



White Mountain Gem & Mineral Club

P.O. Box 3504

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www.whitemountain-azrockclub.org

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PRESIDENT'S LETTER ∞ JUNE 7, 2026

Thank you to all who attended the June 7, 2026, meeting. I was told we had a full house, and I appreciate each and every one of you who attended.

While many adults and children take a breather during the month of June, here at WMGMC our mindset is to finish planning and implementing our annual show, scheduled for July 10 through July 12 at the Elks Lodge in Show Low. We must not forget or ignore that the set-up for this show will take place on July 9, where tables have to be moved into position, and chairs must be mostly stacked out of the way. In addition, that is also the day where we host a potluck for the vendors and ourselves. This is a great opportunity to showcase our abilities and show those vendors we value their participation and attendance. We are blessed that many of them honor us by returning each year. Our attention to detail and our willingness to treat those vendors with respect and professionalism go a long way to assure us they will return each July.

Please consider how, as a WMGMC member, you could contribute to this very busy day, July 9. Bringing in a pot-luck contribution would go a long way to helping, whether a main dish, side, dessert, drink, or condiment. Feeling strong? Come earlier and help rearrange the tables and move the chairs. Exact timing of these necessary situations will be finalized for the July 5 meeting. Let's get together and make this our best Rock, Gem, Mineral, and Fossil Show yet. Remember that set-up on July 9, and rearranging and cleaning after the show closes at 4:00 PM on July 12 is extremely important to the inner workings of our show.

Thank you and enjoy our beautiful summer weather.

Donna L. Pollard, President WMGMC

Help Wanted

Mailed Newsletters: We need someone in the Snowflake-Taylor area to take over the mailing of the monthly newsletter. All you need to do is pick up the printed copies of the monthly newsletter from PerfectPrintz, fold and staple them, then put on the mailing label and stamp. Drop in the mailbox and you are done for the month. Fewer than 20 are mailed each month. Our non-email members really welcome this service.

Pot Luck Co-coordinator: While Shelly does an amazing job making sure we have a terrific monthly pot luck, a second person is needed. Our club is growing and she is tap dancing as fast as she can especially since she takes notes during the meeting. A number of members jump in to help clean up which is very helpful and appreciated. Sharing the workload will make the task easier.

Annual Show: Our show is coming up July 10, 11, & 12. Everyone should plan on volunteering some time. We have all sorts of jobs to do. Any special needs can be accommodated. Contact Sandra and let her know when you are available.

Are you a junior rockhound, or do you know one? The American Federation of Mineralogical Societies (AFMS) has a newsletter written by juniors, for juniors called *Crack the News*. Check it out at

<https://www.juniors.amfed.org/juniors-newsletter>

BULLETIN BOARD

HAPPY JUNE BIRTHDAYS

Sandra Angelo Lidia Duvall Lee Freyenhage
 Yvonne Garrett Malcolm Glick Alicia Hamilton
 Jenna Hamilton Leif Jentoft Roy Lovato
 Bob McAlpin Candis Mayper Rick Palmer
 Myra Rees Takeisha Reyes

Monthly Potluck for July:
 Last Names A through L

LET'S DO LUNCH

The Let's Do Lunch Club will meet at Monica's Cafe, 1100 E Hall Street, Show Low, AZ, on Thursday, June 25th, at Noon. Bring a friend for some good food and fun conversation. Let's celebrate our June birthdays.

CALL FOR ARTICLES

If you have a favorite rock, geologic topic, lapidary technique, or DIY project you would like to share with your fellow club members, we welcome your contributions to our knowledge of the wonderful world of rocks. See page 3 for submission details.

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May 2026 Field Trip

TREASURER'S REPORT

May Expense

Rock Talk Printing & Postage, Show Signs, CPA Fees, Property Taxes, Member Badges, Historian Supplies, Club Promotion (Biz Expo), Charitable Donation to Apache Creek Deaf and Youth Camp

Upcoming Expense

Show Expenses, Meeting Supplies, **Rock Talk** Printing & Postage

Income This Month

Member Dues, Member Donations, Badge Payments, Silent Auction, 50/50 Raffle, Fossil Raffle, Biz Expo Donations

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

Laura Edwards Debbie MacArthur
 Glenn Hamilton Alicia Hamilton
 Kim Borgatta Stephen Keim

Rock Talk Newsletter

Our newsletter is published monthly by the White Mountain Gem & Mineral Club, Inc. Any information or comments members wish to include in the monthly newsletter must be given to the editor at the general membership meeting or call the editor no later than Tuesday following the meeting.

