

ALASKA PEBBLE PATTERN

January 2014



Official Bulletin Of The Chugach Gem & Mineral Society

P.O. Box 92027
Anchorage, AK. 99509-2027
<http://www/chugachgms.org/>
find us on facebook too!

The club meets at First United Methodist Church, 725 west 9th Ave. Anchorage, AK. Enter the building from the rear parking lot, south of 8th Avenue between G & H Streets.

BUSINESS MEETING - 2nd Thursday of each month at 7:00 PM.

POTLUCK MEETING - 4th Thursday of each month at 6:30 pm.

For the potluck bring an entrée, side dish, salad, or dessert (plus serving utensil) to share with at least 5 people. Also bring your own plate, silverware and drink.

Most importantly, bring a rock to show!

Annual membership: Individuals - \$20.00; Families (2 or more) - \$25.00

Lifetime membership: Individuals - \$200.00; Families (2 or more) - \$250.00

Bulletin only: \$10.00

CGMS OFFICERS AND CHAIRPERSONS

ELECTED POSITIONS FOR 2014

PRESIDENT: Andres Macias 274-2204

FIRST VICE PRESIDENT: Phillip Elrod 349-5457

SECOND VICE PRESIDENT: Kyle Johnson 520-808-1220

TREASURER: Nancy Danford 694-3288

RECORDING SECRETARY: Marie Motschman 575-7470

SUNSHINE: Dorothy Arnold 279-3876

VOLUNTEER POSITIONS FOR 2014

PROGRAMS: Greg Durocher 337-2553

FEDERATION LIAISON: Tom Cooper 262-9759

FIELD TRIP: Bonnie Hepburn 274-0941

PARLIAMENTARIAN: Norval Kane 243-4648

NEWSLETTER EDITOR: Chris Teutsch 694-6586

MEMBERSHIP: Chris Teutsch 694-6586



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WEBSITES OF THE MONTH

Provided by Greg Durocher

International Gem Society: <http://www.gemsociety.org/>

Dave Doorenbos doing the Annual Seward Polar Bear Jump Off for the American Cancer Society again! You can sponsor him [online](#).

Sleuthing out a 13-Century great eruption from ash in Arctic ice:

<http://www.livescience.com/41170-ancient-volcanic-eruption-discovered.html?cmpid=514645>

Why there aren't more coprolites:

<http://www.livescience.com/41735-cockroaches-ate-dinosaur-poop.html?cmpid=514645>

EDITORS NOTE

By Anita Williams, acting editor, awilliam@alaska.net

Greetings Everyone,

I am filling in for Chris while he is off on vacation, rock hunting in warmer climes so please excuse my primitive methods of putting the Pebble Patter together. Meanwhile warm temps here in Anchorage are making for a messy winter. As we all know, this too will pass. Soon enough spring/summer will arrive, now will melt and rocks will once again be exposed. Let the field trips begin!

Our trip leader Bonnie and a committee of volunteers have been putting together potential

trips for the upcoming season check out the draft schedule on page 11 and see if one or more trips can be put on your “must do” list for this season. Bonnie has included in-town programs to keep us motivated during the non-rockhounding part of the year. These are always fun and interesting so consider participating. The more the merrier. Last year we visited the mineral collection located at the UAA Geology building. This collection of incredible Alaska minerals was put together over many years by Bureau of Mines geologists and was housed in Juneau. Now it is here in Anchorage and open to the public. It is well worth visiting if you are in the area. Also since the main article for the Patter this month is all about organizing your collection, see how the B of M identified their collections.

As mentioned above, included in this issue are two parts of a three part article by Carolyn Stevens about care and maintenance of your mineral, rock, fossil, or other collection. After re-reading the articles I am re-inspired to make sure my collection has identification labels. What a great excuse to get all the rocks out of the boxes and handle them. I do try to have name and location information at the very least on a specimen, but I find that additional information such as when acquired; collected, traded, gift or bought; and price or other associated information is a wonderful memory jogger when visiting are passing on your collection.

If anyone has suggestions or comments about your collection, how about writing a letter to the editor and we’ll get a dialog going. Hope to hear from some of you.

BUSINESS MEETING MINUTES

Thursday January 9, 2014

Chugach Gem & Mineral Society (CGMS) Business Meeting Minutes

~CGMS meeting called to order by President Andre Macias START: 7:03 p.m.

