

Westside Board Meeting 10/16/07

Stu Earnst opened the meeting at 7:35pm

Kathy gave the treasurer's report. Bob Pattie submitted a bill for copier expenses.

Old business:

Map booklets

Back in the late spring Bob Pattie and Bruce Himko were asked to get quotes for printing the map booklets. Bruce has not reported back but Bob was quoted the same price as the last printing.

Ed reported that he has sold all of the map booklets and foresees the need for about 100 color and 50 b/w map booklet for sale at up coming shows. Bob will check with Mike Messenger to see if he has any booklets remaining. If Mike has none then Bob was instructed to place an order for 100 color and 50 b/w booklets.

While on the subject of map booklets, a question about GPS data on the collecting sites was raised. Since a good number of collectors now record GPS data at sites, the Council felt that GPS data would greatly enhance the utility of the maps to the various collecting areas. Therefore the council requests that anyone wishing to share their GPS data on collecting sites please send the data to the editor. The GPS data will only be used in the map booklets and will not be published on the website. So please anyone with GPS data on collecting sites such as: Walker Valley, Kalama, Blanchard Hill, Saddle Mtn, First Creek, Money Creek, Cedar Ponds, Race Horse Creek, Little Naches, Salmon Creek, send your data to the editor and I will pass it along to Ed Lehman.

Walker Valley

Stu reported that replacing the locks at Walker Valley is becoming increasingly expensive. Not only are our locks often missing, it seems that the DNR's locks are also being stolen. Stu will look into a cheaper supplier for our locks. It turns out that at least some ORV'ers were photographed getting past the gate by driving their 4-wheelers around the gate post. This is really irritating not to mention illegal. Stu will take the photos to the DNR and see if anything can be done to stop this practice.

Saddle Mtn.

Bob Pattie shared the material he and Diane Rose presented to the BLM in Spokane last month. They spoke to Mike Sweeney who is a geologist with the BLM and he was sympathetic to our issues with current situation regarding the collection of petrified wood at Saddle Mtn.

New business:

Nominations for new officers will take place at the 11/3 meeting in Ellensburg. It is imperative that the eastside work to fill open positions for trustees and officers especially since we lost Bill Snell and many of the longtime members are no longer able to travel. The Westside should have no problem filling out its board.

The council would like to know how many members are presenting geology/earth science/rockhound material to school children in their area. Please the the editor know if you are performing such a community service.

Meeting adjourned,

Submitted by Glenn Morita, Secretary Pro-Tem

Saddle Mtn Presentation to BLM

Background Information

- Land Ownership -- BLM and Railroad in a checkerboard fashion
- WSMC built a set of outhouses on property set aside for that purpose
- 1973 - WSMC reporting on issues of access to general collection sites
- 1983 - BLM put up signs on road to show entering/leaving public lands
- Still checkerboard ownership
- 1200 comments on proposed rules on collecting on public lands
- Jim Fisher, BLM area manager was involved

1990 Letter from Jim Fisher to WSMC officers

- Results of land exchange between BLM and Glacier Park Company
- BLM acquired 10 sections of land on Saddle Mountain
- Also acquired all rock of unique character, i.e. petrified wood, on these sections
- Western end of mountain now open for recreational users
- Eastern end has some limitation on access

- Section 8 is open to rock hounding, however vehicle travel is confined to existing roads.

Notes: The Glacier Park Company was a Real Estate office for the railroads. Glacier Park Company discontinued business in 1992 when most of the land had been either sold, traded, or used by the railroads.

BLM

Proposed Spokane Resource Management Plan Amendment
Final Environmental Impact Statement (1992)

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Land Exchanges- Exchanges of public land will continue under Section 206 of AFLPMA which requires:

- A determination that the public interest will be well served by making an exchange
- Lands to be exchanged are located in the same state; and
- Exchanges must be for equal value but differences can be equalized by payment of money by either party

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Mineral Resources

Impacts to mineral resources as a result of sales, exchanges, etc., could occur where mineral potential is high. Generally the preferred rule is both surface and subsurface (mineral) estates to be traded in an exchange. However, due to third party encumbrances, difficulties in the valuation process or a proposal to exchange lands with high mineral potential that would not otherwise be available for exchange, it may be preferable to complete certain exchanges with mineral estate reservations. In these instances disposal of surface acreage located over federal minerals with high mineral potential results in diminished surface use control when permitting development of subsurface minerals. Reuniting federal minerals with federal surface would allow increased surface use control and facilitate better management of federal minerals

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Code of Federal Regulations

Title 43, Volume 2 (Revised as of October 1, 2004)

Title 43 - Public Lands: Interior

Chapter II - Bureau of Land Management, Department of the Interior

Part 3620 - Free use of Petrified Wood

This discusses the collection of limited quantities of petrified wood for noncommercial purposes under terms and conditions consistent with the preservation of significant deposits as a public recreational resource

Instruction Memorandum No. OR-2000-023

This is called "Rock Collecting Guide on Bureau of Land Management lands in Oregon and Washington". It follows the federal guidelines in Title 43, Chapter II, Part 3620.

