

LET'S HAVE AN ADVENTURE

ACCESSIBLE GEOCACHING

The Treasure
Is In The Journey



INCLUSIVE FITNESS INITIATIVE

ACCESSIBLE GEOCACHING

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Find out more at FitnessInclusionNetwork.org

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IA INCLUSIVE FITNESS
INITIATIVE



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Left:

Team members organize information for the Fit-In Network cache they are placing at Onondaga Lake park



ABOUT US

Fitness Inclusion Network (Fit-In) is a grassroots group of athletes, students, families, and professionals in adapted physical education, medicine, physical therapy, occupational therapy, engineering, therapeutic recreation, special education, social work, and disability policy and law. Our mission is to develop innovative ways to promote and support inclusive fitness for children, adolescents and adults with disabilities in Central New York.

Last summer the Fitness Inclusion Network partnered with Syracuse Parks and Recreation to place geocaches in accessible nature areas in our

city. This Summer we expanded the project by linking with the New York State Department of Conservation.

We decided to create this geocaching guide because we thought this would be a great way to encourage people with disabilities to get outdoors. We discovered so many beautiful nature areas right in our city! We also learned about accessible trails, boat launches, and forests in our region. This geocache project was also a great way to meet people and make friends! We have included profiles in this guidebook to introduce you to some of them!



FitnessInclusionNetwork.org





WHAT IS GEOCACHING?

Geocaching is a real-life, scavenger hunt that uses GPS-enabled devices to find a hidden object referred to as a “cache.” Players receive a specific set of GPS coordinates that will often lead them to previously unnoticed paths and areas in order to find their cache. It is an exciting way to get out and explore the outdoors! Caches come in all shapes and sizes and will usually contain a small logbook and token. Once discovered, one can choose to switch the keepsake inside with

something of equal or greater value. Although there are multiple geocaching groups, we recommend accessing these coordinates by going to www.geocaching.com or downloading the Geocache App on your smartphone. Accessible geocaches placed by our Fitness Inclusion Network can be found by searching “Fit In Network” on geocaching.com. Embrace your inner adventurer and start geocaching!





HOW TO FIND ACCESSIBLE NATURE AREAS

Would you like to start an accessible geocaching group in your community? We have discovered several excellent web resources for locating accessible trails and recreation areas in New York State!

NYS Inclusive Recreation Resource Center

Developed and maintained by the SUNY Cortland Department of Therapeutic Recreation Center, the NYS Inclusive Recreation Resource Center (IRRC) promotes and sustains participation by people with disabilities in inclusive recreation activities and resources. The IRRC maintains an online database with descriptive information about recreation resources to help people with disabilities better plan their recreation. The IRRC also provides training, called Inclusion U, to parks and recreation professionals, self-advocates, tourism professionals, human services professionals, families, and anyone interested in increasing opportunities for inclusive recreation. People who complete Inclusion U training can submit entries into the online recreation access database.

www.colfax.cortland.edu/nysirrc/about.html

NYS Department of Environmental Conservation

The Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) welcomes all visitors to explore outdoor recreation on state lands and is committed to providing an ever-increasing range of accessible opportunities. Currently, visitors to DEC's accessible facilities can enjoy fishing, boating, hunting, canoeing, picnicking, horseback riding, hiking, visiting historic assets, wildlife observation and camping at DEC campgrounds as well as primitive areas. The NYS Access Pass, which is administered by the Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation (OPRHP), is accepted at DEC campgrounds and day use areas. Service animals are welcome at all DEC sites.

Many of the DEC sites were designed to provide people with choices about the type of recreational experience and level of personal challenge they prefer. The DEC employs a network of Access Coordinators who are available to discuss individual needs and recreational pursuits.