~Marie Motschman read NOV 14, 2013 Business Meeting Minutes. Motion made and seconded to accept minutes as corrected. Motion passed unanimously.

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

***Treasurer:** Nancy Danford reported CGMS is financially solvent.

***Corresponding Secretary:** Nancy Danford distributed all the incoming mail.

***Sunshine Report:** Dorothy Arnold was unavailable.

***Membership:** Greg Durocher requests all members make their dues payments. The current membership is 119. The membership list is being reviewed and purged of those who have not paid.

***Federation Representative:** Tom Cooper had nothing to report but will - email Greg Durocher the Federation highlights.

***Pebble Patter:** Chris Teutsch was unavailable. Anita Williams will be handling the publication for Jan and Feb on Chris’s behalf. Please send articles to Anita.

***Upcoming Trips:** Bonnie Hepburn presented a draft developed by the Trip Committee with two pages of exciting options.

***Website:** Andre Macias stated Phillip Elrod will meet with Adelane and upload the final 2014 trip list.

***Scholarship:** Andre Macias has received no return email from Sonja at UAA regarding the two recipients who are to receive the 2013 scholarships. He'll keep working this issue.

***Science Fair:** The committee will meet later this month.

OLD BUSINESS: None to Report.

NEW BUSINESS:

*Greg Durocher made a motion to tender his resignation as Treasurer. Joe Turnbow Seconded. Greg suggested Nancy Danford accept the duties. Nancy accepted the officer position. Motion passed unanimously.

*The **Museum of Science & Nature** 201 N. Bragaw St., is requesting volunteers to work an event they are holding on Saturday Jan 25th for details, please contact Katch / Judy. 274-2400

IN ADDITION, *CHEMISTRY of BEER and WINE is the Theme of their annual fundraiser to be held April 4 – 7. Purchase tickets in advance at Centertix.

*Of folks completing Greg's informal survey, the status quo for the Spring, Fall, and Rock & Mineral Show Fund-Raisers, at CGMS remains satisfactory.

March 27th will be the Spring Fling Silent Auction and Potluck.

*Louise Gallop passed on. Her executor donated her rock collection to CGMS.

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Meeting adjourned at 8:05 p.m.

Respectfully submitted:
Marie Motschman
CGMS Recording Secretary

Managing your Rock and Mineral Collection

Part 1 (of 3)

By Carolyn Stevens, Editor of *The Alaska Miner*

For the past three years, a rock and mineral show has immediately followed the Alaska Miners Association Convention held each November at the Anchorage Sheraton. Because rock, mineral and fossil collecting is a natural hobby for those involved in geology and the mining industry, there are doubtless many geologists and mining industry folks "out there" in Alaska (including this editor!) that have some beautiful (and valuable) specimens that are stored (uncleaned, untrimmed and unorganized) in garages and cabinets and other out-of-the-way places. This article is included in this issue of *the Alaska Miner* to help interested rock and mineral collectors forge their rock and mineral accumulations into potentially valuable and useful collections. Material for this article is derived from "Rockhounding Arkansas," which is located at the following website:

<http://rockhoundingar.com/collection.html>.

The topics addressed in this article include: 1) Getting serious with your collection, and 2) The importance of labels. For the next couple of months, *the Alaska Miner* will hopefully include two more articles on the subject of building and managing your rock and mineral collection. Next month, the second article will consider the sizes of collectable minerals and the trimming of specimens for value enhancement. The third article will address the cleaning and display of collected specimens.

If you are truly a **collector** and not simply an **accumulator**, you will eventually have to decide what to do with all your rock, mineral and fossil acquisitions. There comes a time when one must decide what is worthwhile to keep, and what must be deemed “yard rock” or “giveaways”. Unless hard decisions are made, each potential collector will remain only an “accumulator” without ever becoming a real “collector”. Collections are, at the very least, labeled properly. At the very best, a collection is well catalogued and properly stored so that a particular specimen can be easily retrieved to show to an interested party. Having specimens readily available for viewing and appreciation yields much of the satisfaction that a real collection should bring. Like artists and photographers, rock and mineral collectors should have only their very best and showiest pieces in display cases. (Ultimately, keeping only the best specimens is how a collection is built.)

