

Storage_Caches_1991.txt

This is the first of a series of articles about caching, the third most important tool a survivalist has. The first being knowledge of how to survive under any circumstance, the second is being in good enough physical condition to survive under any circumstance.

We will start with the home cache. The home cache is a supply of food and tools in the house (or other home) that would permit you to exist in your home for a determined amount of time if all outside support ends. If the grid goes down, communications are jammed or dead, the water is cut off, and fuel sources are gone. When would such an event happen, surprisingly enough our standard of living is built on a thin egg shell, it could happen at any time by many different means. Here in South

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Florida we have seen first hand how something like a hurricane can wipe out your entire lifestyle in one day.

To prepare for a storm or other disruption of living norms we need to lay in a supply of food, water, fuel, in the home that we (all those in our group or family) can survive for at least one month.

We can not continue to rely on the government to provide for us in 48 hours.

This was made painfully evident in Hurricane Andrew. And then when the government did come in it was at the best merely life sustaining. We should also consider protective gear which would include firearms and ammo. When the troops came in to protect us they were told not to load their weapons.

It took the gangs of looters only a matter of an hour or so to figure

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this

out. There was even one incidence in which the gangs surrounded some troops

and demanded their weapons. Luckily the troops had seen what was going

on and radioed for a military helicopter with armed police on board who

arrived before there was bloodshed.

OK, where? This is a common concern, especially here in S.Fl. where hurricanes have completely leveled entire developments.

Well, don't laugh, it has proven to be best to make the bathrooms a safe

haven. Bathrooms, partly because of their smaller size, partly because

of the fact many do not have windows are considered the strongest room

in any house not constructed with a "safe room" where the walls are especially constructed for the survivalist's needs.

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Empty the cabinets and stock them with water, water purification devices, a camping stove and a brand new can of fuel for the stove (brand new because they are sealed for placement on store shelves and usually don't leak unless punctured), food, flashlights and batteries (in drawers not the cabinet), your family first aid kit, a couple of changes of "roughing it" clothes, and a battery powered A.M./F.M. (and CB or ham) radio. You do not need to purchase special "backpacking" foods for this cache, just your ordinary canned foods, stews, soups, etc.

Just consider it a pantry in a strange place. Oh, and if you own one the cellular phone. You can keep your bathroom stocks (extra toilet paper, etc.) in a hall closet with only a couple of rolls in the cabinet.

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You will notice I did not mention firearms. IF you are going to keep a supply of self defense firearms in the house you must be sure that small hands (if you have children, grandchildren, or fiends and neighbors that drop by have any) can't find or get them. But then again you don't want them locked up where you can't get to them yourself, especially if you wind up running in there in the middle of the night with your key ring on the dresser or in your pants pocket. I have seen some interesting installations of medicine cabinets. I saw a house that had a medicine cabinet in each bathroom that were originally built into the wall, high enough that little folks would have trouble reaching them. The owner had made a few changes though. He purchased a medicine chest that mounted

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flush

on the wall that was bigger than the original and removed the originals

leaving a nice hole in the wall. He custom made some shelves and placed

his weaponry in the "cache" on the shelves and then hung the new medicine cabinet over it. He used a drill to drill a hole large enough

for the head of the mounting screws to fit through just below and touching

the smaller mounting holes, making "slotted " holes. By leaving the screws just shy of being tight he could grab the medicine chest and

lift it about 1/4" and pull it off the wall.

I am not going to pretend to be an arms expert and tell you what you need in your cache for protection. My personal caches

have 22 long rifle rifles and handguns for protection against the four

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legged vermin. After Andrew the rats got big enough to use as target practice (some as big as cats) if you were not inclined to eat them. But then again, that is a different survival topic. I also plan to have 9mm semi auto pistol for protection from the 2 legged vermin. These are choices you will have to make on your own. You will also have to make the decision whether or not to have firearms around if you have children. These are moral topics I do not care to go into.

Water is one of the most important needs in emergency situations. Under normal circumstances I would have a gallon per day per person on hand. If there are reasons you might be exerting physical energy I would recommend twice or four times this amount. If you are going

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to
be on the move the size and weight of such preparations would be prohibitive.
So, you can substitute water purification products for a large quantity
of the water. If you are preparing a bug out route make sure there are
water sources along the way to allow for you to process and restore your
on hand supply of water. On our Appalachian trip (the pictures) our chosen
route was beside streams. Except for certain sections of the trip we had
access to replenishment of water so we could make do with just a couple
of canteens. Water availability needs to be a major concern in bug out
trail layout. If you live in an area that has access to a pond, lake, stream,
or canal then you may substitute water treatment equipment for the

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major
portion of the water supply.

