

Catching a travel bug through 4-H geocaching!

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Recently 4-H Geocaching Club in Sudbury picked up a travel bug and there's no doubt they've got it bad! Eighteen members are now enjoying the great outdoors while hiking and geocaching.

What is geocaching? It is a high-tech treasure hunting game played throughout the world by adventure

seekers equipped with GPS devices. The basic idea is to locate hidden containers, called geocaches, outdoors and then share your experiences online. Geocaching is enjoyed by people from all age groups, with a strong sense of community and support for the environment. Through an RBC 4-H Rural-Urban Youth Grant, this

Sudbury 4-H Club is now enjoying this outdoor sport.

Members learn the basics of hiking and appreciation of nature. However, this club also includes geospatial and geographic lessons, the knowledge of technology to enhance our appreciation of nature, as well as ecocaching.

Ecocaching is similar to geocaching in

that geocachers are seeking a treasure, but one that nature has created.

There is another unique aspect to this club that will evolve within 4-H Ontario. The Club is not a typical local club where only those members participate in a project. It is meant to be inclusive of all 4-H youth in Ontario who want to participate. It will soon become a virtual, interactive club through

a specially designed website and www.geocaching.com. In other words, 4-H members will all join the same club and work towards their credit in a variety of ways.

Since geocaching can be done anywhere in the province or the country, 4-H members will log-in to the site and supply information to the 4-H Geocaching Club for Achievement. "We are in the first phase of the project in which we are

developing the material and website" says Wayne MacDonald, one of the 4-H leaders. "Our goal is to provide a virtual meeting place for 4-H members to be included no matter where they live."

4-H is an organization of leaders building leaders. Over 6000 youth 10-21 years of age, and a grass roots network of 1600 trained, screened volunteers pledge their Head, Heart, Health and Hands as members of community based clubs. With projects encompassing agriculture, food, health and the environment, 4-H Ontario's "Learn To Do By Doing" clubs, camps and conferences have a successful 94 year history in developing competence, confidence, connection, character and caring within rural and urban youth."