Three rather funky “technical?” terms applied by rockhounds when assessing potential specimens at collection sites include “trashite”, “leaverite” and “high grade”. “Trashite” refers to mineral specimens that have no value. These should always be left *in situ* (at the collecting site). “Leaverite” means “leave it right where you found it”! Seriously, picking up specimens of minimum or no value at the collection site wastes time, energy and space that the collector could be applying to specimens of real value. (Of course one learns to be more selective with practice.) As one’s collection grows, the true collector should always aim for quality rather than quantity. “High grade” refers to applying a critical eye to your collection and selecting only the best pieces to keep, while disposing of lesser pieces by selling, swapping or giving them away. Better yet, if “high-grading” is practiced at the collecting site, there will be far less “trashite” or “leaverite” vying with better specimens for your time and space.

Effective labeling of the specimens is very important in a good collection. An unlabeled or mislabeled specimen doesn’t have nearly the value that a properly documented piece does. The information on the label should, at the very least, say what the specimen is and where it came from. The more specific the location information is, the more value it adds to the specimen. Location can be a very important clue in determining what kind of rock or mineral (or fossil) a specimen is if it is unidentified. Other relevant information that may be put on the label includes who the specimen was collected by, the date of collection (and/or acquisition) of that specimen, and other special information about the collecting trip or acquisition circumstances.

Computer-generated labels (with the name of the specimen, the locality, who the collection belongs to, and any other relevant notes) can be filled out by hand with a **permanent** pen in your neatest printing. If there is a good possibility that the label might get separated from the specimen, write a

brief description of the specimen on the label. Many collectors paint white dots on each sample and assign it a code number (written on the specimen) that corresponds to the label. Take care to not make the label so fancy that it detracts from the specimen itself. Heavier weight paper is preferred for labels since humidity may cause lightweight paper to curl. If your labels are printed on lightweight paper, consider gluing them onto heavier cardboard so that they will stand up or lay down properly if they are being displayed at a show.

[Originally published in Vol. 33, no. 7 of *The Alaska Miner* (July, 2005)]

Managing Your Rock and Mineral Collection (Part 2 of 3)

By Carolyn Stevens, Editor of *The Alaska Miner*

Last month, in the first of three articles on “Managing Your Rock and Mineral Collection”, the two subjects discussed were on (1) making choices that will make your specimen accumulation into a collection, and (2) the importance of labeling your specimens. This second article of the series will discuss the sizes of collectable minerals and how to trim specimens to enhance their value. The material for these articles is derived from the “Rockhounding Arkansas” website at <http://rockhoundingar.com/collection.html>.

“STANDARD” SPECIMEN SIZES

Specimens are commonly organized, traded and sold in units called “beer flats”. Beer flats are the two-inch high cardboard boxes that are disposed of once the six-packs have been removed and stocked on the store shelves. These approximately 11” x 17” boxes are ideal for storing all but your largest specimens. These boxes, standardized and accepted among rock collectors, hold commercially available white paper boxes of various standard sizes that are specifically sized to fit within the beer flats. A good way to store your extra specimens is in beer flats. And, if you have many specimens stored this way, you will probably need heavy-duty shelving, like metal shelving of angle iron that can be screwed into wall studs.

Macro Specimens

Several sizes are recognized for collectable specimens. Size is important when you are making decisions about what to collect and how you’re going to do it. Most people have limited space in which to house their collection; therefore the size of what they collect is a serious consideration. 1000 thumbnail specimens, for example, will fit into the same space that only 50 hand specimens will occupy. (If you have unlimited space, of course, then specimen size is not an issue.) If you can’t keep the big pieces, then a perfect alternative is to go for the smaller sizes. Collectable specimen sizes are grouped into two separate categories: Macro specimens and micromounts. “Standard” macro specimens are categorized as **Thumbnails (T/N)**, **Miniatures**, **Hand Specimens** and **Cabinet Specimens**.