Your next concern should be for shelter or protection from the elements. If you are expecting to still have the house or other building as a shelter then you need to take into consideration the need for insect repellent as you can not always expect the windows to still be intact. If they are you can help the insect problem if there are screens. Also, if in a Northern climate sleeping bags and cold weather protection is advisable. In the case of storms or other natural phenomena the building may be nothing more than a shell, some standing walls, or just a slab. So, you should also have tents available for setting up inside what is

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left of your home.

This brings about a point we need to cover. The home cache in areas such as a hurricane zone need to take into consideration the possibility of the home being destroyed. So, your first (in closeness to the home) external cache should be right there in your yard. If you examine pictures of disaster struck areas (hurricane and tornado) one thing you will notice is that usually the lawn is still there. Trees may be broken off or bent over but from the grass down is still intact. So, I suggest that you have a duplicate cache in terms of time of survival on the supplies at hand. In other words, if you are keeping a months supply of food and water in the house you should have a months supply of food and water

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(purification)

in the external underground caches in the yard.

Food in the external caches should be of more compact and even portable foods like backpacking meals. The caches in your yard are right there where you can keep an eye on them so the care of a remote location is not necessary. I suggest placing the tubular caches in the ground and placing a pot with a whole in it the size of the caching tube, and then a shrub or flower bush in the same size pot can be placed in the pot in the ground. I came to this idea while standing in line at a bank, all of their plants were set up like this (except for the whole and tube) so that they can come through every week or so and swap outdoor plants

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with indoor plants to aid in their access to light. It was totally unnoticeable until you grabbed the plant and pulled up. So, the idea of an entire garden of potted plants in the front yard in such pots with caches underneath each came to mind. You can tell your neighbors (if you have any that can see your yard easily) that you are keeping the plants moveable in order to assure that none are starved for light.

Of course, you should become active "puttering" in your garden in spare time so the neighbors would not think it unusual to see you rolling a wheelbarrow and shovels and garden equipment around in your yard. After they are use to this you can start placing your caches, a few at a time.

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I will be getting some pictures to illustrate this process as soon as I can so keep checking back on this homage for pictures.

Besides there are going to be other articles on caching in the future.

Besides the tubes I expect to have some ammo cans buried under square oblong planters done similarly to hold items that the tubes are not suitable for. A pistol and ammunition come to mind first for such a cache. Possibly a larger than backpack able water purification system in another. Remember that this cache will be dual purpose. Not only will it be a backup for your home cache (in case it is blown away or destroyed) but should also contain everything you need to make it to your first bug

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out trail cache should the necessity be to remove your group from the home location.

Discussion of the home caches will continue with my next installment. Until then, start puttering in your yard, I'll fill you in on tube construction next.

This is the second of a series of articles about caching, the third most important tool a survivalist has. The first being knowledge of how to survive under any circumstance, the second is being in good enough physical condition to survive under any circumstance.

It is time to discuss caching strategy and your bug out plan. I am assuming that all survivalists have a bug out plan. The definition, for our purposes, of a bug out (some consider it one word - bugout) is pretty much the same as a planned evacuation.

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Many feel that their bug out vehicle will be in operation and plan their caches along their route in increments of either a days travel by that vehicle or the distance it can travel on a fuel load. While planning a route and a bugout plan for a vehicle you must also consider

caching fuel. This makes the cache much harder to plan and initiate. The obvious advantage of a vehicle does more than compensate for the extra work and problems.

The most obvious advantages are the speed and distance you can cover in a vehicle as opposed to making the trip on foot. Here in S. Fl. the

distance to what I would consider a safe retreat would be across state

lines. Anywhere from 500 to 1000 miles can be accessible by vehicle in

a matter of days as opposed to weeks or months by foot. There are other

advantages also. Protection from the elements in an enclosed vehicle is

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an obvious advantage. With more than one driver one can sleep while the other is behind the wheel. Being able to sleep inside a vehicle (a van or station wagon) at the camp sights along the way is a secure feeling.

There are many reasons why a vehicle is needed for a major evacuation.

