



Lake City Rockhound News

NORTH IDAHO MINERAL CLUB

March 2009

Club Mailing Address—P.O. Box 1643 Hayden, ID 83835

Meeting every third Thursday of the month at 6:30 PM

At Post Falls Senior Center, in the Dougall Room— 1215 E. 3rd. St. Post Falls, ID

The public is welcome.

www.amfed.org/nfms **DOWN LOAD YOUR NORTHWEST NEWSLETTER...**

www.northidahomineralclub.com...**read your club newsletter on line.**

Want to Go Rock hounding in Wyoming in July? by Christina Morrissey
The White Mountain Gem & Mineral Club in Show Low, AZ is planning a week-long field trip to Kemmerer, WY (southwest WY) beginning July 13, 2009. All interested rockhounds are invited!

This is a fee trip and the cost is \$60 per person/per location. There will be more than one location per day as long as at least five people are interested in going to each location on that day.

The initial gathering spot on Monday, July 13th, will be at George Putnam's store, Creative Creations (www.wyomingfossils.com). George will be organizing the various trips to each of the locations, some of which are on private claims, including his own Green River fossil fish quarry. He guarantees that everyone will go home happy. Material to be collected during this week , will include:

Fish fossils, Star Crinoid fossils, Blue Forest Petrified Wood (pet. wood enclosed in blue chalcedony), Wyoming Blizzard Rock (a unique formation of druzy quartz), Jade slicks (naturally polished jade), Cedar Ridge or Cadillac Ridge Agate (Sweetwater agate in matrix), Gold panning.

Children and pets are okay. Pets must be leashed at the Green River quarry. Most sites are at an elevation of 7000 feet or more (jade is at 5000 feet), where average temperatures in the area in July are around 65-70 degrees. Most locations are accessible to all vehicles, except for the star crinoids and the Blizzard Rock which will require 4WD, so some carpooling will be necessary.

Hotel space in Kemmerer is limited. If you are interested in attending any of these events, make your reservations now! Hotel information can be found at www.fossilsafari.com.

Eunice McQuiston of the White Mountain Gem & Mineral Club is the contact person for this field trip. She can be reached at (928) 536- 7209 or at her brand-new email address: rocknglow@frontiernet.net. (use "Wyoming in July" as the Subject line!). She urges interested rockhounds to make their lodging/camping arrangements as soon as possible and welcomes interest from Washington clubs. Reprinted from the COUNCIL REPORTER—newsletter of the Washington Mineral Council~-----

Minutes of the North Idaho Mineral Club meeting on February 19, 2009

The meeting was called to order by Vice-President Warren Price. The minutes were approved as they appeared in the newsletter. Susan gave the treasurer's report.

Field trip report was not available, but we have been sent the proposed list of trips that the Panorama Club has under consideration for their club, and we are welcome to join any that we can get to. On April 11, they propose going to a quarry (county owned) near USK for Amethyst, Quartz and Calcite. (more on this trip later in the newsletter. Ed). The next will be to Waitts Lake to the Jim McGraff quarry for serpentine, on April 25. May go to Solo Creek but the area has been devastated by long abuse by rockhounds and the USFS is proposing many new rules for the area. (later in newsletter. Ed)

Old business: There will be a show meeting for about a half hour before the next regular meeting for all club members.. At this time 16 dealers are confirmed. Volunteers for the show jobs are needed.

Everett had the by-laws signed to bring our paperwork up to date. He also mentioned that he is giving a PMC class at the Jacklin Cultural Center (The Old Church) on March 7. The class is \$180.00, and maximum class size is 10. Register through the Old Church in Post Falls or contact Everett direct.

There was a discussion of the Omnibus Bill passed by the Senate and up for vote in the House which affects use of public lands, and contains severe penalties for some of the collecting that rockhounds have done for years, particularly pertaining to fossils. This section has been defeated over and over for the last 20+ years, and now was added to this huge bill about public lands. Warren has the phone numbers of our representatives in the House to contact.