Thumbnail-size specimens (abbreviated T/N) must fit into a 1cubic plastic box. (These little commercial plastic boxes are called “perky boxes”; they are excellent for protecting your small specimens and for keeping them neat and clean.) The next size larger than a thumbnail-size specimen is called a **miniature** specimen. This size fits into a 2cubic plastic box. (These plastic boxes are available commercially from Wards or other science or lapidary supply companies.) If the specimen is too large to fit into the 2” box, but is smaller than a grapefruit, then it is considered **hand specimen** size. If the specimen is bigger than a grapefruit, but still small enough to pick up and place on a shelf or in a cabinet, then it’s considered a **cabinet specimen**.

Micromounts

Micromounts (abbreviated M/M) are defined as any mineral that requires magnification for viewing the crystals, no matter what size the matrix may be. A micromount may therefore range between being a tiny chip with good crystals on up to a boulder-sized rock with fine crystals that need magnification for observation. The critical factor determining whether a specimen is a macro specimen or a micromount, therefore, is the magnification factor. If a person really desires to collect the best crystals of any mineral, then one necessarily has to collect micromounts. During the collecting process, you may collect from boulders containing micromount crystals that can be trimmed down later to a more suitable size. Micromount crystals are flowers of the mineral world because the crystal shapes and forms are much more perfect than they are in larger specimens.

TRIMMING SPECIMENS

The purpose of trimming specimens is to remove excess material and improve the overall quality of a specimen by removing damaged areas that detract from the general aesthetics of the piece. Disposing of extra matrix or removing unattractive parts of your specimens will enhance not only the appearance, but also the value of the pieces. Sometimes just effective trimming of a specimen can turn a very ordinary piece into a real showpiece. Effective trimming takes both study and courage, but with practice, the results are very rewarding.

Remember the rockhound terms “trashite” and “leaverite” as defined in the first article? They both refer to essentially worthless specimens that inexperienced or overzealous rockhounds wind up with in their accumulated piles of potential specimens. The author of the “Rockhounding Arkansas” article (from which this material came) suggests that “specimen trimming practice” is an excellent use for the waste material in your collection! After you have finished reading this article, try trimming a pocket of broken crystals out of a piece of waste rock just for the experience.

Initial trimming of specimens should begin in the field. Serious field trimming can employ an 8-pound sledgehammer and a 4-pound crack hammer, if you are willing to haul them to the collection site! (Be sure to wear safety glasses!) You will discover that many materials will not be able to stand the shock of such heavy duty trimming. Learning what materials can and cannot stand the sledgehammer treatment will become much more obvious with experience. Some knowledge of the matrix and its particular nature is essential in the trimming process of each specimen. Though you

will surely ruin some specimens in the learning process, you will also learn how to greatly improve some of your specimens. Do NOT work on a good quality specimen until you have gained some experience in trimming average quality samples.

Trimming Tools

Many different tools can be used in trimming specimens. Simple hammers, various chisels and tile trimmers can be supplemented by screw-type pressure trimmers, hydraulic pressure trimmers, and/or diamond saws. (It should be noted that veteran mineral collectors generally dislike saw-cut surfaces on their specimens. Many geologists, however, consider a sawn surface an advantage. Never trim a specimen just so it will set up nicely; specimen stands are preferable for that purpose.) The variety of useful trimming tools is limited only by one's pocketbook.

C-clamp type trimmers, either screw feed or hydraulic, are available on the internet at: <http://www.rocktrimmer.com>. The smaller one is less than \$100 plus postage, and the larger hydraulic one is about \$600 plus shipping. Other similar C-clamp and I-beam type trimmers are also available at: <http://attminerals.com/equipment.htm>.

The Trimming Process

Matrix has properties that are often quite different than the properties of the collectable minerals formed on or within the matrix. The matrix may be soft and punky, brittle and fractured, compact and extremely hard, or uniform and predictable—or any combination of these characteristics. The strength of the crystals that the trimmer is seeking to recover should be carefully considered. Are they brittle? Do they cleave easily? Are they firmly attached to the matrix? Or is the attachment very fragile? The properties of both matrix and crystals can be easily ascertained by tapping with a rock hammer on a poor quality specimen of the same type.