IMHO (In My Humble Opinion):

The BUGOUT VEHICLE;

The first thing that comes to everybody's mind is a 4 wheel drive truck or station wagon. A lot of good can be said about 4 wheel drive (4wd)

and many consider it an advantage. I agree, but, you should first learn how to drive in off road situations in a 2 wheel drive vehicle. If

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you

can master that then a 4wd is preferable and can get you there faster and easier. HOWEVER, driving around in a jeep or jimmy all painted up in camouflage with the big monster tires is like putting a big neon sign on your back saying "I am a survivalist with goodies"!

The old 2wd vehicles with positraction rear ends would do almost as well as 4wd. Of course, if you can find it, 4wd with positraction (limited slip) axles would be excellent. The idea is to try to make yourself as inconspicuous as possible and yet have a workable vehicle.

A raggedy looking old station wagon or van with limited slip axle might be a good bet. If you could somehow modify it to 4wd without making it obvious then that much better.

Then again, there are those that feel a 4 wheel vehicle at all would

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be
a problem. The bugout vehicle could be a motorcycle. Traveling faster
and lighter and much more maneuverable. The fuel caches would be much
smaller due to lower fuel consumption. IF you get stuck or come up
against an obstacle not acceptable to a car or truck get off and push
or drag it out. It would fit in places a larger vehicle wouldn't. If
the roadways out of an area are blocked it can be ridden on
sidewalks,
through parks and fields, in gullies, RR beds, lots of places a car
can't go. Of course you are at the mercy of the elements and you will
have to sleep in a tent and/or sleeping bag. And if you are worried
about gunfire there is no protection.

The last vehicle I will mention is a bicycle. A mountain bike can be
ridden almost anywhere. If it can't be ridden it can be carried.
There

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is no fuel caching. It is much slower though. A motorcycle could get you 100 to 200 miles a day off road. A bicycle could get you maybe 30 to 50 miles a day if you are practiced and in good shape.

Diesel or Gasoline;

This argument has been going on for ages. Diesels have a slight advantage as far as there are no ignition parts to get wet or deteriorate. Diesels have a very big advantage for engine life. The fuel is actually a lubricant in the upper cylinder and helps cut the wear and tear on internal engine parts. Both fuels present problems in caches. Both need additives to maintain viability for more than 6 months to a year. For my own use I am at present using gasoline. However, Before I get too much cached in the ground anywhere I will switch to diesel. Of course motorcycles will need gasoline, don't know of too many diesel bikes.

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OK, back to caching. Caches along a bugout trail should be at distances you can travel in 3/4 of a day. If you are planning on having a survival camp at each cache this will give you time to set up and tear down camp. This will also allow for any delays (such as laying low while "they" pass by or any trail trouble) so that you are not pushed for time all the time. When you hurry you make mistakes.

So, how far apart is that anyway? Well, that depends. You need to go out and run the trail in your chosen vehicle on your days off, weekends, vacations, and holidays. That way you will know, the first day I can get to here. So figure 3/4 of the day for the first cache. Well, actually, the second bugout cache. The first should be fairly close to the home location. That way if the bugout occurs late in the day or if you are caught with your proverbial pants down you have a fresh supply of fuel and supplies near at hand. Then your second cache should be at the 3/4 days distance from the home base.

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Driving the bugout trail yearly is a good idea. That way any changes can be made to compensate for man's "progress" into your backwoods trail. Besides, the better you know the trail the less likely you will have any surprises or hardships along the way.

The caches should be placed at 3/4 day intervals and the vehicle should have enough fuel capacity to run from cache to cache. These will be things you learn by driving the trail. The vehicle may need to be modified to contain enough fuel. If it still can't make it then you will have to make some "fuel only" caches.

Caches that contain fuel will be the hardest caches to build. I have considered items like aircraft bladders from wing tanks (these would be nice because there would be no air on top of the fuel) to buried 55 gallon barrels. Either way, the time and effort in burying them would be substantial and the likelihood of being discovered and/or observed high. Large caches such as this are problems. Great care must be taken in assuring solitude and stealth. The vehicle must

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also contain a way of retrieving the fuel from the cache. A pump (either hand operated or powered by the engine or electrical system of the vehicle) or other device to suck the fuel up out of the ground into the tank in the vehicle. Of course, here again, a cache of fuel for a motorcycle would naturally be smaller. A 5 gal can or 2 of fuel for a motorcycle would be easy to cache. And if you want to travel light, you could cache a backpacking tent and sleeping bag at each overnight cache with a days food. That way you could travel from cache to cache with nothing but spare fuel and a small day sack.