Membership Dues

Membership dues are \$20 for a single membership and \$25 for a couple/family. (\$5 less if you receive newsletter by email.) Dues are paid in January each year along with a completed application form. Memberships initiated in November or later in a given year are also good for the following year.

Meetings

We meet the first Sunday of the month (unless it falls on a holiday) at the VFW Post 9907, 381 North Central Avenue in S how Low. Turn north off the Deuce of Clubs at Burger King. Social half hour at 1:00 PM, meeting starts at 1:30 PM.

Elected Officers

OFFICE	NAME	PHONE	EMAIL
PRESIDENT	Donna Pollard	(480)600-2714	tdpollard@msn.com
VICE PRESIDENT	Sandra Angelo	(928)537-3726	sandra_angelo@hotmail.com
2ND VICE PRESIDENT	Debbie Trimble	(520)400-6527	dltrimble076@aol.com
SECRETARY	Shelly Applegate	(928)245-4300	shellylynn@gmail.com
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EDITOR	Bea Kennedy	(330)391-1916	bea.bullwinkl@gmail.com
FIELD TRIPS	Dick Turpin	(480)240-0995	dickturpinaz@gmail.com
	Ursula Wilson	(928)532-5703	uewilson@yahoo.com

Members At Large

Hope Rubi	(928)228-8851	Terry Pollard	(480)431-0686
Ursula Wilson	(928)532-5703	Carl Hickman	(928)536-3744

Volunteer Positions

Website Maintenance	Donna Pollard	(480)600-2714	tdpollard@msn.com
Show Chairman	Sandra Angelo	(928)537-3726	sandra_angelo@hotmail.com
Assistant Show Chairman	Ursula Wilson	(928)532-5703	uewilson@yahoo.com
Sunshine	Donna Pollard	480-600-2714	tdpollard@msn.com
Education, Schools	Open		
Greeter/Door Prizes/Raffle	Thelma Gray		
Auctioneer	Donna and Terry Pollard		
Highway Cleanup	Brookie/ Larry Embry	(928)537-0760	
Bonus Prizes	Sandra Angelo	(928)537-3726	
Historian	Donna Pollard	(480)600-2714	tdpollard@msn.com
Librarian	Rick Palmer	(928)333-5019	palmer57@frontiernet.net
Meeting Room Setup/Cleanup	Shelly Applegate	(928)245-4300	shellylynn@gmail.com

Chamber of Commerce Liaisons

<u>Show Low:</u> Donna Pollard	<u>Snowflake/Taylor:</u> Karen Hickman
<u>Springerville/Eager:</u> Open	<u>Heber/Overgaard:</u> Loren Wright

New Facebook Group Page

Did you know we have a new FB page? Our rock club member Jamie Konopacky created a new group page. The name of the group is [White Mountain Gem & Mineral Club WMGMC](#) (no dash). Please don't confuse it with the old group page called White Mountain Gem & Mineral Club – WMGMC (dash) as that group page is no longer active. Use our new FB page to post your club events and reminders. You can also tell us about rock and gem related ideas, places, or projects you have done. Let's make it a nice social communication tool for us all to use.

If you have any questions or concerns or need help accessing the new page, White Mountain Gem & Mineral Club WMGMC, please feel free to reach out to Jamie via text, call 715.498.7121 or email konopacky25@gmail.com

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/1729487638237510>

WHITE MOUNTAIN GEM & MINERAL CLUB MEETING MINUTES JUNE 7, 2026

The meeting was called to order at 1:30 pm by Vice President Sandra Angelo. Donna Pollard, President, Shelly Applegate, Secretary, and Kim Whitley, Treasurer, were unable to attend. 57 members and guests were in attendance. The meeting began with the Pledge of Allegiance. Guests were introduced. Welcome to Laura Edwards, Glenn Hamilton, Debbie McArthur, Jim Gale, Ron and Wendi Kavas, Laura Edwards, Wayne Coats, Kim Borgatta, and Steve Keim. Welcome back, Mary.

