



GEM SCOOPS



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Pendleton District Gem and Mineral Society

April 2011

ROCK COLLECTING IN FOREST LAND

Ponderings From the Podium

This is the time of the year that is really tough for Rock Hounds. The weather is so changeable and unpredictable that it is really difficult to make any collecting trip plans much more than a couple of days in advance. This first half of April has been a perfect example. The temperature has been as high as the mid-80's and so low that you didn't want to take a chance getting your feet wet crossing a stream. It has been dry for days at a time, and then suddenly we are hit with a horrific thunderstorm or two or three days straight of chilling rain. It will be calm and clear for a few days and then we're fighting high winds and/or dark and dank clouds.

Finally, you get the weather figured out and head afield to discover that you forgot about the BUGS. When it's warm and sunny the gnats and mosquitoes make their presence know. And don't forget about the Ticks. I encountered my first flat-crawly-thing two weeks ago, so I can attest that they are out and about and active. They are not a critter to be taken lightly, as they can carry and transmit some really nasty ailments. Have fun but "Be careful out there"!

Larry

NEXT MEETING May 18, 2011

Fred Sias will talk about the workshop presented by the SFMS each year at Wildacres and the William Holland School of Lapidary Arts. He will also show pictures of the Facilities and the Classrooms.

APRIL MEETING

DATE: Wednesday, April 20, 2011

PLACE: Clemson-Central Library, 105 Commons Way, Central
(From the intersection of US 123 and SC93, head NE on SC 93 for 2.4 miles. Turn right on Commons Way. Can't miss it!)

TOPIC: Rock Collecting in Public Land

SPEAKER: Round-table Discussion

PROGRAM: The meeting will be about "Rules for mineral collecting and gold panning on public lands." We will have a round table discussion with personnel from the Department of Natural Resources (DNR), Clemson Forestry, the National Forest Service, and, if possible, a representative of the Southeast Federation of Mineralogical Societies.

Refreshments will be served by Brenda Tartaglia at 7:00 p.m.

Visitors are always welcome.

New Trends in Rockhounding by Bill Wetzel

Our hobby has been changed by a number of new laws at both the federal and state levels. We need to have rockhounds declared endangered or they will not survive.

One law makes it illegal to enter natural caves or man made excavations. The reported purpose of the law is to protect the bats. The law does not clarify at what point, if you are digging a hole, that you break the law by being in a man made excavation. At the Ray Mine the rangers presently are attempting to restrict the area that is open to rockhounds, and fill in the shafts, so they will not need to monitor the people or bats. and fill in the shafts, so they will not need to monitor the people or bats.

Other laws make it illegal to remove any artifacts or fossils from any public lands. Public lands include National Parks, State Parks, National Forests,

Continued on Page 2.

Pendleton District Gem and Mineral Society

Minutes of General Meeting March 16, 2011

Location: Central/Clemson
Library Meeting Room

Attendance: 17 including 3
visitors.

President, Larry Boller, called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm and welcomed the visitors.

Refreshments were provided by Wayne and Susan King.

Continued on Page 2.

2011 Officers

President:	Larry Boller	864-296-8077
V.P.:	Ed Overly	864-328-3057
Secretary:	Cecelia Jackson	864-261-3580
Treasurer:	Phyllis Phillips	864-654-8514

2011 Directors

Dave Cicimurri	864-650-7115
Jim Duzenberry	864-654-5741
Fred Sias	864-654-6833
Rich Warner	864-654-0913

General Meeting Minutes (Continued)

Program: Dr. Richard Warner provided a very interesting presentation on a student field study of the Colorado Plateau during last year's Geology 370 course. The presentation included area maps, photos and geologic information collected during this Maymester course. Their journey began in Las Vegas taking students through Zion National Park as well as Navaho land throughout Arizona and New Mexico.