One strategy would be to have the first couple of caches with supplies of this sort so that until you clear the populated areas and are out into the "sticks" and therefore not making you easily spotable. Once you have cleared the populated areas anyone you run into will probably

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be just like you, trying to get away from the city. However, everyone should be suspect unless you know them, and then keep an eye on them. Man, that sounds paranoid. But in survival circumstances you have to be cautious.

In the next article on caching I will talk about what I plan on putting into each bug out cache. In the future we will get into actual construction techniques.

Any Questions or comments about these articles, email them to me. If I get enough I may put a question and answer section to the home page.

This is the third of a series of articles about caching, the third most important tool a survivalist has. The first being knowledge of how to survive under any circumstance, the second is being in good enough

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physical

condition to survive under any circumstance.

Just what do we need in our bug out caches? Well, that is determined by your strategy. IF you are using a motor vehicle you will HAVE to cache fuel. A bicycle or foot evacuation will have to be more frequent

and closer together but no fuel will be cached. My personal preference

at this time is using 55 gal. drums for fuel caches. The better but more

expensive way would be aircraft fuel bladders. The reason they would be

better is that their would be little or no air on top of the fuel. Air

causes problems with fuel so the less exposure to it the better.

I like the method of first painting the outside of the drum with a rust

proofing paint and then having a friend of mine spray them with

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polyurethane foam. This is just a redundancy habit I have and may be considered nonessential IF the drum is coated with rustproofing well enough. One nice thing about the foam spray is that you make the drum look different enough that someone catching a glimpse of you in process will not automatically think you are burying a drum. If you can pack up and leave before they come in for a closer look then they will just be confused as to what you were doing. The foam adds some strength and some waterproofing to the drum.

If you are caching gasoline then you need to add some life extender to the fuel. This is available at many automotive stores. If you are caching diesel you will need to acquire a product that is used in jet

fuel storage. It is a chemical that, among other things, prevents algae from growing in the fuel. This is a problem with long term diesel fuel storage.

Great care is taken while digging a hole for a cache. All of the leaves, twigs, and whatever ground cover (such as grass) is removed and preserved so that it can be replaced without leaving any

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indication that anyone has been digging there. A piece of visqueen or plywood is laid out so that any dirt that is dug out of the hole is placed on it and not allowed to fall on the surface around the digging area. All dirt needs to be compacted back into the hole around and over the cache so that it won't settle with a little rainfall and leave an indentation over your cache. The leftover dirt needs to be removed from the area. If there is a stream or river nearby you can either drop it in the water or on the bank. If there is no stream nearby then just take it as far away as possible and scatter it as thinly as possible on the ground.

A hole is dug that will leave the top of the drum a minimum of 2 ft. underground. The drum is placed in the hole. The drum should be on a slight tilt with the bung on the high side. This is so that when filled it can be filled till there is no more air in the drum. The dirt should be put back in around the sides and tamped in layers of a foot or two with the end of the shovel handle or a sledge hammer to compact the dirt and make it as solid as possible. The drum is then filled with fuel and the bung screwed in tight. A generous coating of axle grease over the bung to keep it from rusting in place

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is a good idea. Once the fuel is secured in the drum you then need to fill in on top of it with dirt. An optional piece of plywood over the drum to keep the dirt away from the bung is possible or you can just make sure it is cleaned away before you unscrew it when retrieving the fuel.

One quick word about retrieving your fuel. Don't forget!!! If you are going to take the fuel out you must provide a way for the air to get in. As difficult as it would be to suck the fuel out without letting air in, the barrel would collapse. I prefer to use air pressure to push the fuel up out of the drum instead of a pump to suck fuel up. Place the line on the bottom of the drum and then put air pressure on top of the fuel. The fuel will freely flow out of the line and into the vehicle tank. Most 55 gal. drums have two bungs, one small and one large. Placing a tube that will reach the bottom of the

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barrel

welded into a threaded plug that fits the bung that is on the lower side of the barrel will give you a supply of fuel when you screw an adapter into the other bung that an air hose can be connected to. Pressure doesn't need to exceed 20 to 30 lb. per square inch to give a healthy flow of fuel. If you are merely rotating your supplies (something that should be done every couple of years even with extenders) the collapsing of the drum would require removing and replacing it.