As usual, Show and Tell was a lot of fun. Thanks to everyone who shared. Doug reported on the success of the Kids Zone at "Rockin the Rim". At least 100 fliers were handed out to families who were excited about the upcoming show. The Chamber indicated it was the best Kids Zone ever.

Dick Turpin asked for input from the membership for the June outing. We will be heading to Woodruff for petrified wood. Since we are so far north, we may visit Jim Grey's Rock Shop. Meet at the Bashas parking lot 8 am, June 27th.

The highway clean-up was very well attended: 13 club members participated! It has been many years since we had that many help. Many of the new participants were surprised that it was such a good time (as promised). And, of course, we were rewarded with Brookie's Cookies. Brookie suggested that we do it again September 19.

Jamie Konopacky set up a Facebook page for the club. Members can post information on the page. She walked people through to the site. This will be a great addition to sharing information about our club.

Show Update: Greg announced signs are going up this week. This can be kind of strenuous so help from strong bodies would be appreciated. Contact Greg if you can help. Lynn Erickson will be putting together the six raffle baskets. She needs rock specimens for the baskets. Contact her if you have rocks to share. Sandra passed around sign-up sheets for the show. Contact her for when you want to work. There are jobs for all abilities.

Doug announced a lecture he holds the second Sunday of the month from 2 -4 pm at the Chamber. It is a geological history of the area.

Hope announced "Let's Do Lunch" will be at Monica's Cafe on the June 25 at noon.

Cathy had information about two proposed Wind Farm projects in Apache County (Lava Run and Black Rock.) She encouraged everyone to voice their opinions to decisionmakers on these projects.

After a short break the raffle winners were drawn. Blue won \$81! Chris and Chooch Frayer presented their winter rock hound adventure. Cool places and terrific specimens!

Minutes were accepted in the business meeting. The treasurer's report shows we are fiscally stable. No further business to discuss. Meeting adjourned 3:45 pm.

Notes taken by Cathy Cargile. Respectfully submitted: Sandra Angelo, Secretary Pro Tem

Agate Specimens from May 2026 Field Trip



JUNE FIELD TRIP ≈ MAY FIELD TRIP REPORT

June 2026 Field Trip Announcement: Woodruff Butte - Petrified Wood

Field Trip Leader: Dick Turpin 480-240-0995 dickturpinaz@gmail.com

Date: Saturday, June 27, 2026

Location of the Field Trip Site: North side of Woodruff Butte

Where and When We Will Meet: In the morning, we will meet at Basha's Grocery in Taylor at 8:00 AM.

Recommended Vehicle: Any vehicle can reach the collecting location; however, the last half mile is very bumpy. Members who want to avoid this section can park either at Bashas or at the turn on the north side of the Butte. There should be several folks with high clearance vehicles willing to give you a ride.

What we will collect: Colorful, high quality petrified wood from the Chinle formation.

Recommended Things to Take: Buckets, rock hammer, grabber, digging tools, camera, water, lunch, sunscreen.

Cell Phone Service: There should be some cell service at the collecting site. It is about five miles from Holbrook.

Options: After getting your fill at Woodruff some members may choose to travel north from the Butte and stop at Jim Grey's huge rock shop in Holbrook or stop at an unexplored petrified wood site just outside of Holbrook. See Dick for directions to either location.



May 2026 Field Trip Report – Apache Creek Agate and Crystals

On Saturday morning, May 23, thirteen club members gathered at the “Y” to begin the two-hour journey to Apache Creek, New Mexico. Fortunately, everyone squeezed into just four vehicles, which was a welcome bit of efficiency given the current price of gas. The drive through Alpine, Luna, and Reserve was both scenic and relaxing, offering beautiful mountain views and a pleasant start to the day.

Upon arriving at the Apache Creek Ranch for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing, we were welcomed by Debbie Lange, Reverend Craig's brother, and Noah. The club made a donation to support the Ranch's important work and to thank them for allowing us access through their property.