New Business: Bertha Mc Pherson has been confined to her home with pneumonia.

Warren mentioned the Northwest Federation/American Federation website contest. We have received all the information from the chairman of the committee but it turns out we are not eligible to enter because our website was not designed by a club member.

The Mid-Year meeting of the Northwest Federation will be at the fairgrounds at Kennewick during the Lake-side Gem and Mineral Club show, which is April 18 and 19. The Federation meetings are on Saturday and we will be represented by Everett Headrick as our Federation director.

There will be a geology hike on March 15 sponsored by the local chapter of the Ice Age Institute. Information presented by Bev. and brochure available.

Bev also mentioned a website of "Rockhounds to Jewelers" who like to collect their own material.

There is a faceting conference in Portland sponsored by the Columbia-Willamette Faceter's Guild on June 26-28 at the Monarch Hotel in Clackamas, OR. Reasonably priced and sounds very good. Info—see Bev.

The Panorama Gem and Mineral club is having their 9th show in Colville at the Fort Colville Grange on March 27 and 28. Opens at 8 AM on Friday and 9 on Saturday. Always a good show, and help with our show so try and carpool up there and see the show! The Rock Rollers 50th Show is March 13-15. The meeting was adjourned at 7:52. B. Johnson, Secretary. New members at this meeting were Anna and Gary Provost of Rathdrum, and Rick Buchheit renewed his membership. Glad to see you back, Rick and a hearty welcome to the Provosts'. Spencer opals and sapphires are their "thing".

Refreshments were enjoyed—homemade snicker doodles from Pam Hicks -very good! And excellent home baked breads from Joan Gundlach. Thank you so much! While we ate we watched an excellent program from the Federation library —EXOTIC TERRANE. Bill Gundlach surprised and delighted us with his presentation of hand knapped obsidian arrowheads and points. View these on the website—pictures by Mike Burton. Thank you so much for coming with your knapping display, Bill. Your work is expertly done, and well displayed..

Omnibus Public Land Management Act of 2009. URGENT ACTION REQUIRED!

This bill consists of 160 + public lands bills thrown into one bill, S.22. The bill consists of more than 1200 pages. Among many questionable proposals the most dangerous and insidious are regulations against collection of fossils. On a field trip your child or grandchild could innocently pick up a fossil and if authorities arrest you for this violation, you could serve time, have your vehicle and collecting equipment impounded and ultimately confiscated. As rockhounds, we have seen increasing restrictions placed on areas in which we can collect rocks and materials. Please go to <http://amfed.org/nfms/bulletin1.htm> and read the materials presented on the site. Then it is URGENT THAT YOU EMAIL, CALL OR WRITE YOUR REPRESENTATIVES, TO VOTE NO!! ON THIS BILL. This bill was introduced to the US Senate, January 7, 2009 in the current 111 session of Congress, by Senator Jeff Bingaman, D, NM. January 15, 2009 it passed as amended by 74% of 'aye' votes. It is now in the House of Representatives and is expected to be voted on soon.

In Idaho the addresses and phone numbers are shown below. I do not have the email addresses but will try to locate them and forward to our members. Please feel free to urge your friends and fellow rockhounds in other states to immediately act urging their Representatives to vote no on the bill.

Representative Walt Minnick (D) —1st Congressional District—U.S. House of Representatives —508 Cannon House Office Building —Washington, DC 20515 Phone (202) 225-6611 Coeur d'Alene phone 667-0127

Representative Mike Simpson —2nd Congressional District —U.S. House of Representatives—2312 Rayburn House Office Building —Washington, DC 20515—(202) 225-5531

Note: Though it is too late to get comments to the U.S. Forest Service on this matter, I am copying the letter for you! so this is just for your information—no surprises when it comes to pass—Jan.23, 2009. REGARDING SOLO CREEK QUARTZ CRYSTAL DIG

The U.S. Forest Service is considering the adoption of a management program for the Upper Solo Quartz Crystal dig site located on the Priest Lake Ranger District. The proposed action would set management guidelines for the site to protect resources and improve safety conditions. The attached proposal contains a map and additional information on this project. We are interested in any specific comments or concerns you may have about the proposal.

