

("Geocaching, here today, here tomorrow" continued)

you down a path. Jim notes one caveat, watch out for the double fire tacks ... some may blink! His was a deer bedded down for the night!

Jim gives this advice: always be aware of and follow the parks and city's rules when hiding and searching for caches. Observe the park hours and let the parks department know where you've hidden the cache.

Many geocachers take trash bags with them on their explorations --- "leave it better than you found it" is the motto. "Geocaching is a great way to get out and enjoy this earth we've been given and help us realize we need to take care of it whether it be woods or cities," Jim said. "And it's nice to find new parts of the city and world you live in that you would not have gotten to otherwise."

Project Updates

Greenway Signage - IN PROGRESS: Signage continues to be a priority on several of our greenway routes. Estimated completion date is spring 2011.

Velie Park Bridge - IN PROGRESS: The big news so far this winter is that LSPR has been preliminarily awarded a \$450,000 Transportation Enhancement Grant to construct a bridge at Velie Park to connect into the Little Blue Trace Trail. The parks department will match with \$150,000 for a total project cost of approximately \$600,000. Pending the approval of the next transportation bill before Congress this quarter, we can begin design and engineering of the 200' bridge and connecting trail from the park. We should receive notice to proceed in the next few months.



FREE Park & Trails map available. Park and trail maps are available at Lee's Summit City Hall 220 SE Green Street or request a mailed copy by phone at 969.1500

Special thanks to volunteer writer/photographer Beth Settle, who collected information and photos included in this publication.

Lee's Summit
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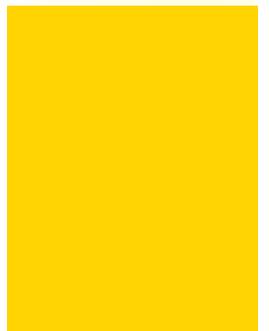
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Tales from the trail

Your connection
to Lee's Summit's
Trail & Greenway
Development



A publication from LS Parks & Recreation
to keep you informed of the progress
in our greenway program.

DID YOU KNOW...

...LSPR was the first to complete a Transportation Enhancement project using ARRA stimulus funds in the Kansas City region. The project was completed ahead of schedule and almost 40% under the original budget.

SPOTLIGHT on the Velie Park Trail

Velie Park offers much more than what's behind the sign. Yes, there's a fun playground, a large open field encompassed by the asphalt trail which wanders through some wooded area, but quickly emerges back in "suburbia" with houses close by.



A nifty mini-amphitheater is situated between some trees ... six tiered benches provide the setting for solitude or an impromptu stage for skits and other family fun. So that's the parking lot side of the trail. What makes this park a treasure in Lee's Summit's parks system is what's on the other side of Anderson Drive.

A hurriedness carries one on the asphalt trail, screaming of exercise and the fast pace that asphalt has come to symbolize in our cultures. But asphalt soon gives way to the serenity of a "natural trail" decorated with seasons of fallen leaves and twigs. Walnut trees arch over the path, providing shade and an occasional nut. Sometimes tiring of the urban asphalt, it's good to feel the crunch of gravel underfoot as the path becomes more rugged. The circular mulch trail, albeit short (.2 miles), provides a nice trek through a variety of trees and vegetation.



The treasure within ... an empty buckeye pod lies amidst the early changing fall leaves.

The creek adds a soothing ambiance as one strolls through the woods. A pond caps one leg of the trail. One can find peace, notice the foliage changing with the season, and get lost in the "wilderness" just a few blocks away from homes, streets, trampolines and play sets.



Geocaching, here today, here tomorrow

One of my favorite t-shirts these days has a saying that goes like this: I use billion dollar satellites to find Tupperware in the woods. What's your hobby?

Some of you will chuckle and others with furrowed brow will think a hesitant "okay ...?"

In May of 2000, the US government decided to no longer scramble signals from navigational satellites. The 24 satellites, originally intended for military use, had limited civilian accuracy to 100 meters. After the Selective Availability feature was turned off, the accuracy for the man on the street (or in the parks) improved to 10 meters.

To celebrate and test the newly available technology, Dave Ulmer stashed a bucket of trinkets in the woods in Oregon and posted N 45° 17.460 W 122° 24.800 on a website. Simple rules, take some stuff and leave some stuff ... also sign the logbook. And the "sport" of geocaching began.

Ten years later, geocaches can be found all around the world. So what exactly is geocaching? Simply put, one goes to a website, such as geocaching.com, finds some coordinates, plugs them into their handheld GPS and takes off to find the treasures.



Lee's Summit resident Jim McFall finds geocaching to be a great motivator to get outdoors ... and take the family, neighbors and friends along. About two years ago when Jim caught the caching "bug" he developed the Lee's Summit Parks Tour series (which you can find on geocaching.com).

"There are more than 20 parks in Lee's Summit and some of them are little known by anyone other than those

that live in the area," Jim explains. My point in hiding caches

in city parks was to get people to explore what's available in their city and enjoy some great features that they otherwise might not find out about.

For example, Jim's favorite hide is near the waterfall in Legacy Park. "Hey wait a minute," you might be thinking, "there's no waterfall in Legacy Park." Really? Go check out

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Legacy Park #2 and read the many comments about beauty of the area and kids playing in the pool of the waterfall. Other park locations with Tour caches include Canterbury, Williams Grant, Upper Banner and Harris.



In addition to introducing others to our great park system, another perk Jim gets from creating caches is reading comments made on the website regarding the cache and the journey to the find. Comments such as these are common:

- *Thanks labDog717 for helping me see Lees Summit, moved here a year ago and geocaching has got me out exploring the area*
- *This was in my back yard and didn't know it existed. I'll bring the kids here to play.*
- *Second of four LS Parks Tour caches today. Found three yesterday. This one was a nice hike. We need to remember to take our binoculars along these trips. I think I could have added another bird to my life list, but I couldn't see it well enough. We did see a Great Blue Heron preening itself in a dead tree near the lake. A beautiful site.*
- *Gave up this search when I came face to face with a snake. Think I might try this one again in the winter. This might be a bad experience for younger cachers. On a brighter note the park is so pretty.*

Geocaching is a year-round sport. Jim made certain to put variety in his Tour. Some require a little (or a lot) of bushwhacking; others conveniently located in parking lots and around trails ... note, I said "conveniently" located, not "easily" located! The winter is a good time to head into the woods, no ticks, less poison ivy, less vegetation to deal with and no snakes.

Jim, an outdoor enthusiast and father of an Eagle Scout, has encountered a wide variety of caches. Some simple, one place, one find. Others are more elaborate like the 21 site cache at the Legends; each find has a clue that leads to the next. Some have riddles to answer to get the geocodes (coordinates) and others are puzzles. And of course, there's the virtual cache where you find the spot and take a pic to prove you were there and send it to the cache's owner and then you get credited with the find.

Creating a cache can be as simple or complex as one wants to make it. One creative cache was a VHS swap ... bring a VHS to leave and take a VHS home with you to watch. Don't think the fun has to stop when the sun goes down. Introducing ... "fire tacks!" Fire tacks are tacks with a reflective surface. So you download the coordinates, go to that spot and start shining a flashlight around until the light hits something, generally an arrow to point *("Geocaching, here today, here tomorrow" continued on back)*