The Motorized Access Program for People with Disabilities (MAPPWD) permit is a temporary revocable permit that provides motor vehicle access to certain state lands administered by DEC. MAPPWD permit holders are permitted uncommon access to activities such as hunting, fishing, camping and wildlife observation. The permit is only issued to qualified people with disabilities, who must complete and submit an application to the DEC Access Coordinator. Permit holders can use a permitted vehicle to travel beyond the reach of public roads, to areas where others must hike or bike. The permit provides access for those who seek solitude, connection to nature, undisturbed wildlife habitat, and inclusion with fellow sportspeople.

Lastly, the DEC maintains a database of accessible state forests and conservation areas. It also provides links to accessible nature areas such as John Dillon Park.

www.dec.ny.gov/outdoor/34035.html

NYS Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation

The Access Pass permits residents of NYS with disabilities, as defined in the application, free or discounted use of state parks, historic sites, and recreational facilities operated by the NYS Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation and the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation. The pass holder may have free or discounted use of facilities operated by these offices, for which there is normally a charge.

www.nysparks.com/admission/access-pass/default.aspx

Rails to Trails Conservancy

Rail-trails are multi-purpose public paths created from former railroad corridors. They are most often flat or follow a gentle grade as they traverse urban, suburban and rural communities in America. Ideal for many uses, such as walking, bicycling, inline skating, cross-country skiing, and equestrian and wheelchair use, rail-trails are extremely popular for both transportation and recreation.

www.railstotrails.org

Other Key Resources:

Many municipal parks and recreation departments offer accessible trails and recreation opportunities. Contact the commissioner for Parks and Recreation in your city or town, or contact the county parks department to find out about accessible trails and recreation opportunities in your community. The Division of Youth Programs for the City of Syracuse Department of Parks and Recreation has been a great partner for our Accessible Geocaching project!

www.syr.gov.net/Parks/youthRecreation.html

Networking

Many YMCA's have inclusion coordinators. Regional Independent Living Centers also are staffed by people who will be able to suggest accessible trails and recreation areas.

Veterans groups and local outdoor enthusiasts may also have information about accessible recreation. For example, Advanced Strategies Adventures is a group of certified hunting and fishing guides that offer accessible fishing and hunting trips in Central New York. Another example is Team Adventure, a local organization that offers

accessible high ropes and outdoor adventure experiences. Networking with people who love the great outdoors is a great way to learn about accessible trails, and maybe even create an accessible trail in your community!

Websites

YMCA www.ymcanys.org

Independent Living Centers

www.acces.nysed.gov/vr/independent-living-centers

Advanced Strategies Adventures

www.advancedstrategiesadventures.org/page/page/5682047.htm

Team Adventure www.teamadventurecny.com





PUTTING IT TOGETHER: SUCCESSFUL GEO-CACHING

Here are some tips for getting started and for safe and successful geocaching!

SUPPLIES

You will need a GPS receiver, map, and compass. You can download apps onto your smart phone that do all this. Examples: My GPS Coordinates, My Scout, and Geocaching apps.

SAFETY

Bring flashlight, water bottle, cell phone, insect repellent, sunscreen, first aid kits, and outer-wear for unexpected rain, wind and bugs. It's also a good idea to bring some pocket change.

LOG YOUR JOURNEY

Bring a camera and a pen and notebook. Write a log detailing your journey. Share the spirit of adventure with the geocache owner and for other geocachers. An action camera is a fun way to share your perspective on the great outdoors!

CACHE TREASURES

Cache finders will want to leave behind a little token (as well as take one as a souvenir). Think small, lightweight, environmentally (and culturally) friendly, inexpensive and non-degradable ideas.

ETIQUETTE

Don't place caches on private land without permission. Pick up litter along the way and don't leave anything behind. Return the cache to the same spot where you found it.

RATE ACCESSIBILITY

Although the Geocaching site has a system for describing caches that includes an icon and point system for accessibility, you may want to explore a more detailed rating scale that was developed by Handicaching.com. The Handicaching rating scale provides information about Cache Height, Route Obstructions, Route Slope, Route Surface, and Distance to Cache.



