

## 10/21/08 Westside Board meeting minutes

Stu opened the meeting at 7:35pm

Stu presented the treasurer's report. Bob Pattie submitted bills for the printing of the newsletter. A motion to pay the bills was carried.

### **Wagonmaster:**

The annual planning meeting for the 2009 Wagonmaster field trips will be held on Saturday, January 17, 2009 at the Boeing Recreation Activity Center, 22649 83rd Avenue S., Kent, Washington. It is just off the Valley Freeway (Highway 167) on the North edge of Kent. Contact Bob Pattie for more information 206-550-5789

### **Old Business:**

- Nominations for the 2009 slate of officers and trustees are underway. On the Eastside we need to nominate a VP and 3 or 4 trustees. The Westside needs a secretary and 4 trustees.
- Last month the dispersal of some of the WSMC display case material was brought up. Dave Eckert informed the board that a group in North Seattle was trying to set up a Rockhound Museum and that it may be interested in some of the material. Several other organizations such as the local community colleges, UW, Washington State History Museum, state Geologist office were also suggested as possible recipients. Right now the Rice Museum is in the best position to receive part of the collection. Since their standards are very high, the Council will have to make sure the donations are of a high enough quality to merit a permanent display.
- Ed reported that he had spoken to someone in the Snohomish County Search and Rescue about donating out first aid kit. The SAR will contact Ed if anyone is interested in the kit.

### **New Business:**

- Bob Pattie reported that there will be a hearing on November 5 in Issaquah on the new regulations covering recreation on DNR and DNR managed lands. One of the key issues is the ban on the removal of rocks without prior written approval from the DNR.
- The DNR is planning for future recreation in Reiter Foothills, a 10,000 acre area located in Snohomish County between Gold Bar and Index. Recreation planning efforts are focused on this area due to the variety of public uses that occur, including both motorized and non-motorized uses. The planning process began in January 2008 and is expected to continue through spring of 2009. It is important to note that no mention of rock/mineral collecting as an activity is made in the preliminary documents.
- Bob also reported that the DNR's list of rock and mineral clubs in the state is woefully out of date.

Meeting adjourned,

Submitted by Glenn Morita, Secretary Pro-Tem

## 11/01/08 Combined Board meeting minutes

### **Mineral Council Meeting Minutes**

**November 1, 2008**

MEETING CALLED TO ORDER ON TIME:

Treasurer's report: There was income from maps and expenditure of reimbursement for locks purchased.

### **Old business:**

- Westside appears to have nominations filled for all positions with Bob Pattie and Dave Eckert speaking up and filling the open trustee spots, one by back-filling Ed Levesque's position since not attending meetings for two years.; Eastside is lacking for 2nd Vice President and two trustee Board positions. Leigh Klettke made herself available for nomination for the open Secretary position. Likewise, Steve Livingston, present, was asked and accepted being named for nomination to fill a Trustee spot, and Keith O'Donnell was also asked and accepted the nominating position for the second trustee.
- The Slate of Officers to be announced 3/28/09.
- The Walker Valley Report: the DNR gate has been fixed.
- The Westside Board had discussed a first aid kit. There is no new information
- The further discussion for the boxes of display materials for the Westside to be donated has been tabled for now with renewed interest in folks displaying them at shows.
- Bob Pattie reminded folks of the Sultan to Index recreational area meeting in Issaquah 5th November; there will be discussion of the user groups and definitions of use for horseback riding, bird watching, ATVs/Quads with no mention of us rockhound's use. Was encouraging folks to attend since it is proposed to state no removal of soil, rocks, etc..
- For the Walker Valley meeting it was noted DNRs listing of clubs is no doubt out of date and all clubs are encouraged to contact DNR to update a contact name and phone number with them.
- Further discussion held on the Omnibus Bill being so cluttered with every groups interest the rockhound is not really represented. The

issues on the forest land basically are for restricting ATV use, but up for review is the issue of not removing plants, rocks, etc., from State land. This bill covers 198 million acres, and one item to note is that if a motorized vehicle is on a road that is closed to them there will be a fine imposed and the vehicle will be impounded.

- It was mentioned there was another meeting on the ensuing Saddle Mountain issue over the wording of the issued permit, whether the wording was for mineral rights leased with the land or not, and it was mentioned there should be another decision on the matter about December...(old news).

#### **New Business:**

- There was discussion on changing the format of the Mineral Council Maps from stapled corner to booklet style. This would be a major undertaking and yet a major improvement. Problem is there has only been GPS coordinates sent in for Saddle Mountain and travertine at Sweetwater and some are being worked out for Greenwater. GPS coordinates are needed, and it was felt that at the Wagon Master meeting in January their volunteer leadership of trips should be reminded of the need for coordinates and recruited to get those in right after they go on their next trips. Mineral Council trips should all have coordinates sent in on their trips, too! The coordinates could be updated to the Mineral Council map sites before the undertaking of the change in format.
- There was miscellaneous table talk on sites, etc..
- Fire Obsidian site: Chris Pratt mentioned BLM is settling claim issues there
- Ed Lehman says there is a "claim finder" site under the BLM website; if you are interested in the exact web address email him with a request for it.
- The Dolph Museum is open for viewing BY APPOINTMENT ONLY by calling the late Howard Dolph's phone number and making contact on the line at (541)739-2816. Times and possible cost/donation only unknown.