If you are just storing enough fuel for a motorcycle you can bury a plastic drum (readily available mail order) large enough to hold a couple of 5 gal. cans and a fair amount of other supplies. My plans

for a motorcycle will have racks on either side of the rear wheel that Gerry cans can be supported on. I also plan on running a fuel line to each tank and a valve set up to switch tanks easily. But this isn't about my personal plans it's about telling you where to get started so you can start your own plan and get busy.

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Fuel aside, the strategy will determine the cache contents. If you are planning on a minimalist approach and are using a bicycle or motorcycle (or on foot) and you want to travel as light as possible then your caches will need to hold food for a day, a tent, and a sleeping bag. If there is no water available along the trail you will need to store a days supply of water also. This way you can travel from cache to cache with just a small bag (shoulder bag or pack) and rely totally on the caches. If you prefer a "take it all with you" strategy your first caches should contain adequate backpacking gear that you can live on. A good reliable pack, tent, stove, and so on that will be transported with you. If this is your strategy then you will need to cache food and water every day, two days, three days, whatever you can carry to restock for supplies. Many prefer this because it makes you a little less dependent on all of your caches being accessible. If you are using a motor vehicle then fuel is a large caching investment. If minimalist is the way you want to go then ammo boxes or tube caches can be used.

The final retreat site cache is definitely much larger. In this

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local you need to stash enough supplies to live on till the end of the crisis you are avoiding. If it is a long term disaster you are planning to avoid you should cache things like seeds for a garden

and anything else you need to become totally self-sufficient. If you think things will return to normal after a couple of months to maybe a year then a years supply should be cached. It is my humble opinion that a years supply should be cached even if you are laying in self-sufficiency supplies. This is so that you are covered if it is too late

in the year to start producing your own foods. If you don't use it all

you can save it and use it in times that your harvest isn't enough for whatever reason.

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This is the fourth of a series of articles about caching, the third most important tool a survivalist has. The first being knowledge of how to survive under any circumstance, the second is being in good enough physical condition to survive under any circumstance.

Cache construction is one thing that is both critical and varied from person to person. The size and shape varies according to your personal survival strategy. I have vaguely covered construction of a fuel cache in the last article. It is a place for you to start and then improve as you tailor the caches to your own needs. We will now discuss construction techniques for the rest of your supplies.

My favorite type of construction is the tube style caches. These days the availability of plastic pipe in a wide variety

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of
sizes has made it simple and easy to construct caching tubes in the
size
you need. It may not be cheap but you can purchase PVC pipe in sizes
large
enough to place fully loaded backpacks in them with room for your
weapon
of choice along with it. If you are planning on a foot bugout then
your
first cache (if your plan is to take it all with you) should be in a
pipe
of this size. Smaller pipe sizes (and therefore cheaper) can be used
from
this point on to hold food and water caches for restocking.

To construct these caches a minimal investment in tools
(you may already own them) and a small amount of knowledge is needed.
To
cut the pipe I use a normal circular saw (I use a special blade
purchased

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from a local hardware store but the standard blade will do) and purchase end caps, glue, and cleaner made for the PVC pipe. Follow standard procedures to glue one cap on the chosen length of pipe. The hardware store will explain how to do this if you don't already know. Just remember, the glue is cheap, a leak can be expensive. The other end cap is generally not glued. I have heard of some survivalist placing stores that do not need to be rotated in tubes and gluing them shut. This requires you to cut the tube open to retrieve your cache. The end that is not glued is always kept up towards the surface. If you use a normal end cap you can (if your climate is not wet and the ground water level is not a problem) coat with a liberal coating

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of petroleum product and just slide the end cap over the end of the tube.

However, you can purchase "cleanout plugs" that glue on the end of the tube (a necessity if you are in wet climate with high level of ground water) and have a threaded plug that tightens enough to be watertight.

I have been using end caps for a smaller size pipe that I turn down on a lathe to fit the inside of the pipe. I then turn grooves in the cap and put "O rings" in the grooves. I also drill a hole across the cap on the "outside" of the O rings to side a piece of brass stock through to use as a handle to remove the end cap with. The O rings are lubricated with petroleum jelly and the cap

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slid

into the tube. It is a nice water tight fit but you have to have access

to a lathe, it is too expensive to have it done for you.

