

Geo Cache – a global treasure hunt with locations in Lamorinda



Photo Vera Kochan

A Geo Cache sign-in "logbook" was located inside a plastic pouch glued to a large magnetic, protective patch that was found on a historic Moraga artifact.

By Vera Kochan

The "treasure" at each Geo Cache (pronounced JEE-oh-cash) location is most definitely nothing comparable to a pirate's chest of riches, but then, that is not the point of geocaching.

Geo Cache was started in 2000 by a group of people in Oregon with an interest in technology and geography. Originally called Geo Stash, in reference to the small treasures that were left at each location by players, the "game" caught worldwide momentum and can claim nearly 2 million participants globally. Within the United States, California leads with 138,475 Geo Cache locations.

According to a National Geographic article, "Caches are the hidden treasures. After registering online, geocachers look for coordinates

(the longitude and latitude) of caches. Caches have two or three parts: a waterproof container, a logbook to list the people who visit the cache, and sometimes a low-cost trinket or geocoin. (Geocoins are metal medallions made by individual geocachers or organizations. Like other cache items, geocoins are not worth much money.) Common materials found inside caches might include foreign currency, key chains, ornaments or booklets. Valuable objects, food, or other items that could be easily damaged are not allowed in geocaching." It is suggested that players bring small trinkets to exchange for any taken from the cache where applicable.

Geocaching has become a pastime/hobby that is fun for all ages, while getting players outside to experience nature and discover some historic sites where caches may be

hidden. The adventure might require a bit of walking, depending on the cache's location. While caches are meant to be hidden, none are supposed to be buried. Clues to the cache are given online, for example: look under the bench by the oak tree.

Lamorinda has not been left out of the geocaching craze. There are at least 10 caches in Moraga, with as many in Lafayette and Orinda. To get started, go to geocaching.com to register and get the free Geocaching mobile app to help you find possible cache locations in the area and beyond (there are millions worldwide). Geocaching.com is loaded with information to help beginners. There's a 5-star rating guide that notes the level of difficulty for any cache location.

Once players are ready to hunt, make certain that the phone being used is fully charged. It is suggested that participants keep their eyes open for any possible camouflaged caches as they are not supposed to be in plain sight. Once the cache is found, sign the logbook within, exchange one item (if any), and put everything back the way it was found for the next players. The basic rule of the game is "Leave no trace" during the hunt. It is also important that the cache is sealed properly to prevent any damage from the elements.

REI.com notes that, "More than two decades old now, geocaching has evolved into a vast, diverse and passionate community of users. Like any social group, it's evolved its own slang and social norms. You can do it on your own, with a few friends or with other geocaching devotees at events year round, around the world. However you choose to do it, the game of geocaching can be delightfully addicting."

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A. OUR OPINION – YOU DECIDE!

Save Lafayette responds to Court of Appeals decision regarding The Terraces Project

Save Lafayette continues to work to preserve all residents' health, safety, and quality of life. We support the efforts of Our Neighborhood Voices and the thousands of neighborhood leaders across the State of California fighting to restore local government decision-making and fair growth initiatives.

The Court of Appeal's decision to deny our lawsuit in November 2022, was very disappointing, particularly given the court's subsequent decision to grant the appeal for the People's Park project in Berkeley because "noise impacts had not been adequately studied."

We raised many more serious issues regarding the Terraces, but for whatever reason, with Senator Wiener in attendance, the Court found the following issues acceptable:

- the City consultant's software shows up to 500+ Terraces residents would not escape a wildfire
- the City stated that County Connection would send 27 buses in a timely fashion to rescue 1,800 schoolchildren from a wildfire, even though the Connection's CEO had denied any such assurance
- this project is inconsistent with Lafayette's General Plan/Zoning
- the State's Permit Streamlining Act requires project approval in 270 days - the City allowed 7 years
- the intersection traffic, already an F for emergency response, will increase by up to 3000 daily trips
- air and/or noise pollution will always exceed government standards - by up to 800% during the movement of 500,000 cubic yards of dirt from this "scenic gateway" (Caltrans description)
- five endangered species will be directly threatened by the project.

So, did the Court protect the rights/health/safety of residents/students? YOU DECIDE!

As a result of public hearings, The Terraces' approval comes with a long list of requirements and we look forward to receiving information from the Council and staff to ensure that every requirement is met. We also expect that, when it comes to issuing permits, the County Building and Fire departments will look very closely at the traffic, air pollution and fire evacuation impacts on the health and safety of Terraces residents, surrounding neighborhoods and schools.

B. OUR NEIGHBORHOOD VOICES – A CRITICAL INITIATIVE!

Save Lafayette will continue to protect the best interests of Lafayette's residents, when it concerns their rights, their safety and their health, whether it's a city, county or state issue. We support *Our Neighborhood Voices*, a coalition of thousands of California neighborhood leaders driving a 2024 ballot initiative that will protect local control of real estate development decisions.

For more - see www.savelafayette.org