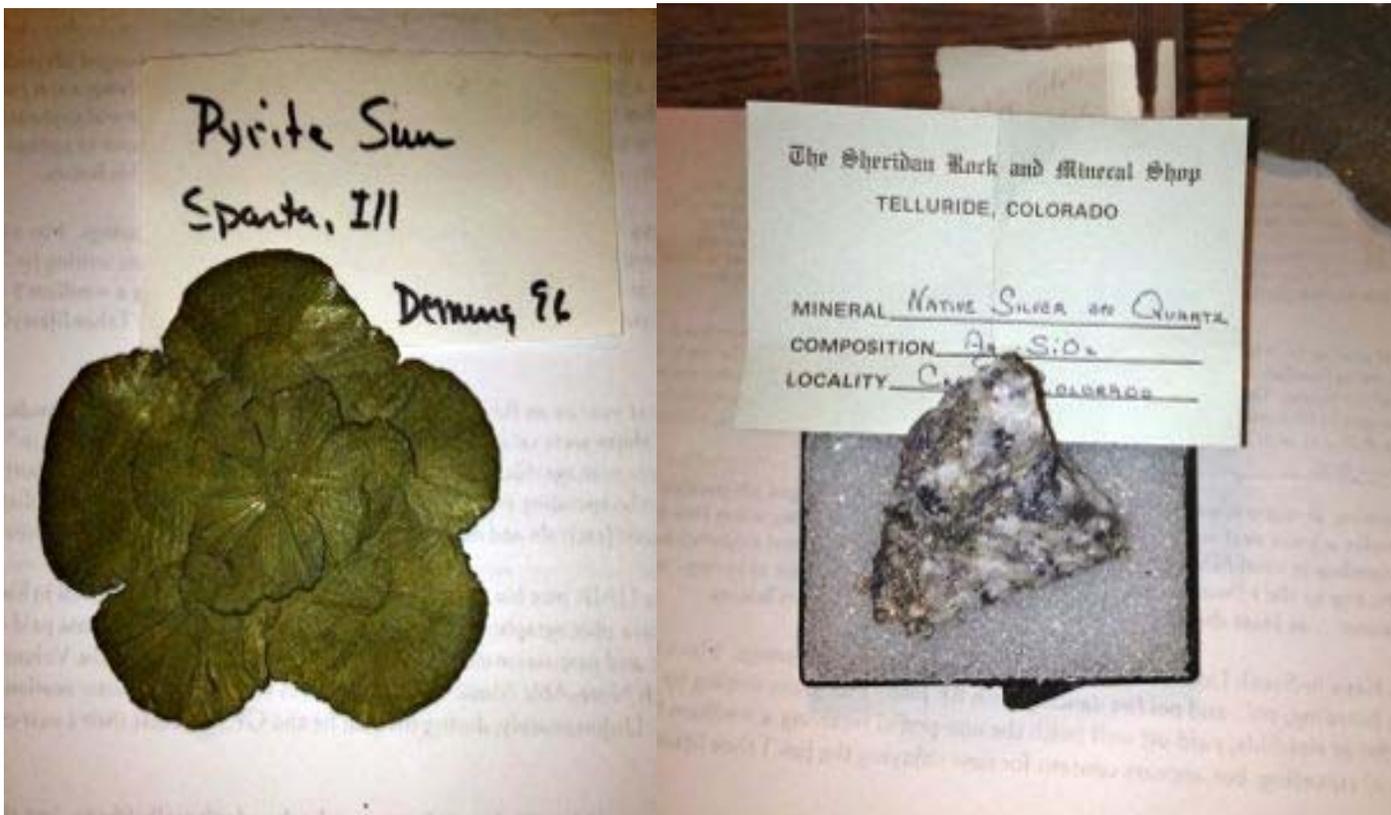
When working on a **hard, uniform matrix** in the field, start with an 8-lb sledgehammer to remove bulk from the potential specimen. Work AWAY from the intended specimen and NOT opposite to it to minimize shock. Once it is reduced to a reasonable size (and depending on the scarcity and delicacy of the crystals), either reduce it further with a 4-pound hammer or wrap it up to take home for the final trimming stages. There the pressure trimmer, chipping hammer (etc.) can be used in a more controlled environment. Should the boulder be too large even to use a sledgehammer on, then it is probably best to work with a hammer and chisel around the edge of the crystal-bearing pocket. Sometimes only a couple of miniature specimens can be recovered from the best part of a crystal pocket that is impossible to collect as a whole. These recovered specimens should be handled very carefully and wrapped in toilet paper (a great wrapping paper for delicate specimens!) for transporting from the collecting site.

