



Georgia Geocachers Newsletter

January 2009

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The Georgia Geocachers Association (GGA) publishes this notice once a month as a way to keep the membership informed of the events taking place each month. If you no longer wish to receive this newsletter, reply to this message with "UNSUBSCRIBE" in the subject line. Send comments, complaints, suggestions, and articles to Professor Shorthair through my Geocaching.com profile page or at [jeffcrom<at>bellsouth.net](mailto:jeffcrom@bellsouth.net).

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Out and About In Georgia – Elachee Nature Science Center by Geomuse

This is the first installment of what I hope will be a series of regular contributions to the GGA Newsletter. These articles will feature places to see while out and about in Georgia, as well as highlight caches near those fun-to-visit areas. This article will highlight the Elachee Nature Science Center, which is often the host site for the Annual GGA Challenge Event.

The Elachee Nature Science Center is located at 2125 Elachee Drive, Gainesville, Georgia 30504 and is considered one of the finest nature centers in Georgia. According to their website, "Elachee Nature Science Center, one of the premier nature centers in Georgia, provides environmental education programs in the form of school field trips for students and also as workshops, camps, and events for the general public. Elachee's sprawling campus, located in North Georgia, consists of a woodland refuge and an interactive museum that will excite and educate visitors of all ages. We invite you to visit and enjoy the [museum](#) and [nature preserve](#) or participate in our [SACS-accredited educational programs](#) for schools and groups which are designed to be engaging, educational, and memorable. Your visit may include a stop at our live animal exhibits and the native plant garden at the entrance to the Center. Surrounding the Center is the 1,500 acre Chicopee Woods Nature Preserve laced with over 13 miles of [nature trails](#). This large protected area with diverse habitats provides an ideal outdoor classroom, plant and animal sanctuary, and variety of scenic [hiking trails](#)."

I have had the opportunity to visit the center on six occasions, once with my daughter (izzy~bel's) Girl Scout troop during which we visited the wonderful museum, went on a wonderful night tour, and saw a program on their resident opossum. Several other visits included participation in and supporting the Annual GGA Challenge Event and volunteering helping with the GPS Summer School ([Visit GGA forum thread complete with pictures](#)).

The nature trails are well maintained, due in part to volunteers, including one of our own, ~erik~ and family. A [map of the trails](#) might help you find your way around, since wandering around on 1500 acres can sometimes be somewhat daunting. (Don't forget to mark your car!) Some of the sights I've seen while along the trail include a huge redtail hawk, various turtles, wild blueberries

(yes, you can eat them), and even a snake or two. Each visit to the nature preserve has reminded me why I love to be out and about in north Georgia.



If you can think of no other reason to visit this Georgia treasure, perhaps it might help to know there are geocaches in the nature preserve. On a recent excursion with TeamMcG and kids, we managed to hit 4 of the several caches in the area. Kids's Kache #3 – Elachee Cachee, Phileas Fogg Cache, Doggie's Day Out # 2, and HI EPE, provided all of the exercise and challenge needed for one day! Be certain to pick up a trail map before you start out – it will help as you navigate the terrain. I won't list all of the geocaches here, but a search from these coordinates: N 34° 13.589 W 083° 49.513, will provide enough entertainment for a fun-filled day as well as shelter to have a snack or some lunch. So be sure to pack a picnic!

(The suspension bridge at Elachee – photo by LZ33.)

Visit the Elachee Nature Science Center website by clicking [here](#).

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Caching Basics: Logging Your Find by Professor Shorthair

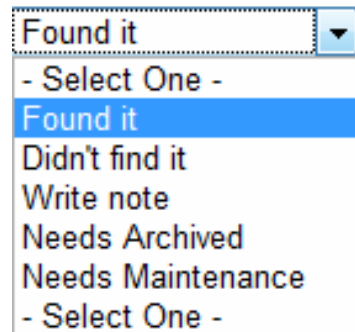
Okay, you loaded the coordinates into your GPSr, you made your way down the trail, you spotted a UPS (Unnatural Pile of Sticks), and you found the cache. You swapped swag and picked up the logbook. Now what?

Well, you log your find, of course. But what to write? Unfortunately, a look through the logbook of any older cache quickly reveals that the art of logging caches has declined somewhat. A cacher is liable to find lengthier and more interesting entries in the earlier pages, but often just a few words or only a signature in later logs.

To an extent, this is natural and understandable. Once a cache has been found a number of times, it may be difficult to find new things to say about finding it. But every cache hunt is different, and a good cache deserves the respectful gesture of a thoughtful log. Was the hike difficult? Was the cache easy or hard to find? Did you make any wrong turns on the way or have any other unusual adventures? Taking the time to write an interesting log greatly increases the enjoyment future cachers will have reading the logbook after finding the cache

There are times when a very brief log, or just a signature, is perfectly acceptable. A micro log, of course, usually doesn't have room for anything for anything except a signature. Many small caches with room for a few trade items use micro-style logbooks. And frankly, there are caches that you may not feel are worthy of a lengthy or thoughtful log. Finally, sometimes the presence of muggles nearby may require a quick sign-and-return of the logbook so that the cache can be re-hidden quickly.

When you get home, you have the opportunity to log your find online. Once you click "Log your visit," you are given five choices from the pull-down menu: "Found it," "Didn't find it," "Write note," "Needs archived," and "Needs maintenance." In almost all cases, one of the first two choices should be selected. If you found the cache, choose "Found it," and if you didn't, choose "Didn't find it." In reality, many cachers feel that there are gray areas in this decision - that there are times when you might not want to log a DNF, even if you didn't find the cache, or



that it is sometimes acceptable to log a find when you actually didn't sign the logbook. This is a subject for another time, but remember that what constitutes a find needs to be agreed on by the finder and the cache owner. If you log a find and the cache owner doesn't think that you have met the conditions for finding the cache, he/she can delete your log.