PUTTING IT TOGETHER: INCLUSION CHECKLIST

And here are tips for increasing usability of nature trails and recreation areas. More information is available on the website of the New York State Inclusive Recreation Resource Center colfax.cortland.edu/nysirrc/about.html.

1	PEOPLE FIRST People with disabilities are people first.
2	COMMUNICATE CLEARLY Use plain language and alternative forms of communication.
3	MAKE SURE EVERYONE'S INVITED Review marketing materials and website for inclusiveness.
4	A CLEAR PATH Ensure that people of all sizes and abilities can approach, enter, and use.
5	Make Space Ensure there is room for people of all abilities to move freely and use amenities.
6	PROVIDE ALTERNATIVES One size does not fit all — use basic principles of universal design.
7	KNOW YOUR BUSINESS Policies about inclusion and access are developed and shared.
8	BRIDGE THE GAP BETWEEN ABILITY AND ACTIVITY Bridge the gap between customers needs and satisfying experiences.
9	SUPPORT EACH CUSTOMER A best practice to support all people is to provide a quiet space.
10	YOUR STAFF ARE YOUR AMBASSADORS Staff must understand what inclusion is and how to make it happen.

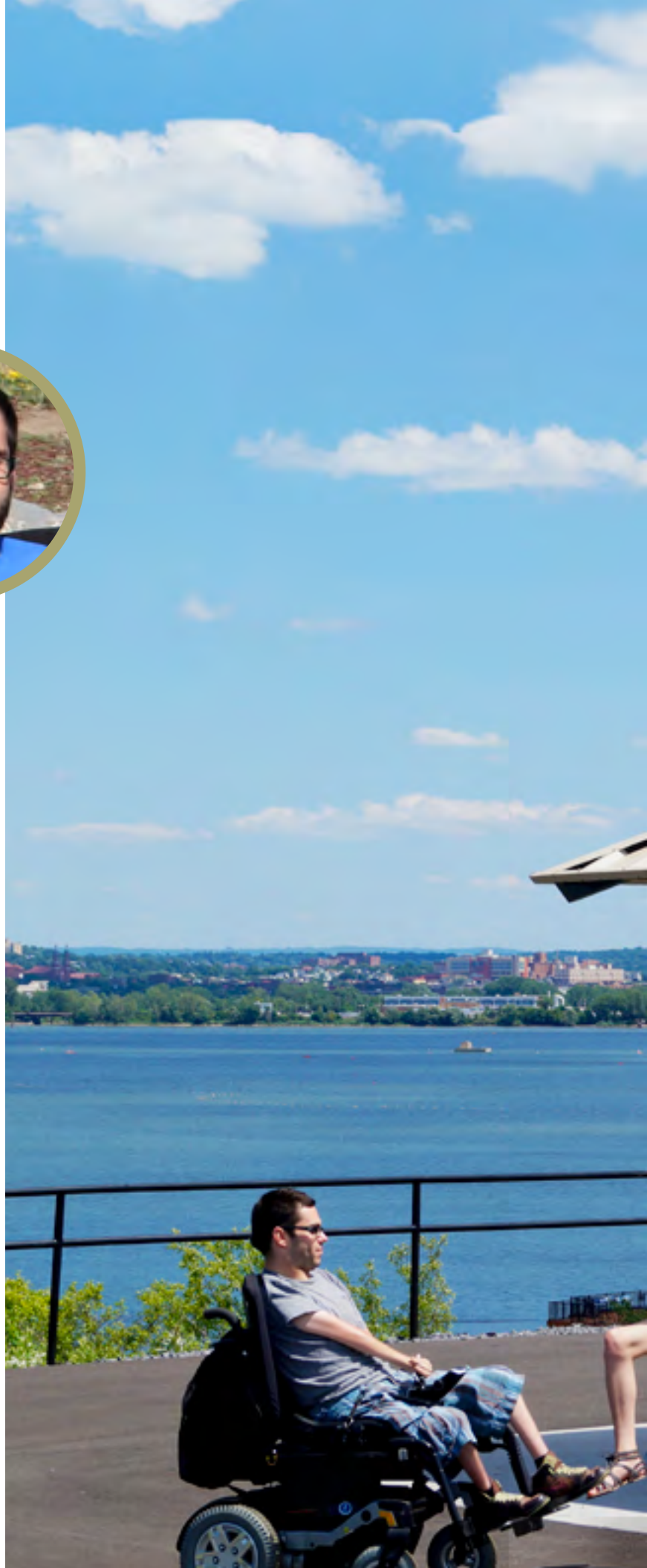
PEYTON

ONONDAGA LAKE PARK

“Nature:
the
ultimate
inclusion.”



Welcome to our Accessible Geocaching project! In the following pages you will meet some of the people who helped us to place the Fit-In caches. Each of us had a favorite spot that we wanted to highlight. Mine is the new West Shore Trail along Onondaga Lake. This paved trail meanders across two miles