Louisiana

Regional Geocaching Policies Wiki

An evolving, community-created wiki on where you can and can't hide geocaches.

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General Information

This page contains specific geocaching land management policies for Louisiana. Naturally all other Geocaching.com guidelines, including obtaining adequate permission for any geocache placement, apply. This listing is not all-inclusive as some land managers have instituted policies we are not yet aware of or may have amended their posted policies. If you are a land manager with a geocaching policy which should be listed here please send a copy of your policy and contact information to isht kinta.

Louisiana State Parks

Louisiana State Parks have a permit policy but are very geocaching friendly. A cache owner wishing to place a cache in a Louisiana State Park must ask for permission from the park ranger and have them sign an application to place a geocache. If placing a multi-cache, the cache is restricted to no more than four stages. The permit will expire one year from the date the permit is issued. It is the cache owners responsibility to renew the permit to avoid having the park remove the geocache. The cache owner will not receive a notice that it is time to renew. You may obtain a copy of the permit at each state park or by clicking this link. LAOSP_Geocache_Permit.pdf

Louisiana National Parks

There are six Louisiana National Park areas. Some of these parks have several smaller units scattered around the state operating under other names. Click here for an overall map. Geocaches may not be placed in a National Park without permission of the Park Superintendent or his designated representative. If permission is granted, the NPS representative will instruct you on their procedures for listing the geocache.

- Cane River National Heritage Area
- Cane River Creole National Historical Park
- El Camino Real de Los Tejas National Historic Trail
- Jean Lafitte National Historical Park and Preserve
- Poverty Point National Monument
- New Orleans Jazz National Historical Park

National Forests

Kisatchie National Forest is the only National Forest in Louisiana, but it has several districts

- Calcasieu

About This Guide

The local laws and guidelines for geocaching placement vary from place to place. As community reviewers learn geocache placement policies for a certain location, they can add it here. This site may not be a complete or accurate list of land policies. These policies are made by the land owner or manager, they are neither the reviewer’s nor Geocaching HQ’s. This guide is just for reference, if no policies for the area you’re looking for are listed, that doesn't mean no policies exist. You must still obtain permission to place your geocache from the landowner or land manager, comply with all applicable laws, and follow the Geocaching Listing Requirements.

If you have an update, email the community reviewer(s) listed.
• Caney
• Catahoula
• Kisatchie
• Winn

Generally geocaching is allowed in the National Forest. A verbal permit is required for each geocache and you must include the name of the official granting the permit in your reviewer note. There are private landholdings in the National Forest. Geocaches may not be placed in those locations without the landowners permission.

Geocaches may not be placed in the following Wilderness or Military areas of the Kisatchie National Forest:

• Breezy Hill Artillery range restricted areas
• Breton Wilderness area
• Camp Beauregard firing ranges
• Claiborne Range military operations area
• Fort Polk military operations area
• Kisatchie Hills Wilderness area
• Lacassine Wilderness area

US Fish and Wildlife Areas

Generally National Wildlife Refuges do not allow geocaches. There have been some placed in the past that are grandfathered. Refuges in Louisiana consist of:

• Atchafalaya
• Bayou Cocodrie
• Bayou Sauvage
• Bayou Teche
• Big Branch Marsh
• Black Bayou Lake
• Bogue Chitto
• Brenton
• Cameron Prairie
• Cat Island
• Catahoula
• D’Arbonne
• Delta
• Grand Cote
• Handy Brake
• Lacassine
• Lake Ophelia
• Mandalay
• Red River
• Sabine
• Shell Keys
• Tensas River
• Upper Ouachita

Louisiana State Wildlife Refuges

• Elmers Island: Certain areas are restricted with no public access. Access to other areas are restricted to certain daylight hours. Permission must be obtained from Refuge management.
• Isle Dernieres: No geocaching allowed.
• Marsh Island: No geocaching allowed.
• Rockefeller: No geocaching allowed.
• Saint Tammany: Operated as part of Big Branch Marsh NWR and current federal rules apply.
• State: Currently the status for geocaching in this area is unknown. Check with the Refuge management for permission.

