

## 05/17/08 Combined board meeting minutes

Washington State Mineral Council Minutes Board Meeting @ Ellensburg

Meeting called to order by Pres. Diane Rose

### #1 Election of officers:

Nominations:

President Stu Earnst

Vice President Ed Brandstoettner

2nd VP Bryan Waters

Secretary Still open

Treasurer Kathy Earnst

Immediate Past Pres. Diane Rose

Trustees

West Side: Re-elect: Ed Levesque, Glenn Morita

East Side: Re-elect: Steve Townsend, Ed Thomas

Check with Steve Livingston and someone from Yakima Club for possible other trustee

Motion to elect all offices, second carried.

New Pres. Stu Earnst took over the meeting:

### Old business:

Walker Valley lease paid for year \$564.20

Stu to get correct email address for DNR

Locks: have enough and the gate is presently open Monday thru Friday

### Field trips:

First Creek: All vehicles inside gate/ car pool required

Meet at 29 Pines to Sign in @ 9 AM.

Steve Townsend has key and Ed is to pick up

Mt Higgins July 20: Collect Rhodonite. Large rocks in road, hard on tires, walk in.

Next combined meeting @ The Palace 9/20. Meeting adjourned Diane Rose took notes

## Update on Mt Higgins Rhodonite Field Trip

Mike Messenger received the following e-mail from Bob Beamer at Hampton Affiliates (Mt Higgins landowner) regarding the scheduled July 20 field trip to Mt Higgins for rhodonite.

“Unfortunately, Mike, we won't be able to do it. Hampton has the timberlands for sale and I expect the closing will be taking place about that time. If you contact me about the 20th of July, I should at least know who the new owner is and may be able to provide you with a contact name and number.

Sorry,  
Bob”

Based on this information, it looks like the field trip to Mt Higgins will have to be postponed or possibly canceled altogether. Mike will contact Bob Beamer in July to see if he can provide a contact for the new owners.

## BC Wagonmasters Field Trip Report

April 2008

Earlier in April, the BC Wagon masters had a meeting at the Abbotsford Gem show to plan some field trips for the spring and summer. Some are tentative at this time due to the cool late spring, snow, and potential poor road conditions.

Here's what's on tap for the spring! As always, our rockhound friends from the US clubs are welcome to join any of the BC Wagon master events! We do ask that everyone attending be a club member in good standing, either Canadian, or US. Here's their web site with Field Trips & Other events! <http://www.mineralcouncil.org/>

**April:** There were plans to have a trip to Nicomen plateau ( between Lytton and Spences Bridge ) for agates. Unfortunately, the cool weather dumped some snow at the higher elevations, so we have postponed this trip to later. Our wagon master for this trip will re-schedule.

**May:** This is the big spring hunting extravaganza at the annual "Rendezvous" event. This year Rendezvous is being hosted by the Shuswap Club in Chase over the May long weekend. <http://www.lapidary.bc.ca/rendez.html>

For those who may have never gone to a Rendezvous, please consider going! This is held every year over the Victoria Day long weekend....Friday is the travel day to the location, which changes every year. Saturday & Sunday morning are some field trips to collect whatever materials are in the local area....Saturday evening, there is a rock auction. Bring some money, and bid on some rocks, minerals, crystals, or carving materials. Most are a good deal, but don't expect something super-collectable for 50 cents either. The auction will have good stuff for beginners, or the more experienced rockhounds....kids materials too!

Sunday will be more field trips, and Sunday will also have the "Bucket" raffle, catered dinner, and Lapidary Society general meeting. Included at the event is one of the lower mainland dealers, and usually a table of rock slabs for sale. The slab table, rock auction, raffle tickets, and dinner tickets pay for the arena rental, and a percentage also goes to the host club for all of their volunteer work. Please come out, enjoy the collecting, make a donation to the rock auction, and buy a couple of items !

This year, the Shuswap club is keeping the field trip locations quiet, but has hinted at a couple of new locations this year! On previous trips to the Chase-Kamloops area there have been trips to the Buse Lake Blue Agate claim, McGilvray Lake quartz crystals, and over to Savona area for agate, and green opal.

What to bring: clothing, footwear, and safety gear for any weather....we could be surface collecting on one trip, and boulder bashing on the next. Minimum tools would be a rock hammer, squirt bottle, and something to carry your goodies. If you have a small shovel, pick, chisels, and larger hammers, bring those too. A cooler for beverages, lunch and water would be great as sometimes the trips would not return until the afternoon. For clothing, bring a variety as it could be cool, wet, or smokin'hot. Suitable hiking boots, safety goggles/glasses as well, just in case you are cracking open some materials.