Meeting adjourned 10:55AM

Submitted by Leigh Klettke

### **IMPORTANT CHANGES TO EMERALD CREEK GARNET AREA OPERATIONS BEGINNING SATURDAY, JULY 19, 2008**

The St. Joe Ranger District has announced significant changes to the Emerald Creek Garnet Area Operations. Due to overwhelming use at the Garnet Area on weekends a limit of 170 people has been established for daily use at the area. Well over 200 people purchased permits at the site on July 12th and that created a situation where folks were delayed in getting to the stock pile and the sluice boxes to wash their gravel. The 170 permit limit is designed to provide a positive experience to those who purchase permits to find Garnets at Emerald Creek.

Beginning Saturday, July 19th, a limitation of 170 folks will be allowed to purchase permits to dig garnets in any single day. Once that number has been reached additional visitors will be turned away. Please call the Clarkia Office of the St Joe Ranger District at (208) 245-1134 before heading to Emerald Creek, especially if you are getting a late start on Saturday or Sunday. Forest Service employees will update the Clarkia Office both Saturday and Sunday mornings regarding operations at the Emerald Creek Garnet Area with specific information about the number of visitors.

For more information about the Emerald Creek Garnet Area and the need for a limitation on daily visitors please contact Carol Ratcliff at (208) 245-6074 or by email at [cratcliff@fs.fed.us](mailto:cratcliff@fs.fed.us).

Submitted by Christina Morrissey

### **Opal hints at persistence of water on Mars**

By Maggie McKee

Opal, a mineral that needs water to form, is widespread in Martian terrain younger than 2.5 billion years old, new spacecraft observations suggest. The discovery offers the most recent mineralogical evidence yet of liquid water on the planet's surface – and suggests an intriguing new target for future searches for Martian life.

Two other types of water-containing, or hydrated, minerals have previously been found on Mars – clays and hydrated sulfates. Since scientists can date the age of a particular terrain by studying the number and sizes of its craters, they found that the two mineral types seem to have originated from different periods in the planet's history.

Clays, or phyllosilicates, are thought to have formed more than 3.5 billion years ago, when igneous rock came into contact with relatively abundant, neutral-pH water. As Mars gradually dried up, its water became more and more acidic. From 3.5 billion to 3 billion years ago, hydrated sulfate salts formed as that water evaporated.

Since then, Mars was thought to have been the frozen world it is today, with water making few chemical changes to its rocks.

Now, Ralph Milliken at NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory in Pasadena, California, and colleagues report finding evidence of such recent chemical changes in the form of hydrated silica, or opal. The mineral – essentially quartz with water in its crystal structure – precipitates out when basaltic rock is dissolved in water.

### **Opal Valley**

Using the CRISM spectrometer aboard NASA's Mars Reconnaissance Orbiter, the team identified opal's spectral signature in and around the gargantuan canyon system known as Vallis Marineris, in terrain less than 2.5 billion years old.

"It's definitely in terrains that are younger than the terrains where we find clay minerals or sulfates," Milliken told New Scientist. "It suggests water was interacting with the surface longer than previously thought."

NASA's Spirit rover has previously detected the mineral in Gusev Crater; the new discovery suggests the minerals are widespread on Mars, says Milliken.

### **More clay?**

Mark Bullock, a planetary scientist at the Southwest Research Institute in Boulder, Colorado, says he is not convinced that the observed spectral lines are indeed from opal. "They may just be seeing another flavor of clay," he told New Scientist.

But if further analysis confirms the detection, he says, it might suggest that the liquid water that carved Vallis Marineris's huge flood channels between 1 billion and 2 billion years ago might not have been just an ephemeral 'flash in the pan'.

"This work shows that the younger water had a significant impact on the chemistry of the surface, ie the production of opal and iron sulfates," Bullock says.

"So maybe that younger water was around for a longer time than it took to carve the flood channels, and was able to chemically alter rocks," he says. "Maybe it even involved rainfall and runoff in this region of Mars."

### **Cold and dry?**

Phil Christensen at Arizona State University in Tempe, says the new study does not solve the mystery of whether Mars was warm and wet in the past, or as he believes, mostly cold and dry, punctuated by rare flooding events lasting weeks or months.

"What caused [the minerals'] formation, how long this period lasted, and when it occurred remain unclear," Christensen told New Scientist.

Milliken agrees. "The water cycle on Mars and how the water interacts with the surface is quite complex," he says.

"This doesn't necessarily mean there was water standing there for thousands or millions of years," Milliken continues. "But certainly the detection suggests there must have been liquid water involved at whatever time these rocks were deposited. That in itself would imply that Mars was warmer then than it is today."

### **Life preservers**

Milliken says the opal deposits – which probably look like flinty beds of chert on Earth's ocean floors rather than lustrous gemstones – would make good targets for future hunts for Martian life.

The next rover to be sent to the Red Planet, NASA's Mars Science Laboratory, is set to lift off in 2009. But its list of possible landing sites does not include any of the newly-found opal deposits.

"For MSL, it's too late in the game for these to be considered," says Milliken. "But for future rovers, these are certainly excellent places to go." Since the minerals reveal where water persisted on the planet most recently, says Milliken: "They would be good places for preserving organic material if it existed on Mars."