This project is expected to meet the requirements for a Categorical Exclusion from documentation in an environmental impact statement (EIS) or environmental assessment (EA) as described in the Forest Service Handbook (FSH) 1909.15, Section 31.2. Analysis, including a hydrologic evaluation of the site is being conducted to verify this assumption. We are committed to conducting a quality analysis for this project so that we continue to protect resources and meet environmental laws.

After reviewing comment and conducting analysis, I will determine whether a decision memo is appropriate for the project. Copies of the decision will be mailed to those people who have submitted comments and have requested a copy.

In order for us to consider your comments in a timely manner they need to be received by February 27,2009. Any comments submitted become part of the project file and will be considered during the analysis. We have enclosed a comment form for your convenience. Please fill it out and send, or you can submit comments by phone or e-mail. Please direct you comments and ideas to: —**By mail:** Sandpoint Ranger District 1500 Highway 2, Suite 110 Sandpoint, Idaho 83864— **Attention:** Jim Nieman **By phone:** (208) 265-6634 **By e-mail**

jnieman@fs.fed.us.

If you have any questions, or would like to talk about this project, contact Jim Nieman, the project team leader at (208) 265-6634from DeWayne Thornburgh, Deputy District Ranger **SEE NEXT PAGE**

Condition:

The Solo Quartz Crystal dig site is located on the Priest Lake Ranger District directly adjacent to Forest System Road 659 approximately .8 miles from the junction with Forest System Road 312. The dig site encompasses 4 acres more or less, is a commonly known site, and has been active for many years. Digging at the site generally consists of individual pits and or tunnels excavated down from two to six feet in depth. Holes and the corresponding soil excavation material are common throughout the area. The site is currently unmanaged. Sediment delivery into the Solo Creek/Upper West Branch drainage is an ongoing occurrence. Excavation throughout the site has also created unsafe conditions in terms of excavated tunnels and or pits, and large trees that have been under dug that greatly increases the probability of tree fall.

Proposed Action:

The proposed action would set management guidelines for the site to protect resources and to improve safety conditions. The site would be open to the general public and managed as a geologic interest area. The site would be considered a free use area. An onsite registry would be used to track activity. Signs and or a brochure would be located at the site to give general information and parameters for site use. An approved digging area would be delineated that would generally encompass the existing dig area. The Forest Service would remove existing hazard trees and the site would periodically be evaluated to review the need for additional removals. The Forest Service would also install sediment traps or other mitigations deemed necessary to prevent or reduce any sedimentation from the site. A riparian buffer would be marked so that no activities would be allowed within the buffer.

DRAFT SOLO QUARTZ CRYSTAL DIG MANAGEMENT SITE**LIST OF SITE PARAMETERS**

1. Digging is allowed only within the marked boundaries.
2. No commercial digging
3. No diversion of water on site. This includes the creek, and groundwater. Digging is prohibited if groundwater is encountered.
4. No digging within 20 feet of the existing creek.
5. No placement of any soil in the existing creek or 20 foot buffer area.
6. Only hand tools may be used.
7. Digging sites cannot be reserved except by active use. Active use includes leaving tools in a hole overnight if camping in the local area or during a lunch break
8. Safe digging practices must be followed: No tunneling: Do not dig under a tree or its roots: Excavations must not have overhanging banks or vertical walls greater than four feet in height
9. Occupying an unsafe hole is prohibited (see No 8 above).
10. The digging site is closed to overnight camping.
11. All garbage must be packed out.
- 12.. Dogs must be on a leash or otherwise tethered and under control.
- 13.The digging area is closed between sunset and sunrise.
- 14.The site will be open from May 1 through October 30, weather permitting.