If you have camping equipment or an RV, you can camp at the arena, or nearby in a campground near chase ( see web site for additional information )

**June:** The claim owners of the Hill-60 Rhodonite mine are willing to host a collecting trip sometime during June. Date is TBA, as this is also a location subject to late spring snow, or even washouts on the road. The last couple of miles is an side road that leaves a forestry road. The location is about half way between Victoria, and Nanaimo.

At this location is rhodonite....Many pieces have been mined, and are just laying around the site in larger pieces. There is also the main "lode" of solid host rock, Some is of low quality, so the trick is to chip corners of the black oxidized stones that are laying around to find one with the nice pink color. There is still some rhodonite in the rock face for those who wish to bring heavier tools to work with to extract it from the host rock.

**Tools:** The road is rough on for the last couple of miles, so if you can buddy up with someone who has a high-clearance vehicle, that would be great. Low clearance cars may not make the last leg on the rough road. Tools to bring would be a rock hammer, heavier cracking hammer, chisel, and safety goggles, good footwear.

This is a staked claim, and we are allowed to collect materials by the generosity of the claim owners. We sincerely thank the claim owners for allowing the rockhounds access.

**July:** Again, no firm date as we are in need of the claim owners' selection of a weekend to visit the "black-dome" thunderegg location.

This is some distance west of Clinton, out in the wilderness. This is a trip for those who can camp without any services like power, water, etc....this is dry camping. For a vehicle, you will need a high clearance vehicle as the backroads can be in rough shape, or can change if there is rain. If you can be self-contained for camping, all the better. The "Black-Dome" location has thundereggs which can be dug out of the mud & gravel.

Tools? Rock hammer, and an assortment of shovels. Mostly digging, and some breaking up of hardpan, or old basaltic materials. Additional details to follow.

**July 19-20:** Okanogan gem show in Winfield. Last year they had a couple of local field trips as an added bonus for visiting the show! Check the show calendar for more info.

**July 2-6:** The US rockhounds are very active in the summer, so there are a number of events we can join! The "biggest" event is the annual "Pow-Wow" held in Madras Oregon.

I am hoping to got to this event, as they have a an outdoor sale area, with 80-100 vendors, plus field trips to local collecting areas plus evening entertainment. Usually at the same time week there is another show-sale with another 100 or so vendors at Sisters Oregon, and another at Prineville.

**August:** No specific trips planned as this is the annual "Summer Camp" where there is a week of rock hunting! This year's summer camp will

be August 3 through 8 based in Fort St. James, and have daily trips in the surrounding area, evening pot-luck dinners, and other fun! This begins right after the August long weekend, so you have all weekend to get to Fort St. James! You can of course show up for just a couple of days if that is all your schedule allows. See <http://www.lapidary.bc.ca/camp.html>

**September:** 6-7, Drynoch area. This is between Lytton and Spences Bridge ( Shaw Springs ) In this area are agates, including one old spot referred to as "santa claus rock" which. This will be a two day trip, so you can stay for one day, or both. Tools would be suitable clothing, rock hammer, backpack or bucket, squirt bottle, and for the more adventurous, larger hammers for boulder bashing. The Estwing "rock-pick" is a great item for this spot, as you can stand at the bottom of a rubble pile, and dig through the rubble picking up agates. You may camp in the area, or perhaps stay in a hotel in Lytton or Boston bar.

Meeting place for both Saturday and Sunday is the Husky gas station in Boston Bar at 10:00AM.

### **Field Trip Report Racehorse Creek, April 12, 2008**

The Northwest Rockies Club hosted this field trip. The group met at Nugents Corner IGA store at 9am, and the parking lot may have been full. The weather driving to the dig site was sunny, and this was going to be a fantastic day. As the group arrived at the collecting site, out came the buckets and tools. I could have counted 50 or so people, but I wasn't there yet.

The collecting is as those who have been here before described: Plentiful, right next to the road, not hard to find, and depending on your "standards" will determine how long you search. From what I was told, there were quite a number of young rock hounds on this trip, and they were all having a good time. After choosing the pieces that would be at a new home soon, some searched for mushrooms. With the colder weather this year, the mushrooms were not out yet.

We had a late start this morning so we missed the meeting of the group at 9am, but not to worry, we have been here before and can meet the group at the collecting site. We drove up the forest road, and noticed the turn I should have made. Not making that turn we continued up the hill, passing by a few getting ready for a mountain bike ride. A few more turns and we were there, at the end of the plowed road and now about 18" of snow. So we turned around, went back to the road I should have turned on, and we were back on our way. Up the hill and around a few more turns and we knew we were very close. Still climbing we had a bit of snow on the road, but it is not bad.

Around the next turn we found a big patch of snow that no one should have gone through. Now we were thinking no way the group went through this, so we did. After starting around the turn, no way was I going to stop, so after making it to the next gravel spot we turned around. Funny that we know to call ahead to make sure that the field trip is still on before leaving, but we didn't. We realized that the trip must have been cancelled due to the snow, so we were at the area, or close to it, so we collected fossils where we were.

