

# NEWSRelease

BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

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**BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT**  
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## Geocaches to be removed from Oregon Badlands Wilderness

**Central Oregon** – The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Prineville District Office will be working with the local geocaching community to remove approximately 84 physical geocaches that are located in Wilderness, Wilderness Study Areas, Research Natural Areas (RNAs) and some Areas of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC). Of these, 47 will be removed permanently, while 37 will be closed seasonally because they are located in sites closed part of the year to protect wildlife or other resources.

The geocaches in the Oregon Badlands Wilderness and in an ACEC on nearby Horse Ridge are very popular because of their proximity to Bend, and can be so heavily used that trails are actually created. “It’s important to get the word out about where geocaches should and shouldn’t be placed because some sites are not designed to handle the type of concentrated use brought on by geocaching,” says Molly Brown, Field Manager for the Prineville BLM. “The great news is that, once the groups know about the restrictions they’re very responsive and responsible. We’re grateful for the cooperation.”

Prineville began identifying geocaching limits in 2005 with the Upper Deschutes Resource Management Plan, which provides management direction for BLM-administered lands in Crook, Deschutes, and northern Klamath Counties. In 2012 BLM policy prohibited physical geocaches in wilderness areas, while still allowing virtual geocaches. Removal of these geocaches will bring the Prineville BLM into compliance with national policy and protect sensitive sites.

“Geocaching is absolutely a legitimate use of public land but it’s inappropriate in wilderness areas,” says Carol Benkosky, Prineville BLM District Manager. “Most times when the public is setting up a site, they’re unaware that they might be putting it in a closed or a sensitive area, so we rely on the geocaching community to help us spread the word and educate fellow geocachers.”

Geocaching is an outdoor treasure hunting game where participants use GPS-enabled devices to navigate to a specific set of coordinates. Once there, they attempt to find the geocache (container) hidden at that location. Geocaches can be *physical*, meaning an actual container is located at the site, or *virtual*, where the objective is to locate an existing feature such as a specific tree, rock or viewpoint. Often, the container may contain a log for participants to document their find, or small tokens that can be taken if an item of equal value can be left behind. Some tokens are even marked with a unique code that makes them “trackable” as geocachers move them from cache to cache and document the moves online.

For more information about geocaching please visit <http://on.doi.gov/1gwnOET> or call (541) 416-6700.

**About the BLM:** The BLM manages more than 245 million acres of public land, the most of any Federal agency. This land, known as the National System of Public Lands, is primarily located in 12 Western states, including Alaska. The BLM also administers 700 million acres of sub-surface mineral estate throughout the nation. The BLM’s mission is to manage and conserve the public lands for the use and enjoyment of present and future generations under our mandate of multiple-use and sustained yield. In Fiscal Year 2013, the BLM generated \$4.7 billion in receipts from public lands.

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