

05/16/09 Combined Board meeting minutes

Meeting Open

Meeting came to order at 9:36 am; 16 club representatives.

Speaker: Matt Karper of the USFS from the Leavenworth office

There was no treasurer's or committee reports as most of the board was absent.

Old Business

We remind everyone that GPS coordinates are still in great need in order to continue updating the Map Book. Please forward those by email to the newsletter editor or Bill Moser.

New Business

Bob Pattie introduced the speaker, Mattie Karper, from the USFS out of the Leavenworth office to talk about the "Motorized Travel Management Plan for the Okanogan-Wenatchee National Forest." This plan is currently in the process of drafting of the environmental impact statement. Copies of the scoping letter and the proposal that had been sent out to the public were handed out to everyone. Details of the whole process and as well as the data can be found on the website: www.fs.fed.us/r6/okawen/travel-management.

Mr. Karper explained that currently, the "forest" is essentially open to all motorized travel unless otherwise posted, also, no resource damage is allowed. The Forest Service is primarily concerned about resource damage to river corridors and other sensitive areas.

In 2005, a Travel Management Rule directed that each national forest designate which roads, trails and areas were open to motor vehicle use on a Motor Vehicle Use Map. The goal is to standardize these maps nationally. Roads not indicated on these maps as open for particular motor vehicle use would then be closed. Maps would be available to the public at all Forest Service offices and elsewhere.

The ultimate goal of the Travel Management Rule is to relocate motorized travel away from environmentally sensitive areas to less sensitive areas. In some cases, it increases the total mileage of some forms of motorized routes rather than restricting any one kind of recreational use of the forest. The stated focus of the Travel Management Rule is on the roads and not on the secondary recreational use attached to the vehicles on those roads.

This doesn't mean that the proposed Travel Management Rule couldn't or won't affect rockhounding. It just means that if it did, it would be incidental. Rockhounds will need to look out for their own interests. In recognition that there still remain many people that have yet to comment on these proposed changes, the USFS is still inviting comment. It's late but it is still worthwhile to let the Forest Service know what areas are important to us to be kept open.

There are currently a series of proposed maps with designated roads, trails and motorized-use areas. A team of people from each of the area districts is working on the proposals. Mr. Karper wanted to assure us that it was local people taking care of local comments and issues and not someone possibly out of touch with ground-level concerns.

Club members were given PDF files of the proposed maps. Several of the members verified by looking at the maps that Mr. Karper brought with him that the Red Top collecting area and roads have been left unchanged.

It was his opinion that, if proposals were made to the Recreation department on a district level by a club or by the Mineral Council for a specific collecting date or indeed for a period of time such as a year, for a specific location, that in all likelihood, such use permits would receive approval perhaps even in closed areas. He seemed to indicate that this would be the manner in which those situations where access was restricted by gated roads to collecting sites could be handled. Keys could then be obtained for travel on those closed roads. Impromptu collecting trips would suffer, of course, unless a person chose to hike in.

There was some discussion about the problem of limited access of side-by-side ATVs on Forest Service roads for physically challenged rockhounds. Some people felt that their collecting opportunities were being further restricted under the new proposals. Mr. Karper indicated that in his opinion, the Disabilities Act was applicable to indoor facilities only and that this plan was in compliance with that piece of legislation. Further, that there were still plenty of routes for all sorts of ATVs in the new proposed Travel Management Plan. If the plan somehow affected certain current rockhound sites, then we need to inform their offices so that they could take that information into consideration

The Travel Map is an ongoing and fluid process, Mr. Karper stated. He said that it would be updated on a yearly basis, so that if clubs or groups had new routes they wished to propose, that they should be encouraged to do so.

Additional Business: Bob Pattie brought up a new website for the Washington State Dept of Natural Resources: <http://tinyurl.com/qtsz83> that will give you a map of DNR-owned properties/districts, what are open, closed, recreational activities, volunteer activities and more. An additional site: <http://tinyurl.com/qshnt1> has further DNR information.

Bob Pattie also mentioned that the Spokane BLM is currently very active in approving a number of sites for cleanup and construction. Please check out their website for further information. <http://www.blm.gov/or/districts/spokane/index.php>

\$3.8 million has been allocated for college students to work on environmental projects, increasing the number of jobs in that area from 75,000 to 250,000.

Environmentalists from New Jersey and San Francisco are suing the Puget Sound area for putting in micro dams upstream in a number of locations to power towns of 1500 - 2000 people.

Finally, a member from Yakima reminded people to consider promoting their club's rock shows through the local schools. In their specific case, the school teachers made attendance to their show a required assignment. Friday was School Day, great attendance, and many kids brought their parents and families back on the weekend.