of wind-sheltered woodlands. I love the views! Accessible geocaches placed by our Fitness Inclusion Network can be found by searching “Fit In Network” on the geocaching.com website. If you have a favorite area you would like to add, contact us at FitnessInclusionNetwork.org! Turn the page to see a map of some of our Fit-In caches and meet some great people who are into accessible geocaching!







Beaver Lake



Onondaga Lake Park



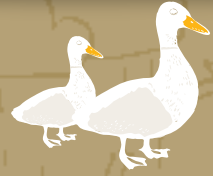
Creekwalk



Lime Hollow



Webster Pond



Oneida Lake Boat Launch



Oneida Lake

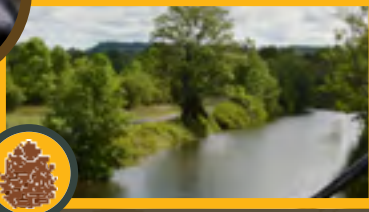


NYS THRUWAY

Thornden Park



Erie Canal State Park



Green Lakes State Park



Highland Forest



Hoxie Gorge



CENTRAL NEW YORK

Goodyear Lake Boat Launch



EASTERN NEW YORK

Geocache Map

This map is representational only. Not to scale.

JAMES LIME HOLLOW



Learning to find your way around a park can be a lot like learning your way around your neighborhood.

Practice geocaching with different technology tools to find the best fit for you. You may even be carrying a GPS with you already! Many smartphones and even some tablets

can act like a GPS for finding treasures in your local park. Look for a smartphone or device that uses voice commands to tell it where to go, and to tell you the names of streets. The best smartphones and tablets for GPS use a cell phone network. Practice using your favorite GPS with friends and family before going out on your own just to be safe.

“Nature means life and beauty. Going out for nature walks is very relaxing.”

