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New geocoins cached by eXtension challenges global searchers

Writer: Steve Byrns, 325-653-4576, s-byrns@tamu.edu

Contact: Amy Hays, 254-865-2061, ahays@tamu.edu

GATESVILLE – Attention geocaching aficionados – Texas AgriLife eXtension has developed and is currently caching a new promotional geocoin.

Geocaching, to the uninitiated, is a growing outdoor activity that centers around finding “cached” or hidden articles with a GPS using in this case, Web-based hints.

The number of people who actively geocache has been growing steadily over the past five years, according to Amy Hays, Texas AgriLife Extension Service geospatial specialist at Gatesville. She said there are now well over 600,000 active caches worldwide.

Geocoins, Hays explained, are special coins created by individuals or groups of geocachers. Each has a unique tracking number and geocachers who find them in a cache will log in the coin number through geocaching.com which allows them to “capture” the coin to their account.

“They then take the coin to a new cache so others can discover it,” she said. “Geocoins are considered ‘travelbugs’ which is a geocaching term used to describe an item that people want others to move around to another cache instead of keeping. They are meant to accumulate stories and miles as they travel. They are considered a trackable find. Since no two coins have the same code, each coin will be unique when found.

“Geocoins and travel bugs can be tracked by the stamped ID on their surface. Geocachers coins and travelbug finds are stored in their online accounts. A virtual treasure chest if you will.” eXtension is a free on-line service that taps the expertise of the land-grant system across the U.S. It is the largest single network of research, Extension and teaching professionals accessible to anyone at a single Web site location.

“We’re caching the geocoins to call attention to both geocaching as a global exercise, and also the development of the Geospatial Technology portal we’ve created within eXtension,” Hays said. “This initial geocaching effort was done by geospatial Extension specialists in 11 states.”

There are now about 45 active cached geocoins, Hays said. She said volunteers who heard about the geocoin will be helping to place 60 more coins in caches in the U.S., Canada and nine other countries around the world in the next three weeks.

For background go to:

http://www.extension.org/pages/Map%40Syst_Geocoin_Adventure

The geocoins are all trackable on Geocaching.com by searching for them through a trackable items page: <http://www.geocaching.com/track/search.aspx?k=Map%40Syst> .

See the eXtension Geospatial Technology portal at:

<http://www.extension.org/geospatial%20technology> .

For more information, contact Hays at 254-865-2061, ahays@tamu.edu