

Real prizes offered in treasure hunt along Hazleton rail trail

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Anticipation will keep building in a competition next week in Hazleton even after searchers find hidden objects.

Containers hidden along the Greater Hazleton rail trail will contain raffle tickets. The more containers that contestants find, the more tickets they collect and the more chances they will have to win prizes at the end of the geocaching event on Aug. 14 at 1 p.m.

The event gives people a chance to try geocaching, which organizer Joe Stefanoski of Hazleton compared to an Easter egg hunt for adults.

Participants also earn a check on their passports for attending events in the Keystone Active Zone program that encourages people to explore Luzerne County.

So far this summer, 32 people have made at least five stops on the passport program, which qualifies them for prizes and a drawing that will be held this fall.

Two people who visited 25 spots have received \$25 gift certificates to Dick's Sporting Goods.

For the Hazleton event, Stefanoski will hide containers, or caches, and list the latitude and longitude coordinates where they may be found using hand-held GPS devices.

"A lot of people think you can just walk up to these with the coordinates. They're often hidden very well. They're camouflaged. People walk by them every day and don't even realize," he said.

A few GPS devices will be on loan for people who don't have them and want to try geocaching.

Stefanoski got interested in geocaching five years ago after reading a magazine article about the activity. Since then, he has found 700 caches, although he knows of enthusiasts who have found 25,000 or more.

"I do it for the fun of walking in the woods and enjoying the scenery. A lot of times it will take you to places you haven't been," he said.

Stefanoski lists the Lofty Tunnel and the Bear's Head Fire Tower near Delano as places he had never seen before trying geocaching.

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