

Halifax Water Guidelines for Geocaching

Halifax Water manages approximately 14,000 hectares of watershed land in and around Halifax Regional Municipality. This land is managed using a multiple barrier approach that is comprised of a series of checks and balances designed to protect the high quality of existing water resources in the Halifax area. Halifax Water is experiencing more frequent geocaching activities on its watershed lands.

Halifax Water may allow low impact recreational use of watershed lands when conducted in compliance with Halifax Water policy and guidelines. The following guidelines have been developed in cooperation with the Atlantic Canada Geocaching Association. The goal of these guidelines is to facilitate safe and low-impact use of Halifax Water watershed lands by geocachers, while ensuring the protection of the quality of Halifax Water managed resources.

Geocaching Guidelines:

- 1) Halifax Water watershed lands may contain geographic or other features that pose a risk to the health and safety of recreational users. Users of Halifax Water watershed lands must do so at their own risk.**
- 2) Caches may only be placed in approved locations authorized by Halifax Water as prescribed:**
 - a. Map and description must be submitted to Halifax Water for review and approval before site is established;
 - b. Halifax Water Geocache seal must be clearly marked on cache container or the cache will be removed by Halifax Water staff;
 - c. Cache must be registered with *Geocaching.com* website (www.geocaching.com) or cache will be removed; and
 - d. Cache owner must maintain site.
- 3) Caches must be easily accessible from established roads and maintained trails. Preference will be given to significant cultural and heritage sites.**
- 4) Caches must only be placed where natural resources such as soil, vegetation, and/or water quality will not be compromised. Similarly, contents of caches must not present an environmental hazard.**
- 5) Cache container must:**
 - a. be water tight and made of material that will withstand all weather conditions;
 - b. be a neutral colour so as not to stand out in the natural environment; and
 - c. not have been used previously for food storage so as to avoid attracting wildlife.
- 6) Caches should include:**
 - a. Halifax Water Geocache seal;
 - b. a logbook (in a sealable bag to protect it from humidity);

- c. a pencil and pencil sharpener; and
- d. a note for finders that includes:
 - an educational message about the cache's specific location, historic value or watershed value in general;
 - a clear message directing finders not to leave items that attract wildlife in the cache and the rationale as to why;
 - instructions for people who find the cache by chance;
 - the cache's coordinates to confirm that the correct cache has been found; and
 - Halifax Water staff contact information and the cache owner's name and/or screen name and contact information in the event that the cache requires maintenance or removal.

7) Halifax Water may remove caches that do not meet these guidelines.

Halifax Water manages eleven distinct public water supply areas. These guidelines are best management practices that should be followed for all water supply areas; however, due mainly to land ownership and regulation restrictions, these guidelines primarily pertain to the following six public water supply areas managed by Halifax Water:

1. Pockwock Watershed
2. Lake Major Watershed
3. Bennery Lake Watershed
4. Tomahawk Watershed
5. Chain Lakes Watershed
6. Lake Lamont Watershed

Geocachers are encouraged to visit *the Leave no Trace* website at <http://www.leavenotrace.ca>. This website offers helpful principles for planning safe and environmentally respectful outdoor recreation activities.

The requirements of Halifax Water watershed lands and the habits of recreational users of these areas are constantly evolving. Therefore, the guidelines listed above may be amended as deemed necessary by Halifax Water.