Louisiana State Wildlife Management and Conservation Areas

Generally geocaching is allowed on most of the management and conservation areas. There are usually permit requirements and check in stations for these areas and the rules and regulations for checking in must be followed. Some areas are restricted as to the time of day you may be on the property. There may also be hunter orange regulations in effect. Also some of the areas are actually owned by private individuals or corporations and they may have additional requirements. Cache owners must include any such procedures in the opening description of the cache page.

The following areas do not allow geocaching in all or part of the management area
• Alexander Forest Wildlife Management Area restricted areas around the firing range, airport, and fish hatcheries.
• Atchafalaya Delta Wildlife Management Area restricted and limited use areas.
• Camp Beauregard Wildlife Management Area military use areas.
• Dewey W. Wills Management Area restricted zone.
• Grassy Lake Wildlife Management Area restricted zone.
• Lake Salvador Wildlife Management Area restricted areas.
• Pearl River Wildlife Management Area shooting range and restricted area.
• Pearson Ridge Wildlife Management Area military use areas and unexploded ordinance areas.
• Pointe Aux Chenes Wildlife Management Area limited access area.
• Richard K Yancey Wildlife Management Area restricted zone.
• Russell Sage Wildlife Management Area Kennedy tract
• Sandy Hollow Wildlife Management Area restricted areas.
• Spring Bayou Wildlife Management Area restricted area.
• Tunica Hills Wildlife Management Area restricted areas.
• White Lake Wetlands Conservation Area

The former Georgia Pacific Wildlife Management Area near Bastrop has reverted back to the landowners and the normal private property rules apply.

The former Jackson - Bienville Wildlife Management Area near Quitman has reverted back to the landowners and the normal private property rules apply.

Military Bases

The following military installations in Louisiana do not allow geocaches:

• Barksdale Air Force Base
• Camp Beauregard
• Camp Minden
• Fort Polk
• Naval Air Station Joint Reserve Base

The following former military installation in Louisiana allows geocaching with permission of the entity controlling the land at the spot the geocache is placed:

• Naval Support Activity New Orleans, also known as Federal City.

Corps of Engineers lands

The Corps of Engineers has no objection to the legal pursuance of geocaching activity based on your understanding of the following conditions:

1. There will be no site disturbance, illegal substances or uses involving the geocaching on Corps of Engineers property.
2. Caches will not be placed in or near restricted or sensitive areas or those areas not open to the general public.
3. The Corps of Engineers may terminate this permission at any time.
4. This permission conveys no property rights, grants no exclusive use, and in no way restricts the general public's privilege of using Corps of Engineers properties.
5. The Corps of Engineers assumes no liability and undertakes no obligation or duty (in tort, contract, strict liability, or otherwise) to you or to any third party for any damages to property (real or personal) or personal injuries (including death) arising out of or in any way connected with your performance of activities which are the subject of this statement of no objection.
6. Permission must be obtained from the managing public or private entity in situations where the Corps of Engineers has granted land rights via license, lease, or easement for public or commercial purposes.
7. Caches will not be placed on or in the immediate vicinity of dams, locks and water control structures.

Universities and Colleges

Generally geocaching is allowed in areas on University and College campuses where the general public is allowed to visit unrestricted. Geocaches are not allowed to be placed near student housing, including Greek fraternity areas.
Trails

There are several hiking, bicycle and horse back trails in Louisiana. Listed below are a few of them:

