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New geocaches added to the local landscape

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Geocaches, small camouflaged boxes, bottles, or containers, are hidden all around communities and can be found in the most obvious or secret places. Those new or interested in the geocaching community are invited to visit the Steuben Community Center today at 6:30 p.m. for a free intro

course. Temporary geocaches will be placed for individuals to practice and learn the sport. Youth and adults of all ages are welcome.

Steuben County 4-H and the Steuben County Soil Water Conservation District partnered to secure permission and place new geocaches in each of the twelve Steuben County townships in order to take adventurers on a tour of the county and encourage geocaching, a family-friendly outdoor activity that feels like a worldwide scavenger hunt and encourages outdoor exploration, navigation, STEM skills, physical activity, and environmental awareness.

Geocaches, small camouflaged boxes, bottles, or containers, are hidden all around communities and can be found in the most obvious or secret places. In Steuben County, geocaches have been hidden (with permission) in parking lots, cemeteries, trails, public parks and tree hollows for local hunters to find as they journey through the county.

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By going to geocaching.com, geocache hunters can acquire GPS coordinates and navigate to hidden caches using GPS on their smartphones or a GPS unit. Hunters can claim they found the cache by logging their username and date on a paper log inside the cache. The geocachers then go to geocaching.com to electronically log their find without giving away the specific location in which they found the geocache, making the hunt an enjoyable experience for the next person.

Some geocaches also contain small “trinkets,” such as marbles, coins, trading stones, and keychains, in which individuals can participate in the well-known “take one, leave one” swap process.

While the special sights and sounds in each township are certainly of interest to those scouring the county for caches, the 4-H and Soil Water Conservation District have added another educational aspect to the journey.

Each cache is equipped with details about the soil on which one stands when they find the cache — what it was formed from (called a landform), what’s in it and how close one is to the water table. The earth gives life to nearly everything, which many often take it for granted, and the goal of these soil details is to help individuals learn more about the earth below their feet and gain an appreciation for the precious resource at each stop while enjoying the thrill of the hunt.

Ten of the twelve geocaches were recently activated on geocaching.com, and here are what some other hunters have already shared:

“I’ve gotta say this was my favorite of the 4 [I’ve visited] in this series so far! It’s got everything: wetland, fen, prairie, tall oaks, tons of birds, flora, and fauna! I spent an hour here enjoying the views and bird watching! As for the cache, it’s another nicely done one with a little informative lesson on the soil here.”

“Saw this new series pop up in my neck of the woods. What a delight! Neat series concept. Also a great cache! Well done!! Another beautiful scenic location! Might have to come back here when it isn’t so gloomy. This place would provide some wonderful nature photos.”

“Beautiful back here even with all the rain. The soil lesson is going good. Very wet today. I have always wanted to check this place out after being to the tri state [area] a few times. Thanks for bringing me here. Nice hide!”

For more information, contact Tami Mosier, 4-H Youth Development Extension Educator, at 668-1000 Ext. 1400 or mosier@purdue.edu.