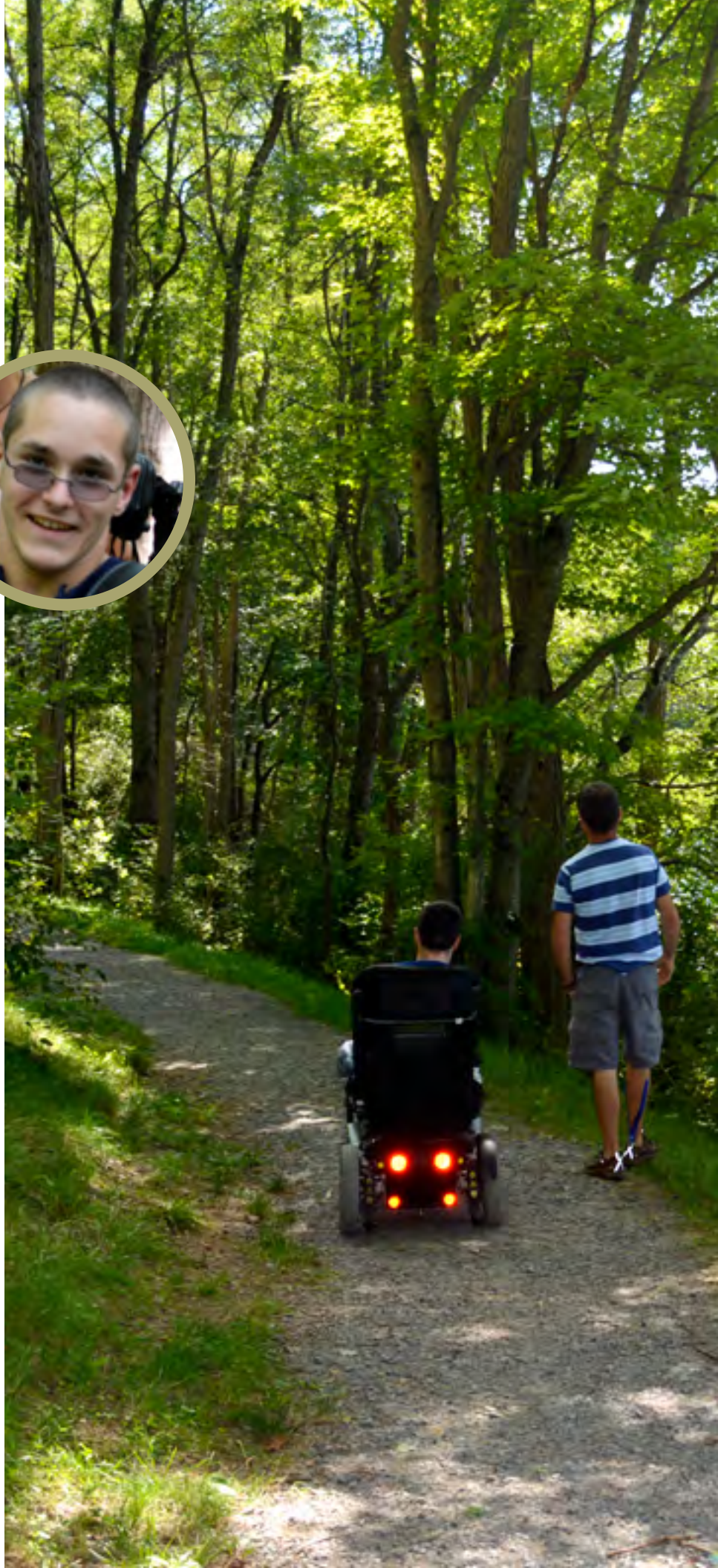




NICK GOODYEAR LAKE

“Being out in nature makes me feel calm and happy.”

Try using an action camera, such as GoPro, to document your geocache adventure. You can post photos and video on our geocache site or other social media. Share your perspective on the great outdoors!





HELENA ERIE CANAL

The Y is made up of people of all ages and from every walk of life working side by side to strengthen communities. I am one of those people. Starting an accessible geocaching club at your local Y is a great way to be inclusive and to get young people together to appreciate nature and be well.

“Nature is great because it makes you feel free.”





CHAD WEBSTER POND



“Geocaching projects are a great way for people with disabilities to enjoy the outdoors, help friends, and make new ones.”

I am involved with the Anglers Association of Onondaga, a non-profit group that is based at Webster Pond in the Valley section of Syracuse. Over the past couple of years I have worked to create an accessible walking loop around the pond. It is .06 miles long.

This year we got together with Arise (our local Independent Living Center) to build an accessible shelter.

I know how much people in the Valley love this landmark and have been coming here for many years. I wanted to take this whole thing and turn it around into something that the public and the community can enjoy!

“Walk or wheel your troubles away by visiting an accessible park each and every day.”





CANDIS & CRYSTAL INNER HARBOR – CREEKWALK

“Its healthy to be outdoors.”

The geocaching app is a good way to get outdoors. There are many other apps that you may want to try:

- **Steps:** Keeps track of how many steps you take per day.
- **RunKeeper:** Uses GPS to track distance, elevation, and speed.
- **MapMyWalk:** Let's you make a map and keep notes about your walks.
- **Able Road:** Rates accessibility of places for Mobility, Hearing, Sight, Cognition.