Next Meeting starts at 6 PM on the 19th of March

first show meeting of 2009: all members are asked to come if possible—for 30 minutes prior to the time we usually meet

PROGRAM—WILL REQUIRE YOUR PARTICIPATION...(IT'S A TEST!!!~!~)

Refreshments volunteers —Susan Rekow and Warren Price

Silent Auction and SHOW AND TELL — Bring your treasures!!!!

Thank you to those who remembered to bring their contribution to the Post Falls Food Bank to the last meeting (in lieu of the Christmas gift exchange we were forced to forgo), and to the Merkleys for delivering the food.

Bits and Pieces – Dennis and Pam Hicks have accepted the Field Trip "torch" from the Roses' who will help in any way they can. Mike and Diane will be back for the April meeting.

I am pleased to report that mineralogist, Dave Waisman has agreed to present a program in April, and will bring specimens. He was here several years ago and his presentation was much appreciated.

We are so pleased to welcome Gary and Anna Provost of Rathdrum as members of our club. They have been working with Spencer opal set in silver, and are developing a sapphire claim over in the Philipsburg area in Montana. They have a young family.

Bertha McPherson has recovered from her bout with pneumonia and is dealing with a heart problem, but is feeling much better, and hopes to join us at the March meeting

Lapidary Hints – – – A few years ago I had trouble getting my cabs to properly fit the belt buckle findings that I purchased at Quartzsite or at various gem shows. When I examined the buckles more carefully I discovered that most of them are not flat but are curved. It was very easy to solve this problem by curving the back of the cab being fitted to the buckle so that the parts fitted together properly. The curve of the grinding wheel made it easy to get this curve. Now my buckles fit together much better and I have less trouble with tightening or losing the screws holding the parts together. Not all buckles are curved so that it is necessary to check them when fitting your cab to the buckle. If the cab is too loose, it can be tightened by placing a cardboard or paper behind the cab. If paper or cardboard is used one should avoid getting the buckle wet as much as possible . Wayne Ehlers, Rockhound Raming, 9/00, via Rock Writings, 3/04, Grindings, 8/05

How to Saw Montana Agate People not familiar with working with Montana agate have, perhaps, wondered how to "set-up" to saw the first nodules they acquire. Most Montana nodules are found in two shapes, flat and slightly curving, or round and elongated. As this material probably has rolled hundreds of miles down turbulent streams, nearly all of it is cracked, so take this into consideration when sawing to get the largest slab free from fractures.

First, look into the rocks with a strong light to determine which way the moss or banding layers lie. Light cuts taken of an end, or side, at right angles to the layers, will then reveal whether you should slab from end to end or side to side. Many people who are used to sawing thunder eggs get used to sawing each nodule through the center to expose the pattern. While this method works well with nodules, it cannot be used to the best advantage with Montana material. It will probably ruin the best sprays as the larger and best ones usually lie toward the center. Sawing across them will render them valueless.

Only a very few specimens carry fine large sprays, so do not be disappointed if the first few do not have them. About the time you are ready to give up; one of the poorest looking pieces may have the fine spray you are looking for .

... .from The Puget Sounder, 11/99, Gem Cutting Shop Helps, Grindings 6/94, Rock Rollers 7/97

I came across this article in one of my exchange bulletins from 2007

BIGGS PICTURE JASPER, A LEGACY IS BORN By Dale Rhode

Biggs Picture jasper and the discovery thereof played a vital role in the evolution of the lapidary field. Many a lapidarist would not be involved with this fine hobby if it had not been for their awe struck inspiration in seeing a polished slab or cab of Biggs picture jasper ... no other jasper created such a "gold rush of excitement," as did the Biggs jasper discovery of 1964. It is engrained in my mind like it was last summer ... I was just a tow head. I remember my dad talking with some other rockhounds/miners about how that country around Biggs Junction was made up of basalt, rattlesnakes and sage brush, with sporadic deposits of agate ... who would have ever thought such beautiful jasper lay beneath the surface of this rugged desert.