One important point to make while discussing construction of your caches is the depth of the combined earth and depth of the constructed cache. If the bottom of the cache is a further distance from the top of the ground than you can reach you need to provide some sort of retrieval system. This can be as simple as a piece of monofilament tied to the bottom item in a tube cache and then tied to the top piece so that you can pull the bottom piece <and all those in between> up out of the cache.

If you are using a different type of cache then you will have to provide

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proper means of retrieval for your cache. I have seen barrel caches in which all stores were in ammo boxes inside the barrel. A 3 foot metal hook was also in each cache with a "T handle" on the other end that would allow you to hook the handles on the end of the ammo boxes and pull them out.

Other types of cache construction vary from things as simple as watertight plastic barrels to elaborate marine plywood boxes (or vaults) that are coated with all kinds of waterproofing. The plastic barrels may not be strong enough to hold the pressure of the ground around and over them so many people place them in a box or even a larger steel barrel. I would have them coated with a thick coat of Polyurethane

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foam

to give it the added strength. The main emphasis is WATERPROOF with a second

emphasis on being strong enough not to collapse when you remove your cached

items for rotation of stores.

Follow the guide lines given in an earlier article for the burial of the cache.

One thing that helps our cause is that anything buried 18 to 24 inches under the surface maintains a temperature of approximately

the average temperature of the area it is buried in. In other words, even

if the temperature gets into the hundreds the temperature (in most areas

of the U.S.) of the cache will probably remain in the seventies.

Also,

if the temperature drops to 10 below it will still remain at the

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AVERAGE

(yearly) temperature of the location. Building codes realized this many

years ago and it is referred to as the "frost line" or "frost

upheaval line" in most building codes. Check the building department

in the area your cache is in and they will tell you the frost line depth.

Maintain this depth and you have less problems. Since the cache is waterproof

anything in the cache will be in a "dry cool environment" that

is usually recommended for storage of almost everything you would want

to store. Even medications are recommended to be kept in a cool dry place

(the medicine cabinet in your home would not even qualify as a good place

to store medications) and the cache is almost ideal in all ways.

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When burying multiple tubes in a cache I like to use a pattern and bury them at a prescribed distance apart. That way when you find one use the pattern and distance to find the others. Having them slightly separated like this helps protect the rest of your cache if one tube is accidentally discovered. Use the points of the compass as your pattern. One at due north of the center tube and one at due south, east, west, however many tubes you have in the cache.

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This is the fifth of a series of articles about caching, the third

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most important tool a survivalist has. The first being knowledge of how to survive under any circumstance, the second is being in good enough physical condition to survive under any circumstance.

OK, now we know the basics of how to build and bury a cache. Now, where do we put it and how do we find it again. If we are good at concealing our caches they COULD be placed almost anywhere. However, other than the front yard cache I discussed in a previous post the need for seclusion is important. They need first of all to be placed away from traffic and residences so that you can bury and “refresh” your supplies as needed without being detected. The need to space them has already been discussed.

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There has been a lot of discussion about whether or not your caches can be detected by the government. I don't care how good you are at hiding your cache, "big brother" can find it if they really want to. However, they will have to suspect that you have something hidden that they want really bad. Then they will have to have a general idea where you have hidden it before they can find it. The advances made in "underground radar" and satellite imaging make finding almost anything possible. If you do nothing out of the ordinary to make them think you are someone that has something of great importance hidden somewhere then you don't have too much to worry about.

Another point to bring up is that if you are in an emergency situation and using your

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caches on the bugout trail care should be taken to take your trash along with you.

Don't leave a trail of garbage for someone to follow. Carry your garbage with you

and place it in the cache that you take your next supplies out of.

You really do not

need to be as particular about hiding the evidence of your cache if you are taking the

supplies out and putting trash in. Go ahead and bury it but don't worry about

complete concealment. The caches will be far enough apart that no one will likely be

able to trace your route by finding them. Besides, if you take the added precaution of

placing your cache 100 or so feet off the side of the trail it would be very hard to

find. If the cache is full of garbage what have you lost!