- **Baton Rouge Levee Path**: This trail follows the east levee in downtown Baton Rouge. Geocaching is allowed on the public right of way. Be aware that private landholdings are close or cross the path in a couple of places.
- **Louisiana Trails**: This trail follows an abandoned railroad line between Sibley and Winnfield. Only portions of the trail are currently complete. Sections of the trail crosses private landholdings. Generally geocaching is allowed on the publicly owned portions of the trail. Geocaches may be placed on the privately owned sections with permission of the landowner.
- **Mississippi River Trail**: This trail consists of many disconnected sections stretching from Minnesota to New Orleans. In Louisiana it is mainly located on public right of ways and geocaching is allowed. Be aware that the sections occasionally cross private property and permission from the landowner is required on those sections.
- **Red River Bicycle Trail**: This trail follows the Red River in Shreveport. Geocaching is allowed.
- **St. Tammany Trace**: This trail follows an abandoned railroad line from Covington to Slidell. Geocaching is allowed. Be aware the right of way is narrow and geocaches must not infringe on the adjoining landowners.

Cemeteries

Most cemeteries are private property. There are a few cemeteries in the state that are owned by municipalities. Several states have banned geocaches in cemeteries due to disrespectful actions by geocachers. Some cemeteries in Louisiana do not allow public access to non-family members. Geocaches may NOT be placed near graves. You must have permission from the entity that owns or controls the cemetery to place a geocache there and there must be public access. Just owning a plot in the cemetery is not sufficient permission. When submitting the geocache, attach photographs of the geocache placement to the reviewer note looking at the geocaching from different directions.

Navigable waterways and islands

- Geocaches may not be attached to navigation markers or buoys.
- Islands in Louisiana consist of property that are a mix of privately owned, owned by the State of Louisiana or the Federal Government. The standard permission issues as if on the mainland apply for these lands.
- Geocaches may not be placed near marine restricted areas (Homeland Security designated).

Residential neighborhoods

Caches in residential areas tend to arouse the suspicion of neighborhood watch groups and general neighborly suspicion. This usually leads to either the police being called or confrontations with landowners. Geocaches in neighborhoods will require permission of the adjoining landowners.

Prohibited Areas

Geocaching is specifically not allowed by the owners of these properties. There may be a few grandfathered geocaches that were placed before the prohibition took effect.

- All Cracker Barrel locations
- All Simon Mall Properties
- Pontchatoula Depot grounds
- Bayou Corne sinkhole mitigation area
- Live Oak Plantation
- Certain structures in the Camp Claiborne area that have been sealed by the National Forest Service.

Youth Camps

Youth camps are properties dedicated for the use of the Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, special needs children, church camps for children or similar sites. Geocaches may not be placed on portions of these properties that are not open to the general public. A geocache placed on public portions of the camp must be placed with permission of the governing authority for the property and the contact information of the director granting that authority must be included in the reviewer note when the geocache is submitted to be published.
Land ownership

Many of the parishes and cities in Louisiana have on-line resources that can be used to help you determine the ownership of land and obtain permission to place a geocache. For the other parishes, you may have to either visit the local courthouse or subscribe to a paid service to determine the land ownership.

Bridges and guardrails

Geocaches may not be placed on, over or under bridges located on federal roadways, interstate highways, U. S. highways and Louisiana highways.

Geocaches generally may be placed on municipal and parish road bridges with the following exceptions:

- Over or under federal roads, interstates, U. S. routes and Louisiana state highways.
- Over or under railroads.
- On bridges containing active drawbridges as listed by the Corps of Engineers.
- Bridges located over spillways or part of dams.

Geocaches may be placed on bridges designed for pedestrian use only or former railroad bridges converted to pedestrian trails that pass over interstate or U. S. highways with the following restrictions:

- The geocache must be accessible by a geocacher standing on the surface area designed for foot traffic.
- Ammo cans or PVC pipe containers are not allowed.
- Containers must be clearly labeled as being a geocache and designed where they could not be mistaken as an explosive device.

Guardrail caches are not allowed on interstate highways, controlled access highways or as part of railroad signaling locations.

On U. S. and Louisiana highways they must be placed on the portion of the guardrail away from the bridge structure.

For bridge and guardrail geocaches to be published, there must be a location available for a geocacher to park his vehicle completely clear of the roadway and the parking location shall not be in a curve or other visually obstructed area.

