

Minutes of the 3/30/02 Combined Board Meeting

The meeting was opened Dave Sanders at 9:30AM

Prior to the meeting Mr. Charles Mason, a retired geologist, from the Gingko Club gave a very interesting presentation about the Teanaway and Columbia basalt formations.

He described in layman's terms how these two large basalt formations were formed millions of years ago. He showed several slides of the formations and described various characteristics of the basalt flows that once explained are easily recognizable. He also described the current theory describing the formation of the Ellensburg Blue agates found in the Teanaway formation.

The WSMC would like to thank Mr. Mason for taking the time to give this very informative presentation to the council members.

Dave Sanders opened the meeting at 9:30AM

Kathy Earnst gave the treasurer's report

Wagonmaster's report:

Ed Lehman said he had found a source for the new picture jasper locality near Skykomish. Apparently the material forms in lenses and outcrops in various places over an area that ranges from north of HWY 20 to as far south as North Bend. Once the snow melts (probably late May) Ed will try organize impromptu field trips.

· Ed will be needing help at the WSMC sponsored trips. He especially needs help with the pancake breakfasts, cleanup, and map selling.

· A motion was m/s/p to have Ed print about 100 sets of the color and W/B map books.

· The Kalama trip is still a go. This year there will be no need for everyone to stay in a single group. The gate will be locked once the group enters just like last year. We have also been informed that digging in the creek bottoms is now forbidden.

· This year Ed will take the group to a different collecting spot where he says the material is better.

· The Skagit sponsored trip to the Lake Wenatchee area for actinolite, soapstone, and garnet is still on. We will meet at the Lake Wenatchee Ranger station at 9AM.

New business:

Vi Jones presented some information that she received from the Forest Service.

· She reported that Senator Murray will be introducing a bill to set aside 100,000 acres to form a wilderness in the Skykomish River drainage.

· She also reported that the Finney Creek Adaptive Plan will have a "science based" analysis of the impact of the road system in the area.

· The Huckleberry Land Exchange has gotten the approval to go forward.

· Volunteers have raised over \$1.2 million for trail maintenance. Vi thought we should try to do something similar so that rockhounds could get some recognition

Stu Earnst received information from the state Department of Fish and Wildlife about the formation of a new citizen advisory council composed of 12 to 15 people that will meet 3 to 4 times a year. The council's purpose is to provide Fish & Wildlife with feedback regarding new policies. Stan Brook will serve as a representative from the WSMC.

Election of officers:

The officers for 2002 are:

President - Dave Sanders

First VP - Ed Thomas

Second VP - Stu Earnst

Treasurer - Kathy Earnst

Secretary - Marci Kleckner

General Discussion:

· The new map books seem to have lost the information about how to report misuse/abuse of collecting sites. The next map book edition should have this information added.

· Due to the heightened security following the terrorist attacks, there will not be a show at Fort Lewis this year.

· There is a new rule regarding off road use of ATVs and 4WD vehicles in the Teanaway (Redtop area). Only licensed vehicles are allowed

on the roads and NO off road use of any kind is permitted.

· Bob Pattie will send Glenn the hardcopy of the old handout describing the function of the WSMC. Glenn will print it in the newsletter for comments that may be included in an updated version.

· It was suggested that the procedure for reporting the misuse/abuse of collecting sites be printed in the newsletter.

Salmon Creek and its Purported Coprolites

Material on lower and middle reaches of Salmon Creek have the appearance of fossil animal droppings (coprolite) has long been known, first to pioneers of the area. It was identified as coprolite early. It was also disproved early (in the late 1930's by Dr. Dake of Portland; others followed). Unfortunately, fancy is more attractive than fact; the misnomer 'coprolite' shows no signs of going away. It stays alive largely by being repeatedly passed off on new users - the unwary initiates.

Without a text of the debunking studies, I have until now not been prepared to argue this matter reasonably. To remedy this situation, I recently went to Salmon Creek to gather samples for close examination. I chose not to study already-collected specimens because such specimens would have been taken selectively or have undergone sorting. I gathered 22 samples directly from a clay formation that bears them, unaffected by run-off and prior human disturbance. It must be noted here that specimens are randomly distributed in the clay, not clustered or restricted to a given level of the clay layer. I will first give a brief description of incidental findings, then present my understanding of origin.

Before we discuss the samples, I must indicate here that shape is sufficient indication that they could not have been formed a concretionary bodies.

Of the 22 samples, two are of intergrown specimens, five were knobby, two had reticulated surface patterns, and three showed a shallow depression, produced longitudinally during extrusion. Growth is usually uninterrupted; discontinuous activity (as suggested by variously spaced circumferential indentations) was revealed on only two. Knobs and the reticulated pattern accrete on already-formed material. Such accretion alters color, changing it from yellow-brown to brown, indicating a shift in mineralization.

(I had heretofore assumed that the reticulated and knobby forms were from distinct occurrences, not mixed with the others. It now seems likely that they are merely from distinct zones of the clay bed, independent of exact location along Salmon Creek.)

Of the 22 specimens, only three lacked a 'flat', a plain, relatively flat, surface, free of pock marks (not always easily identified). Seventeen of those having a flat had it on an end; it was near an end on one. (The other specimen was nearly equant in its 'flat' plane, making it difficult to identify an end.) I consider that the flat marks the part of the mass that existed at a point of growth. It is the place where material was 'cut off' from the point or 'window' at which growth occurred. Because there is only one point of growth, formation was by extrusion.

Assuming the truth of the above consideration and accepting the assumption that these are indeed extrusions (no other assumption seems plausible), it remains to consider the extrusion process. Here, the contortions must be taken into account. It is clear that the contortions could not have been formed by material having been dropped after extrusion; the pattern of the contortions is insufficiently random to consider such formation.

It is necessary next to consider the nature of the environment into which extrusion occurred. It is absurdly clear that it was neither into air (a gaseous medium, if you prefer) nor into a solid. Air could have not produced the contortions; a solid either would not have afforded entry of would have produced a far different distortion. I conclude that extrusion was into a medium moderately less viscous than the extruded material. (The difference was moderate because the extruding material was only slightly distorted in cross section, if at all.) I consider the extruded material to have been gelatinous; the medium into which extrusion occurred might have been gelatinous as well. An extrusion penetrated the medium in a given direction, resistance would build within the medium, causing the extrusion to shift direction. Repetition produced the manner of contortions we see in examples of the extrusions. Finally, failure of extrusions to gain curved form suggests that extrusion took place on a vertical line. Failure of extrusions to have been compressed along their long axis suggests that extrusion was directed downward.

I do not have insight on the source of the pressure that caused extrusion. The medium into which extrusion occurred was probably not the clay as we see today, but it might have been that of conditions existing early in development of the clay deposit. (Or, it might have preceded such development.) I lack insight on how the specimens broke free from their point of origin. I do not know how they became distributed in the clay. My best guess is that specimens are of an iron-bearing gel lying at the bottom of a bog, overlying another gelatinous mass. Extrusion occurred anciently when the bog was buried, as by a glacier. The apertures through which extrusion occurred might have been a thin, perforated layer of solidified material (perhaps a separate product of the iron-bearing gel, now lost or yet unobserved.)

Authorities indicate siderite is present. Color and texture indicate limonite and perhaps goethite might be dominant in extruded material; siderite in accreted portions. Crystallization, if present, is microscopic. I failed to find vivianite with the specimens. It is likely that I failed to recognize it.

Clearly visible features on the specimens scream "These are not coprolites!". It became discreditable to continue use of the term years ago; no support has been given since. I suggest the term be dropped.

Ray Claude, 12/10/01 via Carny Hound 1/02