Meeting adjourned at 12:00 pm
Notes taken by Christina Morrissey

MEETING ADJOURNED Submitted by Glenn Morita, Secretary Pro-Tem

BC Wagonmaster May 2009 Field Trip Report

by Harley Waterson

The following field trips are scheduled for the spring of 2009:

As always, please check the web site for updated info!
<http://www.lapidary.bc.ca/trips.html>

Rendezvous:

The May Victoria Day Long Weekend is the annual Rendezvous get together for all of the BC rockhounds. This year's event is in Winfield BC May 15-18. Check-in is on Friday, with Field trips starting out Saturday morning, and Sunday morning. Additional events include the Saturday night Rock Auction, and Sunday evening Dinner, and Annual General meeting of the BC Lapidary Society. This year includes an election of some new personnel to the Society.

May 23 (Saturday)... David Williams has organized a special trip into the Similco Mine near Princeton to look for copper based minerals, Peacock ore, and Pyrites in the mine dumps. This location is normally off limits to collecting, so this is a one-time opportunity for mineral collecting at this location.

The meeting place for the group will be the A&W in Princeton at 9:00AM.

Please note that this is a working mine site, and everyone visiting must have a hard hat, and respect the area we are allowed to collect in. Please contact David Williams if you plan to go, so that he has a list of people, just in case of date change, or cancellation.

David's number is: 604 870 1024.

June 7 (Sunday) Gord Pinder is leading a trip to the MacAfee fossil location near Cache Creek. At this location are leaf fossils, and the rare occasional insect or fish fossil. The specimens are in layer hard mud, so please bring suitable tools such as rock hammer, small chisels, flat knives, etc for splitting the layered material. As this is a private claim, there may be a small fee.

If you intend to go, please contact Gord at 604-556-6489 for additional details. The meeting place is the Husky truck stop in Cache Creek at 10:00am.

July 11 (Saturday) Bob and Dee Morgan will be leading a trip to their Hill 60 Rhodonite claim on Vancouver Island. At this location are chunks and boulders of Rhodonite, so you will need to bring heavier tools such as hammers, chisels, shovels, etc. Last time I was at this location, the road was not in good shape, so I would recommend a pickup or 4-wheel drive higher clearance vehicle. No charge for reasonable amounts of material.

Meeting place is the gas station at the intersection of the Island Highway, and Highway 18. This is about half-way between Victoria and Nanaimo.

August 3-8 will be the annual Summer Camp, this year in and around Tachick lake near Vanderhoof. This is a great week of rock hunting, and exploring in the caribou area, with several locations to collect materials. See the web site for additional details for camping, cabins, or hotels.

If you are not able to go to summer camp, perhaps another option in the summer would be to attend some of the US events, such as the Madras Oregon Pow-Wow event, Prineville show, and even the Sisters Oregon show-sale! More info on the US web sites.

<http://www.mineralcouncil.org/>
http://www.wamsi.org/pages/wr_show.html

Travelling elsewhere? Check for local shows at:
<http://www.rockngem.com/showdates.asp>

September 20 (Sunday)... This location has Soapstone and Antigorite collecting, near the Carolin Mines road exit (#195) on the Coquihalla a few miles east of Hope. Meeting place will be the Bridal Falls Coffee Shop at 9:00AM. (Exit # 135). Tools to bring would be a hammer, coarse file or rasp, and perhaps a couple of grits of sand paper.

Access BC group formed

At the most recent Wagonmaster meeting at the Abbotsford Gem Show, we also had a discussion about the provincial government allowing the identification of Rockhound Reserves that can be set aside for collecting purposes. The BC Society will discuss this at the upcoming Rendezvous in more detail. The basic summary is that we can request a specific area to be set aside for the purposes of rock collecting by amateurs, for non-profit personal use. Any excavation must be with hand tools only. One such location has been already identified, and paperwork submitted, and additional locations are also being considered. If you are currently holding a mining claim for the express purpose for rockhounds, this new ability to identify a reserve will relieve individuals from the fees, and paperwork to maintain the mineral claim.

Another discussion topic was the new organization called "Access BC", which has been started up by some individuals who (Like us) are finding that back country roads are not being maintained, and in some cases perfectly passable roads are being de-activated and bridges purposely removed to deny access to back country areas. All outdoor recreation groups, and individuals are encouraged to join this advocacy group which is lobbying the various government organizations to keep the back country accessible.

Others affected by this are hunters, fishermen, hikers, snowmobilers, ATV's, trail bike users, Rock Hounds, etc.

This newly formed Society ABC advocates for maintaining access to the backcountry Crown lands of British Columbia for fishing, hunting, berry picking, mushrooming and other outdoor recreation.

Members insist that government ensure "off highway" forest and mining roads are not closed to public access. Too often places where we used to camp, hunt, fish, pick berries, gather wood, cut a Christmas tree, prospect for minerals and fossils are no longer accessible because the roads to them have been chalked, blocked, gated, cross ditched and are now impassable.

Crown land is our land and access should be limited only for good publicly supported reasons. Rural British Columbians are dissatisfied with the provincial government on this issue. In fact a majority of the 200 members who signed on in the first couple of days are determined to do what ever it takes to reverse the road destruction practices in order to regain access to their former places of recreation.