This also states that commonly collected rocks such as chert, petrified wood, obsidian, and cinders are not subject to mining claim location.

SURFACE RIGHTS vs. MINERAL RIGHTS

- The most basic type of property ownership is a "fee simple estate". This is complete or absolute ownership. The owner controls the surface, the subsurface, and the air above the property.
- When buying property in areas of potential mineral development, a buyer of surface property should determine if a fee simple estate is being purchased or if ownership will be shared with others. Mineral rights transactions are normally a matter of public record and copies of deeds or lease agreements are normally filed at a government office.
- What qualifies as a "Mineral"? The word 'mineral' is used in a variety of contexts. Generally, ores of metals, coal, oil, natural gas, gemstones, dimension stone, construction aggregate, salt and other materials extracted from the ground are considered to be minerals. However, there is no definition of 'mineral' that applies in every situation and what is considered to be a mineral can vary from state to state.

Note: This was taken from 'geology.com'.

OBSERVATIONS

- It appears that when this land exchange took place it was a fee simple estate. Jim Fisher, BLM area manager stated in his letter in 1990 that BLM had complete ownership of the 10 new sections from the land exchange.
- BLM acquired the lands in the Saddle Mountain Management Area so they would be generally managed for live-stock grazing, recreation and wildlife habitat. (Per FIS page 13)
- BLM does not consider petrified wood as a mineral.
- Petrified wood is classified as a common invertebrate fossil.

Current Issues/Questions

- Does the BLM have 'fee simple estate' deeds for the lands exchanged in the Saddle Mountain area?
- Where is the documentation of the exchange?

- Saddle Mountain Minerals, L.L.C. a Washington corporation claims to have mineral rights on the petrified wood on the original railroad lands that were exchanged to BLM on Saddle Mountain. When were these mineral rights purchased?
- Does the mineral rights documentation state specifically that petrified wood is included?
- How long has Saddle Mountain Minerals, L.L.C. been in existence and how long ago did they purchase the mineral rights on this land?
- Is Saddle Mountain Minerals, L.L.C. mining for Petrified Wood on land where BLM acquired from a land exchanged?
- Is the state or federal government receiving taxes on material sold from this mining operation?
- What is the history of Saddle Mountain Minerals, L.L.C. regarding mining?

3rd Annual South Sound Gem, Opal and Mineral Show

The 3rd Annual South Sound Gem, Opal and Mineral Show will take place this year on November 9th through 11th, co-sponsored by the Northwest Opal Association and the Boeing Employees' Mineralogical Society. The venue will be the Expo Hall at the Western Washington Fairgrounds in Puyallup.

The show will feature individuals' display cases containing lapidary, faceting and jewelry arts, along with mineral and fossil collections. As in previous years, there will be Special displays. Other possible displays will be an array of Ellensburg Blue agate, carved stone, a dinosaur diorama, and a Space Needle model constructed of cut and polished rock and provided by the Puyallup Valley Gem and Mineral Club.

Thirty-to-thirty-five dealers will be offering their products, including gemstones, opals, minerals, rough rock and slabs, jewelry, beads, findings, fossils, books, lapidary equipment and tools.

Approximately a dozen demonstrators will be showing their skills in such areas as gemstone faceting, opal cutting and carving, wire wrapping, gem identification, beading and intarsia.

The Creative Center will once again cater to activities for adults and children.

There will be a silent auction, a fluorescent mineral display, a raffle and door prizes. Food will be available at the concession booth in the building. The show is wheelchair accessible and parking is free in the Gold Lot located across the street from the Fair Gold Gate entrance.

Show times this year are 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Friday and Saturday, and 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Sunday.

Admission is: Adults - \$4.00, Seniors (+55) - \$3.00, Students (age 13-17) - \$3.00, and children age 12 and under accompanied by a parent or adult - free. An \$8.00 Combo Ticket, which may be purchased at our gem show and at the Antique and Collectibles Show, is good for admission to both shows.