



United States Department of the Interior

**NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
Chesapeake Bay Office**

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PRESS RELEASE

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**National Park Service and Maryland Geocaching Society
Launch a Centennial Challenge**

Annapolis MD -- The National Park Service (NPS) and the Maryland Geocaching Society (MGS) announce a six-week collaboration designed to introduce geocaching participants to national parks and public lands in Maryland. Geocaching is an outdoor game using GPS-enabled devices. Participants navigate to a specific set of GPS coordinates and then attempt to find a geocache container hidden at that location.

Each year, MGS creates a themed challenge called "Cache Across Maryland" (CAM) in which 10 geocaches are placed at 10 sites linked by a common theme across the state. The theme is kept secret until the geocache coordinates go "live" on the Maryland Geocaching Society website. The Cache Across Maryland challenge launched this past Saturday at four early morning kick-off events across the state.

For 2016, the Maryland Geocaching Society chose to celebrate the National Park Service Centennial with a literal interpretation of the National Park Foundation's "Find Your Park" campaign.

Participating locations include:

- Assateague Island National Seashore
- Harriet Tubman Underground Railroad National Monument, hosted by Blackwater National Wildlife Refuge
- Catoctin Mountain Park
- Monocacy National Battlefield
- Hampton National Historic Site
- Greenbelt Park
- Piscataway Park
- Chesapeake & Ohio Canal National Historical Park – two locations
- Potomac Heritage National Scenic Trail, hosted by Great Allegheny Passage

Staff from the Accokeek Foundation at Piscataway Park and the Captain John Smith Chesapeake National Historic Trail helped the Maryland Geocaching Society organize the challenge. All three organizations have been working together since 2010 on special events and programs including the Captain John Smith GeoTour and Star-Spangled Banner GeoTour, and “Cache In Trash Out” environmental stewardship events at Greenbelt Park in 2012, and Piscataway Park in 2015.

“Hundreds of geocachers from Maryland, Pennsylvania, New Jersey, Delaware, West Virginia, Virginia, and Ohio participated in last year’s event,” said MGS Immediate Past President Mark Neuberger. “We expect even more this year because the geocaching community is very excited to travel to national park places.”

The National Park Service permits geocaching when the activity is directed by park management and has the approval of park leadership. In NPS parlance, “ParkCaching” also requires an educational component. ParkCaching provides several opportunities to show off particular features of a park and to share nuggets of information with geocaching participants.

“Visitors have had a great experience with geocaching along the John Smith Chesapeake Trail, and at other places we’ve helped coordinate, such as Fort McHenry National Monument and Thomas Stone National Historic Site,” said Chuck Hunt, Superintendent of the NPS Chesapeake Bay. “Participants are eager to discover special places of national significance in the Chesapeake region.”

Cache Across Maryland opened on Saturday, March 26, and the celebratory closing event will be held on Saturday, May 14, 2016. The event will include a picnic, awards, and geocaching activities. Visit the Maryland Geocaching Society website at www.mdgps.org to learn more about Cache Across Maryland and geocaching in Maryland.

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*The **National Park Service Chesapeake Bay** connects people to experiences of the natural and cultural heritage of the Chesapeake Bay and its rivers. We help to conserve special places important to visitors, residents and the nation, for this and future generations. For more information, please visit www.FindYourChesapeake.com and www.nps.gov/chba.*

*The **Maryland Geocaching Society** is a volunteer organization that promotes and supports the sport of geocaching in Maryland. We foster fruitful and responsible relationships with public land managers, law enforcement agencies, and heritage professionals to highlight and care for special places in Maryland. We recognize and maintain positive relationships with regional, national and worldwide geocaching communities and teach others the adventure of geocaching. For more information, please visit www.mdgps.org.*

*For more than 50 years, the **Accokeek Foundation** has been a steward of the land. Through a partnership with the National Park Service, the Accokeek Foundation interprets the past, present, and future of agriculture and environmental stewardship at Piscataway Park. The Foundation’s programs include interdisciplinary school tours for students, historical and modern farm museum exhibits, heritage breed livestock conservation, natural resource stewardship and land conservation, and the Piscataway Cultural Landscape Initiative. For more information, please visit accokeekfoundation.org.*