The drive up the mountainside was steep, rocky, and a little unnerving for anyone seated on the downhill side of the vehicles. Fortunately, careful driving and a bit of patience got everyone safely to the flat-topped mountain where the collecting would begin.

Once the group spread out across several acres of ground that seemed almost carpeted with Luna Blue agate, the experienced collectors quickly noticed a familiar pattern: wherever Ursula went, good specimens seemed to follow. Several members discreetly kept an eye on her movements, hoping to benefit from her uncanny ability to locate productive spots.

After crawling under a particularly unfriendly stretch of barbed wire, Greg and Ursula made their way to a location that had produced several beautiful crystal clusters on a previous trip. Their success was almost immediate. Within minutes, they uncovered several smaller pieces belonging to the same crystal cluster. As excavation continued, it became clear that the productive area was remarkably small—less than two feet across. Other members dug test pits nearby but found only the more typical material common to the site. Whatever talent Ursula possesses for finding exceptional specimens, the rest of us have yet to develop it.

Still, no one went home disappointed. Over the next four hours, members collected abundant high-quality agates along with several attractive crystal clusters. (See Page 4 for a sampling of pictures.)

By lunchtime, most collectors had filled their buckets and satisfied their curiosity, making it a good time to head for home. The trip down the mountain provided one final adventure. One vehicle encountered what can only be described as a “Deliverance” moment when it came upon an old pickup truck towing a large cattle trailer and blocking the narrow road. With no way around and no indication of what was happening, the group waited patiently. After several minutes, a loud gunshot suddenly echoed through the canyon. What the driver was shooting at remains a mystery, but he eventually moved down the road to a wider spot and allowed us to pass.

ROCK OF THE MONTH ∞ FLUORITE

Submitted by Donna Pollard

Fluorite has a formula, (CaF_2) , Calcium Fluoride, part of the Halide group of minerals. Contrary to popular opinion, all fluorite does not fluoresce. The phenomenon is triggered by specific trace minerals and structural defects that act as 'activators'. Several Rare Earth Elements (REE'S) are the most common included elements. Yttrium (Y), Europium (Eu), Samarium (Sm), and Cerium (Ce), which substitute for the Calcium (Ca) ions within the crystal lattice are the best "activators". In some specimens, trapped organic matter or volatile hydrocarbons are responsible for the glow. When exposed to high energy, the electrons in these trace materials or elements rise to a higher energy state, as they fall back to their normal state they release this stored energy as visible light. The color is often blue, green or violet, but could be yellow or red. If the fluorite is pure, with no intruders, it will not fluoresce. Even in a single specimen, parts may fluoresce while other parts do not. It depends where the trace minerals settled in the crystal lattice during growth of the crystal. Fluorite was one of the first substances in which the natural phenomenon of fluorescence was studied, and from where the term "fluorescence" gets its name.



All fluorite, whether fluorescent or not, has a hardness of 4, density of 3.1 – 3.3, white streak, and vitreous luster (glass-like, or the same as the clear fluid that fills your eyeball). In addition, fluorite has a brittle tenacity, is translucent to transparent (with the exception of the rare true black color), and is one of the most varicolored minerals in existence. Fluorite may even have various colors in one crystal. The crystal form is isometric, forming cubes, octahedrons, and rarely, dodecahedrons. The crystals are often twinned, and fluorite could be radiated, reniform (kidney shaped), massive, granular, or combinations of the various crystal forms. Fluorite has four directions of cleavage and forms perfect octahedral structure forming triangle shapes on the corners of cubic crystals. It does have an uneven fracture.

Associated minerals include calcite, barite, quartz, dolomite, ore minerals; pyrite, galena, chalcopryrite, sphalerite, and other hydrothermal vein minerals. These associations occur not just in hydrothermal veins, but in chinks, fissures in silicate rocks, layered in sedimentary rocks, around hot springs, in carbonates, in contact metamorphic rocks, and in epithermal veins.

There are several minerals similar to fluorite; apatite has different crystal form and cleavage, calcite is softer and reacts to acid, quartz is harder and scratches glass while fluorite glides over glass, and, unlike halite (salt), fluorite is not soluble in water.