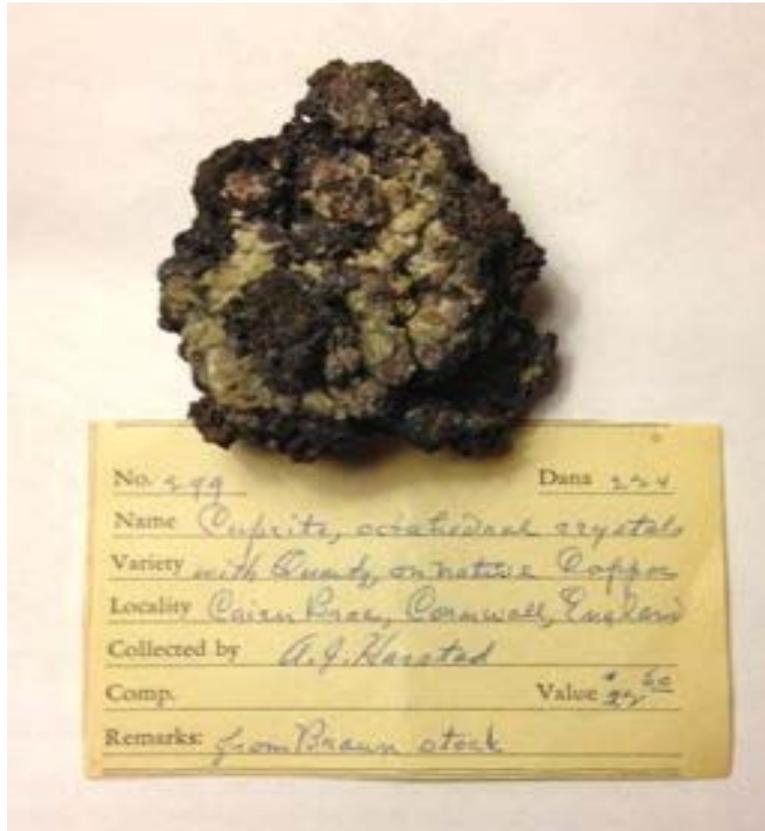
Working with a soft and/or fractured matrix is completely different than working with the hard, uniform matrix. The collector/trimmer must carefully examine the entire specimen. If a crack goes through the crystal pocket, it will be apt to split. But if there is no crack, then light tapping on the back side of the specimen, with strokes going **parallel** to the long direction of the pocket (NOT at right angles to it!) will afford the best chance to chip away excess material.

A pressure trimmer is sometimes essential on some specimens of either hard or soft matrix. This type of trimmer is especially effective because of the highly directional planar pressure (“pinch”) that it applies to the matrix. Several brands of screw-type trimmers are available. The size of specimen that can be effectively worked by such a trimmer is limited by the horizontal distance between the vertical side rods as well as the trimmer’s height. Another limitation may be the strength of the matrix to be broken. If it’s too tough, the central screw’s threading might get stripped, thus ruining the trimmer. Common sense must be used.

Finally, the last trimming trick is knowing when to quit after having done everything reasonably possible to improve the specimen. An expert at trimming can greatly reduce the size of a specimen while simultaneously multiplying its value, sometimes with minimal hammer whacks. No matter how much experience one might have at trimming, however, one should NEVER try trimming someone else’s specimen without their permission!

[Originally published in Vol. 33, no. 8 of *The Alaska Miner* (Vol. 33, no. 8)]





The above photos are some examples of labels. As you can see they range from simple with very basic information to very detailed. The specimen and label from directly is a fine example of 19^h and early 20th century mineral labels from a serious collector. The specimen has a collection number which is also inked onto the sample so the label and sample can be re-united if they get separated. The identification from Dana's Manual of Mineralogy is in the right hand corner. Other information includes the primary mineral name, accessory minerals, vein, mine, location, collector, value, and room for additional comments. The label is as much a collector's item and the mineral specimen.

The rocks, minerals, fossils, and other collectibles will outlive the initial collector. For these items to continue to be invaluable to the future "owners" the responsible thing to do is include at least a name and location with the sample. Actually this isn't just for future owners. I've found that

I do not remember all the information about those samples that I thought I'd never forget. So a label is for the present owner too.