Geocachers should understand that all roadway bridges are inspected on a regular basis by government inspectors and any geocache found attached to the bridge structure will probably be removed by the inspectors.

Other areas

Geocaches may not be placed near:

- Airports used for commercial or military flights.
- Dams
- Electrical generating stations and substations
- Facilities restricted to access or approach by Homeland Security rules.
- Federal Courthouses
- Financial institutions including close proximity to drop boxes and ATM machines.
- Highways designated as controlled access by the Louisiana Department of Transportation & Development.
- Hospitals
- Nuclear facilities
- Post Offices. This includes blue postal service mail boxes and green postal service mail storage boxes. Virtual stages inside post offices require the permission of the Postmaster for that post office.
- Prisons and jails
- Railroads and their right of ways. Depending on the location this may extend 25 feet to 200 feet from the center of the track.
- Schools and day cares

Playgrounds

While there’s no specific guideline against hiding a cache on playground equipment, many geocachers consider it a bad idea. It’s perfectly normal for a 10 year old to be on a playground with their mom. But how normal would it be for him to go there without a parent and for someone who may be fifty something and doesn’t have a kid with them to be prowling around the equipment? This might make most mom’s kind of nervous. If the playground is not part of a school or daycare the geocache can be published, but the cache owner will be asked to reconsider before it is published.
The rest of Louisiana is pretty much wide open as long as the geocaching guidelines are met. Be aware that geocaching guidelines are subject to change. There is no precedent for placing geocaches. This means that the past publication of a similar geocache in and of itself is not a valid justification for the publication of a new geocache. If a geocache has been published and violates any guidelines listed, you are encouraged to report it. However, if the geocache was placed prior to the date when a guideline was issued or updated, the geocache is likely to be grandfathered and allowed to stand as is.

Virtual Posted Coordinates

Generally if the posted coordinates for a multi-cache, puzzle cache or wherigo cache are virtual coordinates, they must not be placed in any restricted area listed above without permission of the landowner or authority controlling the property. This helps avoid confrontations for new geocachers who may not understand what a virtual waypoint is.

Health Score

- To help improve the overall caching experience, Geocaching HQ created an algorithm to calculate a hidden Health Score for each geocache.
- A low Health Score provides an indication that the cache may need attention from the owner.
- The goal is to improve the overall geocaching experience and avoid frustrations due to missing or broken caches.
- The algorithm isn't perfect; it cannot read and interpret the text within a cache page - however it does take the following aspects of a page into consideration:

  1. Did Not Find logs (DNF)
  2. Needs Maintenance logs (NM)
  3. Needs Archived logs (NA)
  4. Last find date
  5. Difficulty and terrain rating

- If the Health Score of a cache is calculated below a dynamic threshold, an automatic alert email is sent to the cache owner by Geocaching HQ.
- A Community Volunteer Reviewer may follow up to perform further actions on the cache page.
- Neither Geocaching HQ or the Community Volunteer Reviewer can assess the true status of a cache; it is the responsibility of the cache owner, as part of cache maintenance.

- If there are a multiple DNFs logs on a cache - the community may not know if the cache is missing or is simply hard to find.
- If a cache page has several posted DNFs - and the cache owner knows that the cache is in place - they should reassure the community by posting a Note log.

  e.g. "There have been a few DNFs, however it is a clever hide! I checked on it this morning. Check the hint!"

- If a Community Volunteer Reviewer does not see a posted response from a cache owner on their cache page after several DNF/Maintenance requests, it may be Disabled.
- If a cache owner knows with certainty that their cache is in place and ready to be found, they may Enable the cache page, with an explanatory note.
- If a cache owner is unable to definitively confirm the status of their cache, the cache page should remain Disabled and a Maintenance visit should be scheduled.
- An Owner Maintenance log should only be posted after a maintenance visit has occurred.
- Only when a cache is confirmed to be in place and ready to be found should a cache page be Enabled.

The number of "false positives" flagged with this process are minimal compared to the number of abandoned caches that this process will remove from the game.