It wasn't until a few days later after emailing with Ed that we found out the Field trip was on, very similar to what is described above, and we were not at the collecting site, now that made me smile just a bit. The thing is that even if you don't find the "correct site" if you get out and look you may find other spots and material. Oh, and the best place for the map is in the vehicle, not at home. The weather this weekend was about 73o so we stopped and hunted on the river too.

The N Idaho club sponsors the next Field Trip on May 17 & 18 at Saddle Mountain for Petrified Wood and Diatomaceous Opal.

Respectfully submitted by Ken, MRGC

From Stone Age News, 05/08

### **Oregon Sunstones**

reprinted from February, 1987 Oregon Geology article  
by Ron Geitgey, DOGAMI

Oregon sunstone, also known as heliolite, is a transparent feldspar with colors ranging from water clear through pale yellow, soft pink, and blood red to (extremely rare) deep blue and green. The color appears to vary systematically with small amounts of copper and may depend on both the amount and the size of individual copper particles present in the stone.

Pale yellow stones have a copper content as low as 20 parts per million (ppm) (0.002 percent), green stones contain about 100 ppm per million (0.01 percent), and red stones have up to 200 ppm (0.02 percent) copper. Some of the deeper colored stones have bands of varying color, and a few stones are dichroic, that is, they show two different colors when viewed from different directions.

Many stones appear to be perfectly transparent at first, but when they are viewed in just the right direction, a pink to red metallic shimmer flashes from within the stone. This effect is called "schiller" or "aventurescence" and is caused by light reflecting from minute parallel metallic

platelets suspended in the sunstone. When viewed along their edges, the platelets are invisible to the naked eye; when viewed, however, perpendicular to their surfaces, they reflect light simultaneously from each platelet, creating a mirror effect. Earlier studies of the Lake County feldspar suggested that the platelets were hematite (iron oxide), but the most recent research concludes that they are flat crystals of copper metal.

The terms "sunstone" and "heliolite" (from Greek helios, meaning sun, and lithos, meaning "stone") have been used for at least two centuries for feldspars exhibiting schiller. The Lake County occurrence was first reported in 1908, and the presence of the schiller effect was the original reason for naming the stones sunstones. For decades, however, the term "sunstone" has been used for these Oregon gem feldspars both with and without schiller.

Oregon sunstones are a calcium-rich variety of plagioclase feldspar named labradorite, a common mineral in basaltic lava flows. All three known sunstone occurrences are in small basalt flows that superficially resemble basalt flows elsewhere in the state that contain large feldspar phenocrysts or megacrysts. However, feldspars in those flows are typically cloudy to opaque and relatively small compared to those in the sunstone flows, which are clear, glassy, and can be up to 2 or 3 in. in one dimension.

No detailed information has been collected on the geology, petrography, or chemistry of the known sunstone flows, so no meaningful comparisons can be made between them or with other flows in the area. The sunstone flows appear to be small; the Lake County occurrence covers about 7 sq. mi., and the two Harney County occurrences are probably less than 1 sq. mi. each. Considering the regional geology and the wide separation between the flows, it is probable that there are more sunstone occurrences in the area.

Sunstones are mined from the soil and partially decomposed rock formed by weathering of the lava flows. The surface debris is dug with pick and shovel and sieved through a quarter-inch screen, and the sunstones are separated from rock fragments by hand. In some local areas, the lava flows are weathered to a depth of several feet, and good stones have been recovered from pits dug into these zones. Hard-rock mining techniques have been used on un-weathered parts of the flows, but the sunstones are often shattered along with the lava, and recovery of large unbroken stones is difficult.

Except for part of the Lake County occurrence, all three producing areas are held by mining claims and are not available for collecting without permission of the claim owners. About 2 sq. mi. of the Lake County flow have been withdrawn from mineral entry and established by the U.S. Bureau of Land Management (BLM) as a free public collecting area. This sunstone area is located off the northeast flank of the Rabbit Hills about 25 mi. north of Plush and 80 mi. northeast of Lakeview. Maps, directions, and information on road conditions are available from the BLM District Office in Lakeview.

Varieties of feldspars used as gemstones are valued for their colors or optical effects. Being typically translucent to opaque, they are normally cut in rounded forms or cabochons. Transparent gem feldspars, particularly calcium-rich varieties, that can be cut as faceted stones are rarer. Occurrences of transparent labradorite have been reported from Arizona, California, New Mexico, and Utah, but few gems have been produced from those areas. Oregon sunstones are uncommon in their composition, clarity, and range of colors, and they occur in sufficient abundance to permit sustained production of faceted gems.

Carny Hound Editor's Note: This article was found on the Oregon Department of Geology and Mineral Industries' web page, <http://www.oregongeology.com/sub/learnmore/sunstones2.htm>  
from Carny Hound, 05/08