Fluorite is relatively common and found worldwide. Blue John, with its alternating light and dark bands is only found in Castleton, Derbyshire, England. Perfect fluorite crystal groups are also found in other lead mines of England. In North America, well known places to collect fluorite include, Rosiclare, Hardin Co. Illinois, Marion, Crittenden Co. Kentucky, and Rimer, Putnam Co. and Clay Center, Ottawa Co. Ohio. Pale green octahedral crystals are found in Barstow Mine, Ouray, Colorado. New Mexico has several fine collecting locations too. Fluorite is also found in several places in Ontario, Canada, and Mapimi, Durango, Mexico.



The name fluorite origin is the Latin *fluere*, "to flow", because fluorite melts easily and is used as a flux in the smelting of metallic ores. It is also used in manufacture of steel and hydrofluoric acid. A confusion that arises is understanding the terms fluorine, fluoride, and fluorite. Fluorine is element # 9 on the Chemical Periodic Table. Fluoride is the negatively charged chemical ion (F^-) derived from the element Fluorine and is the component used in dental care and industrial processing. Fluorite is the colorful naturally occurring mineral we search for, the solid, crystalized version of fluorine. Fluorine gas (F_2) is found in virtually all waters on Earth including ocean water. All forms of fluorine make up the 13th most abundant element in the earth's crust.

Fluorite is beautiful, relatively abundant, and a sought after specimen for most mineral collections. If it fluoresces, it is even more desired in any mineral cabinet.

ROCKIN' SHOWS COMING UP!

JULY 2026

San Juan County Gem and Mineral Society's Annual Gem, Mineral and Fossil Show

July 3 - 5, 2026
 • Fri 10am - 6pm
 • Sat 10am - 6pm
 • Sun 10am - 5pm

Cost only \$1
 Children under 12 free

Friday is Kids' Day! Rocks, Fossils, Minerals, Fossils, Silent Auction, Fluorescent Display, Educational Displays, Kids Area and more!

McGee Park Fair Grounds Convention Center, Farmington, NM



JULY 3-5—FARMINGTON, NEW MEXICO:

Join us at our Annual Gem, Mineral and Fossil Show on July 3rd through July 5th at McGee Park Convention Center. Hours are Friday 10am to 6pm, Saturday 10am to 6pm, and Sunday 10am to 5pm. We will have raffle prizes, door prizes, silent auction, fluorescent mineral display, educational displays, and kids' activities. Friday is Kids' Day dedicated to fun, educational activities all day long.

JULY 10-12—SHOW LOW, ARIZONA:

We are thrilled to announce that White Mountain Gem and Mineral Club (WMGMC) has scheduled its 27th Gem Show for Friday, Saturday and Sunday, July 10 through 12 at the Elks Lodge located at 805 E Whipple Street, Show Low, Arizona 85901. Fri. 9-5, Sat. 9-5, Sun. 10-4; Adults \$5, Kids free with an adult; contact Sandra Angelo, Show Chair, sandra_angelo@hotmail.com. Website: <https://whitemountain-azrockclub.org/>

THE WHITE MOUNTAIN GEM AND MINERAL CLUB PRESENTS OUR

27TH ROCK, GEM, MINERAL AND FOSSIL SHOW
 JULY 10-12, 2026
 FRIDAY 9 AM -- 5 PM
 SATURDAY 9 AM -- 5 PM
 SUNDAY 10 AM -- 4 PM

Admission
 Adults \$5, Kids Free With Adult
Location: Show Low Elks Lodge
 805 E Whipple Street
 Show Low, Arizona

MEMBERSHIP
 We welcome new members! Please visit our website below for meeting times and location.