DRAFT 2014 Chugach Gem and Mineral Society Activity List

Club membership is required for all club trips

Date	Days	Activity Name	Leader(s)	Comments
Feb 20	Thurs 6:30 pm	Evening at Nature's Jewels (KF)*	Joe Turnbow	Meet at Joe's shop and talk rocks. Bring a rock or mineral specimen to show off.
Mar 21-23	Fri-Sun	Alaska Science and Engineering Fair (KF)*	Andres Macias	K-12 science fair at East High School. CGMS members help with set-up, teardown and judging. CGMS gives awards for best geology exhibits.
May 10	Sat	Matanuska River (KF)*	Greg Durocher	Look for rocks in Mat River gravel at MP70-ish of the Glenn Hwy. Joint trip with Mat-Su Club.
May 18	Sun	Spring Cleanup at Hatcher Pass (KF)*	Bonnie Hepburn	Meet in Hatcher Pass at the Gold Mint parking lot at 11 am. Free parking for volunteers. Joint trip with Mat-Su Club.
June 5	Thurs 6:30 pm	Anchorage Dunes (KF)*	Greg Durocher	Meet at the Jodhpur parking lot by the motocross area of Kincaid Park. Short uphill hike to the dunes. Bring food to share picnic style.
June 14-15	Sat-Sun	Spirit Rocks	Phillip Elliott	ATV trip. Beachcombing north of Nikiski for spirit rocks. Joint trip with Mat-Su Club.
June 20	Fri 6:30 pm	Rock Hunt and Potluck	Nancy Danford	Hunt for rocks in Nancy's yard. Keep your finds. Bring a dish to share. Nancy provides hot dogs.
TBD (5+ days)		Dalton Hwy	need leader	Rockhounding along the Dalton Hwy till the coastal plain. Joint trip with Mat-Su Club.
July 11-13	Fri-Sun	Boulder Creek	Greg Durocher	ATV/4WD in the Talkeetnas. Agates, fossils. Joint trip with Mat-Su Club.
TBD	One week	Little Nelchina	Phillip Elliott	Make it a weekend trip or go further and stay the full week. ATV/4WD in Talkeetnas. Agates, fossils. Joint trip with Mat-Su Club.
July 22-27	Tue-Sun	Prindle Volcano Expedition	Andres Macias	ATV and backpack to Prindle Volcano. Trip starts in Chicken.
TBD	Sun	Golden Zone Mine	Dorothy Arnold	\$\$\$ adult/\$\$ child for transportation from MP188 Parks. Meet there at 9AM. Make check payable to "Denali Sightseeing Safaris". Could camp nearby on Sat. Joint trip with Prospectors.
TBD	Fri 6:30 pm	Ale, Brats & (Rock) Collection @Doc's (KF)*	Phillip Elrod	Beer, hot grill, and a tour of Phillip's rock collection. Bring something for the grill and/or a dish to share.
Sep 20	Sat	Sixmile Creek Goldpanning	Phillip Elrod	Moil for gold near Hope.
TBD (Fall)		Kodiak Launch Complex and Fossil Beach (KF)*	Greg Durocher	Fly or ferry to Kodiak to watch a missile launch and hunt for fossils. Won't be much lead time b/c of launch logistics.
TBD (Oct 4 or Oct 11)	Sat	4 th Annual Elliotts Summer Wake (KF)*	Phillip Elliott	Come over to the Elliotts for a potluck and bring rocks to show off! Main dish and sodas provided. Joint trip with Mat-Su Club.
Oct 18	Sat	ANC Museum of Science and Nature (KF)*	Anita Williams	Club visit to the museum in Mountain View.
Nov 7-9??	Fri-Sun	AMA Rock and Mineral Show	TBD and committee	Get your displays ready for this year's show!

FUTURE Chugach Gem and Mineral Society Trips

Club membership is required for all club trips

We'll start planning these trips now and keep you posted as they develop.

Date	Days	Activity Name	Leader(s)	Comments
2015		Prince of Wales Island	Phillip Elliott	Details as trip develops. Joint trip with Mat-Su Club.
2015 or 2016		UP Michigan Copper	Greg Durocher	Details as trip develops. Joint trip with Mat-Su Club.