The system I intend to use for locating my caches will be as follows. First of all I will

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have my complete bugout route mapped out on my laptop and hard copies for all in my group. On the map I will have coded <in case they fall into anyone else's hands> annotations for locations of overnight camp sights and caches. (The laptop has just been added to my bugout plans.) Also, soon to be added to my plan is a GPS. This will be used to place my caches within a few yards and then triangulation of local topographical features to locate the cache in a more refined way. And finally, since most of my caches will have metal <cans, equipment, whatever> in the cache I plan on using a metal detector to pinpoint the cache. If you are concerned about others finding your cache with a metal detector (why on earth would anyone be using a metal detector way out there in the middle of nowhere) you can bury junk (pistons,

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ring gears, old crankshafts, etc.) in the area around your cache to mislead them into thinking they have happened on an old junk yard or an area used to strip a car.

The cheapest and simplest method <and probably most time consuming> would be a form of dead reckoning. On your map make note of landmarks near the cache. This will put you within range. Then make notes of triangulation on specific landmarks for the actual cache site. One word of caution here, do not use “volatile” objects for triangulation. In a years time a forest fire or hurricane, tornado, or other natural or manmade can remove or alter your “landmarks”. Use hill tops, mountain peaks, railroad tracks, the base of power line towers, etc. as landmarks. These will more than likely still be in the same place. To triangulate you need a

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good “scout” compass
or “surveyors” compass. These usually come with instructions on
taking “bearings”
on landmarks. If not many books are available on the subject of
navigation or map
reading that will give you this information. For the location of a
cache it is important
to have at least two recognizable landmarks to take bearings on in
order to
triangulate properly. I prefer at least 3 myself. After you are close
a metal rod with
a not too sharp point can be used to probe the ground till you “hit”
your cache.

If at all possible use the same compass to locate the cash that you
use to place the
cache. If there is any inaccuracy in the compass at least it will be
the same as it was
when used to place the cache. If you are using a metal detector to
pinpoint the

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location of your cache then any minor inaccuracy in the compass will not cause enough discrepancy to cause you to not be able to locate it.

I have seen a new device that is a compass built into a pair of binoculars that allows you to read the bearing of an object as you view it through the binoculars. IF these prove to be accurate then this would be an ideal device for triangulating on a cache.

However, consider the problems you would have taking the same bearing readings with a scout compass. Never rely totally on technical assistance because you never know for sure if you will have it with you to help. After taking your readings with a device like this (or a GPS) it wouldn't hurt to take (backup) readings to verify with your trusty pocket (scout) compass to assure that you would be able to locate it

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without the added technology.

When using multiple tubes in a tube cache I like to bury them in a pattern.

Something like a star. A center tube (that is actually what I take my bearings on)

and then the other tubes buried a given distance, 12 to 18 inches, away from the

center tube. That way I can locate the others once I locate one. A spot of different

colors of paint on the caps would tell me which "point" of the star it is and therefore

what direction to go in to find "center". This also (because of the distance between

them) makes it less noticeable that there is more than one tube in the cache if

accidentally discovered.

I have found a 2 liter plastic soda bottle that is just the right size to fit inside one of

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my standard caching tubes so I always make the center tube of the cache (the one that I hopefully find first) my drinking water cache. If you shop around you will find that you can locate cans just the right size to fit your caching tubes. This of course assumes that you want to cache over the counter foods in cans and plan on rotating your stores on a regular basis. There is a lot to be said for emergency rations being the same foods you are use to eating in a non-emergency situation. There is no “shock” to your digestive track (nobody needs a case of diarrhea or constipation at a time like this) by eating all freeze dried trail food (or other emergency rations) all of a sudden instead of your normal diet. You can also cache items that are not your ordinary emergency foods in caches, such as canned meats, chicken, fish, ham, etc. if

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using and rotating standard canned foods. This will help you plan and keep a balanced diet.

In your daypack, first cache, at intervals along the trail, and, of course, the end retreat cache you need a supply of personal toiletry items. Things like your favorite antacid, aspirin (or substitute), diarrhea medication, laxative, razor (shaving equipment) toilet paper, and dental hygiene supplies. If you have long hair and are not removing it for the bugout then you need a brush and ties to tie it back into a pony tail to keep it out of your way. Hair, however, is a good handle for anyone that might be doing personal combat with you in a hand to hand situation. This is one of the reasons why the military practically shave recruits heads.

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Weapons are a different story entirely. Great care must be put into storing weapons and ammo. I may ask an expert in this area to post an article later for those caching these items. I am not including this information in these articles.

I hope this has given you a place to start. You can of course develop your own methods and style of caching as long as you keep these basics in mind.

Dave