◆ Jewelry ◆ Fluorescents ◆ Gold
 ◆ Displays ◆ Demonstrations ◆ Fossils ◆ Kid's Corner
 ◆ Door Prizes ◆ Vendors ◆ Food Service Daily

Contact us at www.whitemountain-azrockclub.org




JULY-AUGUST 2026

July 31-August 2—PRESCOTT VALLEY, ARIZONA: Annual show; Prescott Gem & Mineral Club; Findlay Toyota Center, 3201 N Main St; Fri. 9-5, Sat. 9-5, Sun. 9-4; \$5 General Admission, \$4 Seniors, Vets and Students, Children Under 12, Free; 22nd Annual Prescott Gem & Mineral Show. Largest indoor gem & mineral show in Northern Arizona! Over 75 vendors offering mineral specimens, beads, slabs, cabochons, crystals, fossils, meteorites, fine jewelry, classes, kids area and more; contact Dan Hunt, Show Chair; Email: pgmcshowchairperson@gmail.com; Website: <https://www.prescottgemmineral.org/>



VARIOUS DATES 2026

GEOLOGY IN THE CHAMBER: A hands-on interactive exploration of Earth History and geologic processes in a casual seminar setting led by Paleontologist Doug Wolfe. The classes will focus on the amazing geologic features of the Colorado Plateau regions. Recommended for ages 12 years and up. Classes at Show Low Chamber of Commerce, 81 East Deuce of Clubs, second Sunday of month starting June 14, 2026, 2:00-4:00 pm. Cost \$30 per class. Class limit 15. Contact Doug Wolfe, 480-201-0665, douglasgwolfe@gmail.com. June 14 - How the Planet Works. July 12 - Our Place in the Galaxy. August 9 - Water World with Dinosaurs. September 13 - Geology and Water in the Southwest. October 11 - Geology and Natural Resources in the 21st Century.

2026 Show Update

The show is nearly upon us. Just about a month away. We have been sold out for several months and have four vendors on the wait list. WooHoo! The community is excited about the upcoming show and looking forward to attending. You will begin to see signs around. The Elks Lodge is expecting us, the layout is ready, food trucks are scheduled, and supplies are being ordered. The next order of business is to make sure we have enough club members covering all the tasks for set up, event, and tear down.

- Storage Unit Crew – 8am, Thursday 7/9 (Terry Pollard Team Lead) – We should have enough scheduled.
- Elks Lodge Set up Crew – 9am, Thursday 7/9 (Debbie Christmas Team Lead) – 4 or 5 more needed.
- Vendor Pot Luck – Thursday 7/9 (Cathy Cargile Team Lead) – Bring your favorite dish to share.
- Admissions including membership information and basket raffle sales (Brookie Embry Team Lead) – 4 people needed per shift.
- Spinning Wheel and Kids Corner (Carol Glick Team Lead) – At least 4 needed per shift.
- Security and Vendor Care – 2 - 3 people needed per shift.
- Elks Lodge tear down (Debbie Christmas Team Lead) – This group should also include those returning items to storage.

Shifts are two hours long. On Friday and Saturday (9-11, 11-1, 1-3, 3-5). On Sunday (10-12, 12-2, 2-4)

Please check your calendars and let me or the team lead know when you plan to work.

This is our BIG fundraiser. Everyone in town should commit to at least one shift. We can accommodate special needs.

Thank you!

Sandra Angelo, Show Chair

WHITE MOUNTAIN GEM
& MINERAL CLUB
CALENDAR OF EVENTS



FIELD TRIPS WANTED!!

PLEASE LET US KNOW OF ANY

GREAT PLACES FOR OUR OUTINGS!

MONTH	MEETING DATE	FIELD TRIP DATE	NOTES
JANUARY	4	17	Gila County Show
FEBRUARY	1	21	
MARCH	1	21	Mellon Center Show—14th
APRIL	12	25	
MAY	3	23	Highway Cleanup—16th
JUNE	7	27	
JULY	5	25	ANNUAL SHOW 10-11-12
AUGUST	2	22	
SEPTEMBER	6 (Picnic)	26	Highway Cleanup—19th
OCTOBER	4	24	Harvest Fest
NOVEMBER	1	21	
DECEMBER	6	CHRISTMAS PARTY	

ROCKHOUNDING ADVENTURES

The Fast Track to Obsession

Submitted by Chris Frayer

The other day, my daughter sent me a text showing a picture of two rocks on our patio shelf. One rock resembled a shoe, the other a fish. The caption of her text read "This was your rock collection 5 years ago..." Fast forward to today, and our collection now covers nearly every available surface. Wherever you look, there are rocks. Big rocks, small rocks, cut rocks, tumbled rocks, crystals and crystal plates. Rocks sit on shelves that were built especially for them, grouped together by type and where they were found. Rocks live in coffee cans and empty snack containers in our shed. Rocks line the wall around our yard and in rock gardens standing in contrast to our neighbors manicured flower gardens. And that is just the outside. Step inside and you will find even more rocks. Rocks sit on book cases, in jars, vases and bowls. Rocks and crystals line windowsills and sit clustered on the table as well as the desk. There are rocks that we carry: for healing properties, good luck, good memories or just because they are beautiful. After all, weren't pockets made for rocks? I would bet money that there are at least half a dozen rocks in the car right now.