The Biggs jasper discovery changed the lives of a lot of people as you will see in the following pages .. I recall the excitement within my dad when he first saw a slab of Biggs jasper, he was hooked from that moment on!!! Everyone was fascinated by how the scenes in the jasper reflected so much the terrain from whence it came. From the time I ground out my first cab of Biggs picture jasper, I too have been drawn to its beauty.

It has gained a highly respected throne in the royal realm of picture jaspers. Like all jaspers, Biggs has variety. Any lapidarist knows about the most rare, blue sky Biggs and blue Biggs jasper that demands \$100.00 plus per lb. The old-Biggs is another variety, black Biggs- Rufus Biggs, which tends to be harder. The most common is lace Biggs, strictly a landscape rock as there is rarely any pattern to it and it is plagued with soft spots. One can gather hundreds of lbs. of lace Biggs as it litters the hillsides all around Biggs Jet and Rufus ...

To whom do we owe credit for the discovery? The first to ever make use of Biggs jasper was the Native Americans that lived on the Columbia. There is an old mine that they dug up on a mountain off highway 97. I have seen several arrowheads that have been found on the river made from Biggs jasper ... since then numerous old native American quarries have been located where they mined Dolphite agate for their gem points and Biggs jasper for their knives and scrapers ... it would be 100 years before man would once again discover the magic of this jasper ... Isami Tsubota, aka Sammi, has one of the oldest running Biggs mine still in production. He purchased quite a bit of land in and around Biggs Jet.

Back in 1987, Sammi was able to give me some first hand accounts of the famous Biggs jasper discovery. In his own words: "it was in 1964 that a road crew was constructing I-84 and they," the crew, "were staying at my motel and RV park. Biggs was not discovered by the road crew while constructing the freeway like many have come to believe." As Sammi explained: "a great flood came and destroyed the canyons from the John Day River drainage, the Rufus drainage and Biggs Junction drainage. Biggs Junction was totally marooned with no way in or out, except by air. The state relief would bring in baloney and bread." It was around Christmas Eve and we had 75 people stranded at my motel ... " luckily the road crew was already there working on I-84 and they went to work re-building the washed out bridges.

Sammi noted that the flood had washed out these unusual looking boulders that were scattered about. He couldn't figure out why all the fuss over these rocks. His wife was becoming angry at the road crew as they would gather these rocks up and pile them next to their motel and RV park. She told Sammi to tell them fellows to be sure and take them rocks out when they left. Sammi laughed when he said that, "better that than cry". Like he said now, there were boulders of blue Biggs and here he was telling the workers they better not leave them rocks!!!! Sammi shook his head and laughed and said "if only I had known." It wasn't until later that Sammi met up with a rockhound by the name of Hoot Elkins. Hoot soon became widely known for discovering the Deschutes picture jasper deposit. .. he showed Sammi a slab of Biggs jasper and Sammi fell in love with the jasper and was an instant rock hound!!!! Then he was out gathering up the washed out boulders. Soon he had a full scale rock shop running and was marketing the jasper. The flood had destroyed the old highway 97 that came in from the south and the road crew tackled that after the bridges were completed. It was then that rockhounds were able to see the huge exposed deposits of Biggs jasper. The flood waters had washed the dirt away that had concealed their hidden beauty for millions of years. (continued next page)

Rockhounds would get the Biggs from the road crews. Some road workers became rockhounds themselves ... by then there was a chaotic rush to get this jasper as it was gaining international attention ... In doing my research I came across an article written in the Lapidary Journal in 1968 and was stunned to read this excerpt ... "Biggs jasper, a silicified clay, and please, let us not call this material a jasper, no matter what its texture or coloring. Due to changes in its composition and lack of sufficient silica in some of its areas, this beautiful picture rock will never quite make the grade as top-quality cabochon material." Wow!!!! Evidently the writer didn't do his homework as some of the finest cabochons in museums today came from Biggs Junction.