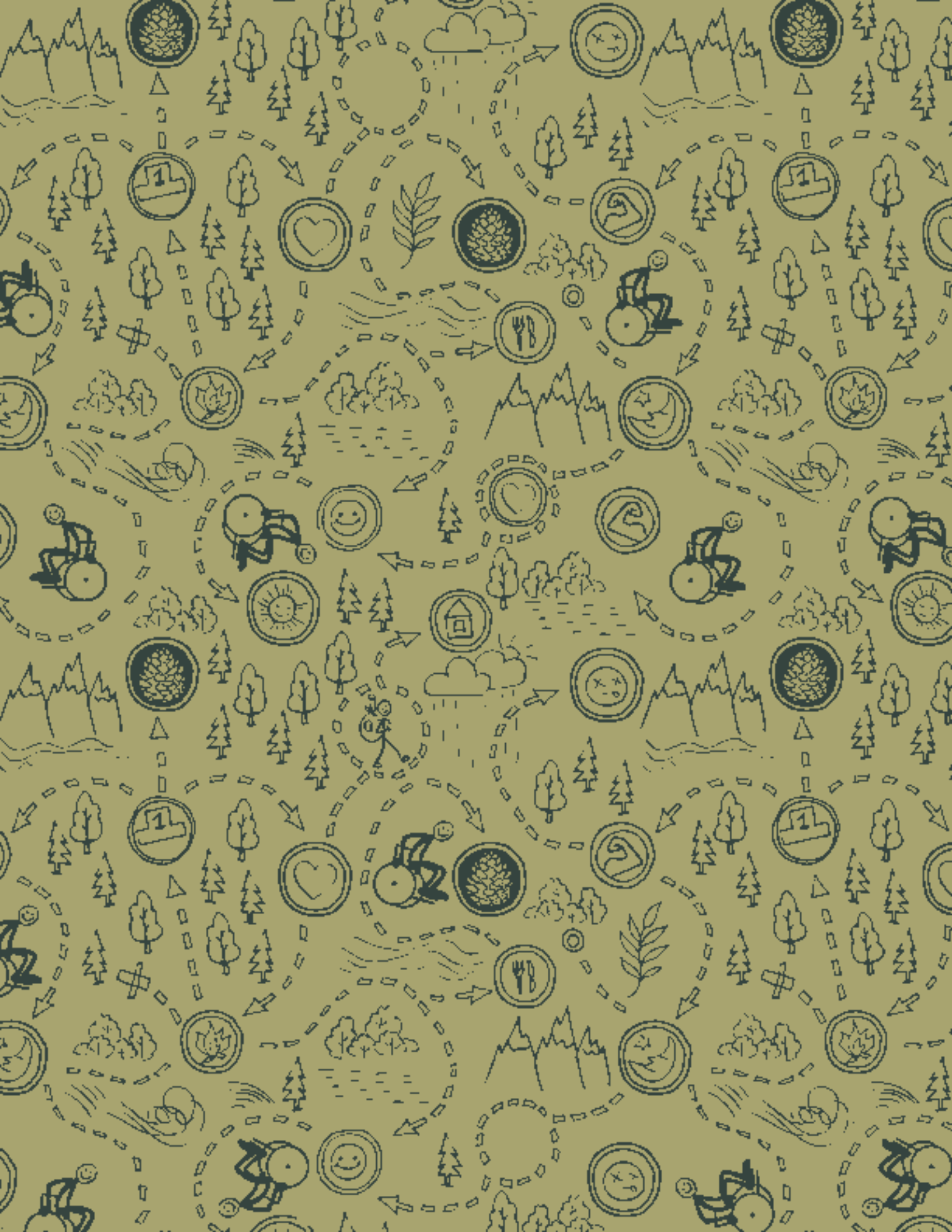




YOUR NAME HERE!

WHAT TREASURE WILL YOU FIND?







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