Business Meeting: Previous meeting minutes were approved. The treasurer's report was provided by Boller. Larry informed the membership that he will be providing the Treasurer's report for the foreseeable future because the treasurer, Phyllis Phillips has a scheduling conflict with Wednesday evenings. Per Fred Sias, the liability insurance has been remitted for 2011. Cecelia Jackson, Secretary, collected \$15 annual dues in the absence of the treasurer. Note: The treasurer's report will no longer be included in the GemScoops

Old Business: Larry addressed the issue of Committee Chair vacancies once again. Chair vacancies include the following committees: Field Trip, Door Prize, and Youth. He also indicated that the VP – Ed Overly needs an assistant for the Programs Committee.

Programs: April's program is covered by a round table discussion regarding the varying rules on collecting in National Parks. May's program will be Fred Sias' presentation on programs/training available through Wild Acres and William Holland facilities. June is open. Regina Kerns suggested the possibility of a presentation about radon in the environment. She recently attended a course through OLLI that was very interesting. She will contact the professor to inquire about willingness/availability to provide a program for the June meeting.

Fred addressed the issue of possible tax umbrella status for PDGMS as a member club of SFMS. There was an SFMS board meeting in Augusta, GA in early March. A survey of member clubs was conducted and only 3 clubs responded. As it stands right now, club

tax status will remain a "social" club rather than and "educational" club. PDGMS does not currently conduct workshops that can be considered educational.

New Business: Ted Wallenius conducted an email survey regarding the necessary change in meeting time and place. Many did not respond. For the remainder of 2011 meetings will be held on the third Wednesday of every month from 7-9 at the Central/Clemson Library meeting room.

Regina Kerns (Publicity Committee Chair) will make sure a meeting announcement is published in local newspapers to encourage new membership.

Larry would like to find a media specialist to help Ted Wallenius with the equipment used for programs. Because Ted was out of town, no media equipment was available for Dr. Warner's presentation. Dr. Warner graciously went to retrieve his personal equipment and returned to complete the program.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:50 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Cecelia Jackson,

Secretary

New Trends in Rockhounding

Continued from Page 1

Wilderness Areas, Wildlife Management Areas, Bureau of Land Management Lands, and any other land that the government can acquire or seize to protect these areas from the public.

Most fossils are in soft sedimentary rocks that quickly weather when exposed to the elements. The government has determined that it is in the national interest to allow possibly irreplaceable fossils to disintegrate rather than risk them being collected by a hobbyist.

Another law makes it illegal to remove anything from a National Forest without written permission. Other public lands such as parks and wilderness areas already were protected. Nobody including the rangers know to what degree this law will be enforced.

The reported purpose of these laws are to protect these public lands in their present condition for future generations. Maybe next they will outlaw erosion, weathering, sedimentation, and other geological processes.

During the last year some of the biggest government land grabs in history have occurred. The government is trying to protect American lands from being used by Americans. This massive federal land steal is called America's Great Outdoors Bill of 2010. To keep out the riff raff and undesirables, many public lands have restricted vehicle access. These lands are still open to ALL AMERICANS that can afford private helicopters or have access to publicly funded government transportation.

The newest victim of political correctness is the Rockhound State Park near Deming, New Mexico. This is a harsh, rugged, steep, rocky desert in a little visited area of the county, but it does have some collectable minerals. The 250 acres were donated to the state by Edgar May "with the stipulation that the land be made into a place expressly for rockhounding." In 1966, the state park was established as a place that rockhounds for a fee could hunt and hard rock dig under the desert sun. Unfortunately the state government noticed that some rockhounds were removing the rocks they paid to hunt for. The state argues that "rock collecting contradicts the principle of natural resource protection." Park president Mary Kay Brady worries that, "She's not sure how the park will survive without rockhounding" (since other than rockhounds few people are crazy enough to visit such a god forsaken place).

Joining the American Land Access Association was a good first step for our club. If we do not become more politically active, rock hunting may soon be restricted to our gardens and driveways.

(This article was written by Bill Wetzel for the Western South Carolina Gem and Mineral Society and was published in their April newsletter. Bill is the WESCAGEM field trip Chairman.)