share. Be sure to put this in the cache description when it is first listed.

You may want to hide a few temporary caches. This will be especially useful if you are doing more of a Geocaching 101 type event, where you expect people who are just learning about geocaching. You will hide these caches, and take the coordinates just like any other, but they will not be listed on the geocaching web site. If you will have access to a computer at the event location you can make the data available electronically (be sure to mention in the cache description that people should bring the data cable for their GPS). Otherwise, you can just hand out a sheet listing the coordinates during the event.

If you are hiding several caches, recruit some "Cache Masters" to help. This is a good way for people to gain some experience hiding caches without the commitment of having a cache listed on the web site. Seven to ten caches are usually enough for this type of event. Be sure to use a variety of containers, and hiding styles.

If you are at a park, work with the ranger or naturalist to a) stay out of "sensitive" areas of the park and b) show off areas of the park (maybe a patch of wildflowers, or a place where bald eagles are known to hang out).

After the event, be sure to collect all of the containers.

## 6. Event Day

That's all there is to it. When the event rolls around, show up a little early so you are there when the first people arrive. Then sit back and meet the people behind those screen names you've been seeing, make some new friends and have fun.

This document was prepared by the Events Committee of the Iowa Geocachers Organization and may be used in any way that benefits geocaching as long as this notice is left in tact.

Feel free to contact us at [www.IowaGeocachers.org/events\\_committee.php](http://www.IowaGeocachers.org/events_committee.php)