There is no denying that we are obsessed with rocks. I suspect many of you reading this can relate. The question is; how did we reach this level of obsession so quickly? There were no warning signs. Neither one of us collected rocks as a child, or had an interest in geology. Just a couple years ago we were just another newly retired couple enjoying exploring the state in our RV, so what happened? It all started with a kidney stone and an innocent camping trip. In 2024 Chooch developed a kidney stone that was too large to pass; it had to be blasted. The procedure was done at the Payson hospital. Rather than drive back a few days later for the follow-up, we decided to take our class C and camp near Payson at a place I'd heard about called "Diamond Point". Soon after we got there we began finding small quartz crystals around camp. Short walks into the forest turned up more crystals. Clearing dirt around trees revealed even larger, better formed quartz crystals. We left Diamond Point with several beautiful crystals, and a desire to find more.

Once home, we discovered a whole community of people on YouTube with videos about how and where to find crystals. We made a few return trips to Diamond Point and even booked a trip to Arkansas to dig for the really big quartz crystals. On YouTube, we found a video about a place in Superior where you can dig for a type of obsidian called Apache Tears. We had to try it out! Soon we discovered videos about other mysterious and beautiful rocks to be found in Arizona. The seeds of an addiction were planted.



The natural progression of the budding rock hound led us to "Gem Trails of Arizona" by James R. Mitchell. The book was in our cart and the 'check out' button clicked without the slightest idea of how this decision would alter the course of our lives. Gem Trails of Arizona had rock hounding places close to our 2024-2025 winter camping itinerary. It promised exciting finds like Rhyolite Geodes and Fire Agates. We worked some of these sites into our plans. The samples we found that first year were not very good quality, although we didn't know that at the time. One thing we did know? We were having a blast being out in nature and learning about rocks and minerals. We came home changed. There was no turning back. We were fully and completely obsessed with our new hobby, to the point that we even traded in our practical Nissan sedan for an old Jeep we named "Barney". After all, a sedan can't get you everywhere the rocks are. Our kids thought we had lost our minds. Nope, not lost, just replaced with rocks.

When it came time to plan our 2025-2026 winter camping, we knew we wanted to rock hound as much as possible, and we wanted to see what the West side of the state had to offer. With the help of our Gem Trails book, YouTube, and Google, we planned our winter travels around rock hounding. Between December and March we visited 22 previously discovered rock and mineral locations, some multiple times. We also discovered a few of our own sites. On this adventure, we stayed at several different places, including: BLM Long Term Visitors Area, six different state parks, one county park, three BLM short term camping areas, and one private campground. During that time, we worked our way from the west side of AZ to central and southern AZ. We walked many miles of beautiful desert terrain, sometimes seeing no other people for the entire day. We experienced wildlife, beautiful vistas, spectacular sunsets, and several crested cacti (another one of my obsessions). We visited old friends, made some new ones, enjoyed wonderful weather, ate some delicious food, and returned home with memories that will last a lifetime. And of course LOTS of rocks. 750 lbs worth in fact.

We have learned much about rocks and minerals over the last couple years, thanks in part to this group. We have also learned that there is so much more to learn! Rock hounding is a hobby that gets us out in nature, as well as a bit of exercise. We hope to continue for many years to come. Perhaps the question I should be asking isn't "How did we become so obsessed so quickly?" but "Why did it take us so long to find this wonderful hobby?"

Chris "Christine" and Charles "Chooch" Frayer

AROUND AND ABOUT

Highway Cleanup, Rockin' The Rim, Field Trip, and Meeting Photos

(Many thanks to everyone who contributed photos this month. I wish I could have included them all.)