"Write note" should be chosen when your visit, for whatever reason, doesn't warrant claiming a find or a DNF. For example, a note should be used if you revisit a cache you've already found or if you visit a cache with a group and you haven't fulfilled the requirements for finding it (like finding the earlier stages of a multi-cache). A note can also be used when you place a travel bug in a cache you're already logged or when you want to report something (that's not too serious) about the condition of a cache to the owner.

The last two online logging choices should not be taken lightly. A "Needs archived" log will bring the cache to the attention of a cache reviewer, and should only be used if there is strong evidence that the cache is missing or the cache site has become unviable or dangerous, and that the cache owner is unresponsive. Do not use this option just because you can't find a cache – this is a last resort. An example of an appropriate use of "Need archived" would be when you find the velcro that once held a micro into place AND the cache hasn't been found in six months AND the cache owner hasn't logged onto geocaching.com for several months.

The "Needs maintenance" log is not quite as drastic, but should still be taken seriously. Using this option will put a "Needs maintenance" attribute (a red cross) in the attributes list. The cache owner then needs to post an "Owner maintenance" log or edit the caches attributes in order to remove it. This option should be used if the cache has a problem that will affect its future viability, such as a damaged container or a full log. Minor problems might be better handled with a friendly email to the cache owner.

Back to your "Found it" log – be thoughtful and give the cache its due. It is distressing to read the online logs of a great cache and see lots of "TFTC" and "9 of 13 for the day" logs. Many cachers use short, uninteresting logs for caches they were not particularly impressed with, but if it was a good cache, write a good log.

And don't "find" your own caches in order to boost your numbers. There is nothing stopping you from doing this, except that when other cachers notice this (and they will!), they are not going to think very highly of your caching ethics. Once again, there may be reasonable exceptions to this – there is a case in which a cacher has logged a find on one of his caches to keep his numbers straight after one of his legitimate "Found it" logs was deleted by a cacher who had a personal grudge against him.

There are plenty of examples of good, informative, entertaining cache logs. North Georgia cacher Slayerette is well known for her great logs. Here's an example: Slayerette's log from Amicalola River Cache - GCR04Y.

Holy Crap! This cache was a booger.

- First all the vines... Boxerlady was right: we needed snowshoes to get through that stuff. We looked like 2 drunks trying to walk through a field, 'cause we kept getting tangled up in the vines.

- The big water snake (possibly a moccasin) Mark saw as we went in towards the cache.

- The GPS is nearly useless in the area because the rock formation bounce the signal all over the place.

- ELJLYLE had rehidden that cache to the point it could only be found by accident.

- The booty slide that reopened my sliced finger.

- The piece of wood that looked like a big snake on the way back nearly made me wet my pants. I think boxerlady did.

- The pissed off bird that kept screaming for us to "GET OFF HER LAWN!"

- A big klutzy Girl scaling a boulder field and nearly losing her balance

- Grabbing the tree with poison Ivy on it to catch my balance.

- The vine field again: see first entry

But here's what I liked about this cache. EVERYTHING and all the above. It's what caching's all about. The whole package. The scenery, the adventure, the tall tales, the buddies you get to hang with, the tuna fish and cold ice water back at the car, scaling walls and hillsides (sometimes mountainsides). It's all fun as Heck. Thanks for the opportunity to hang with my buddies and have an adventure. This was definitely a really fun day... Though I am scraped, cut, bruised, battered, beat, sore, and smiling all the way to the next cache. Thanks Y'all.



(Amicalola River photo by Wakeboard Lanier.)

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**Technical Tidbit
by Joebids**

Did you know...

Once you've gotten a route established in Google maps, whether it was from Geocaching.com or your own independent route, you can then modify that route. Just put your mouse over anywhere on the blue route line and click/drag that route point to encompass additional area(s) you'd like to see or roads you'd like to take. The routing will reconfigure AS you drag and the directions/mileage will recalculate, too. This is a cool way to have it your way.

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2008 Outstanding Cache Voting

Be sure to check out the Members' area of the GGA forums and vote for Georgia's Outstanding Caches of 2008. There are 20 categories to vote in, from Georgia's Must Hit Cache to Georgia's Outstanding Waymark. Voting will be in the Members' Voting Forum and will end at midnight on January 11.

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January GGA Meeting

The first GGA meeting of 2009 will be at Callaway Gardens, north of Columbus, on Saturday, January 10 from 2:00 to 4:00 PM. There will be guest speakers, a raffle, and geocaching fellowship. Admission to Callaway Gardens is free for the months of January and February, so join us; Callaway has lots to offer, including more than 20 geocaches! For details, see the cache page:

http://www.geocaching.com/seek/cache_details.aspx?guid=5c48c4a5-4c0a-46e7-9053-35da6091d494

At press time, there were no other geocaching events scheduled in the state for January.

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December GGA Meeting Notes

This month the GGA took a break from the traditional program and had an event just to socialize. Everyone met for a wonderful breakfast buffet at the Golden Corral in Macon. In attendance were around 45 people including 33 existing members under 27 geonicks and 6 new members under 4 geonicks.

There was food, food and more food. Cachers had a chance to talk shop, compare notes and battle wounds from the trail. We were even lucky enough to have one raffle item a special 2007 Groundspeak Lackey coin that was won by Harelips.

We look forward to seeing everyone for a great meeting in January at beautiful Callaway Gardens.

GA Cacher congratulates our newest Steering Committee member, MariettaGecko, who made the GGA meeting his 1000th cache. (Photo by mertat.)