Is it silicified clay? That discussion came up one afternoon while visiting with Howard Dolph. He laughed and said "let me show you something," he took me to his museum and I was awe struck to see a sliced chunk of Biggs with a fish fossil in it - so one can certainly say it is silicified mud/ clay because if it was volcanic-the fish would have been dusted.

Howard Dolph, God rest his soul, was one of the first to get in on the Biggs digs. Some make false claims, but they just can't fill those boots. Howard mined hard and cut Biggs constantly for decades ... He also fished for salmon off the ramps at Celilo Falls right next to the Native Americans, before the dams covered the falls. Howard was a wealth of information on the history of Biggs jasper. Dolph left me wiser on every aspect of Biggs jasper and the history of the Columbia River gorge. There are many old-timers that were in on the first Biggs digs. Kop Kopcinski of Mitchell was one of the first to ever put Biggs jasper to a saw. Shirts Quant of Prineville dug tons of it – Hoot Elkins, dug both the Biggs and Deschutes picture jasper - and sadly there are some that are not worthy to list here because of their past, and continued dishonorable conduct.

Biggs jasper used to be confined to the north half of "the rockhounds' triangle," from Biggs south to Wasco, then north to Rufus and west back to Biggs. Since this writing (1999) a new discovery has been made at Tygh Valley, some 25 miles S.W. as the crow flies . It was also dug on the Washington side of the river for years until the corps and railroad shut down the digs. Biggs jasper will always play a major role in the lapidary world and it has been my pleasure to share with you the stories of those that are worthy of being noted here. We now own our own Biggs jasper mine and I gladly welcome folks to come and dig, just drop me an email for instructions.

The History of Biggs Picture Jasper is copyright protected, 1999. Reprinted with permission of the author.

Permission to use is, also, granted to other newsletters, as long as proper credit is given. Via Petroglyphs 11/06; The Glacial Drifter 9/06; Strata Gem 3/06; The Rockcollector 1/06; Rockscoop 1/07, Lake City Rockhound News 3/09

These questions and answers were reportedly taken from actual college exams.:(??I hope not!)

Q: Name the four seasons A: Salt, pepper, mustard and vinegar.

Q: Name a major disease associated with smoking. A: Premature death

Q: What is a planet:? A: A body of earth surrounded by sky Q: What happens to a boy when he reaches puberty? A: He says goodbye to his boyhood and looks forward to his adultery.

OFFICERS FOR 2009

Mike Rose—President

Warren Price—Vice President

Secretary - Bill Johnson

Treasurer – Susan Rekow

Federation director—Everett Headrick

Federation Delegate—open

WSMC Delegate-Open

Committees for 2009

Hospitality – Bertha McPherson

Field Trips—Dennis and Pam Hicks

Membership—Susan Rekow

Show Chairman-Bev Bockman and Steve Livingstone

Newsletter Editor—Bev Bockman

Program Chairman-Bev Bockman AND CLUB MEMBERS

Lake City Rockhound News

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THE NORTHWEST FEDERATION OF MINERALOGICAL SOCIETIES

WASHINGTON STATE MINERAL COUNCIL

S.C.R.I.B.E.

2009 Rock and Gem Shows in WA., OR. , ID. & MT

March 13-15 Spokane Rock Rollers – Spokane, WA.

March 13-15 Tualatin Valley Gem club– Hillsboro, OR

MARCH 27-28 PANORAMA GEM AND MINERAL CLUB COLVILLE, WA.

NORTHWEST GOLD PROSPECTORS—Idaho National Guard Armory—Post Falls

MARCH 28 & 29. 2009

April 18-19 LAKESIDE GEM AND MINERAL CLUB—KENNEWICK,WA

—JULY 29-30 AUG.1-2 BILLIINGS MT. AFMS/NFMS SHOW

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