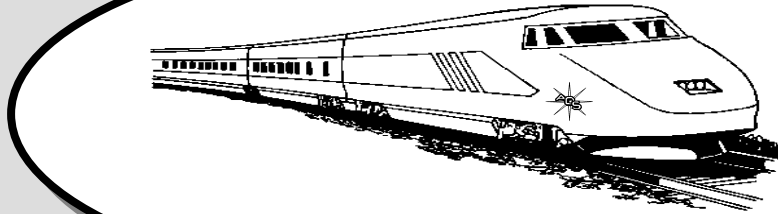


The Opal Express

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Members Only Website Password

To log onto the website's members only area at: [http://opalsociety.org/aos/members only area.htm](http://opalsociety.org/aos/members_only_area.htm) type: Name: "member" and Password: "crystal".

Sept. Speaker – Jim Pisani on Tecopa Opal

Jim Pisani will give a slide presentation on the Tecopa Opal Fields in California. He will discuss the locale, area history, collecting, and will have samples of Tecopa opal for viewing.

Aug. Recap – LaVerne Christenson on Art Clay Silver

LaVerne Christenson gave an excellent demonstration on Art Clay Silver. She easily showed the AOS how to use silver art clay, being a certified instructor for Art Clay Silver and is a signature member of the Art Clay Society. She also has a number of years experience in jewelry fabrication, lost wax casting, forging, forming, and lapidary.

LaVerne described how this newer versions of metal clay have much less shrinkage after firing and has become quite popular among jewelry artists. She described how Art Clay



LaVerne Christenson

It's Coming!
Mark Your Calendar!
The American Opal Society's 42nd Annual
OPAL & GEM SHOW
The Largest Opal Show in USA!
Sat. & Sun., November 7 & 8, 2009
Saturday 10AM - 6PM
Sunday 10 AM - 5PM

Opal and Gem Dealers from around the USA and Australia.

Rough and Cut Opals; other gemstones; jewelry & supplies.

Huge Raffle many prizes of gemstones, jewelry, tools, etc.

Free Opal Seminars on Saturday with Paid Admission.

Free Demonstrations on gem cutting, jewelry making, etc.

Brand New Location!

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<http://whitehouseeventcenter.com>
Located at Hobby City

For more information, contact:

Gene LeVan

Phone: (562) 621-1805, e-mail: fineblackopal@sprynet.com

Jay Carey

Phone: (714) 525-7635, e-mail: jaycarey@charter.net

Silver is a form of silver ground into tiny microns of silver and mixed with a small amount of water and an organic binder. She showed how an artist can mold it into pieces that are then fired in a kiln which burns off the binder and water to leave an article of fine silver. She demonstrated how the clay, because it is flexible and able to take an imprint, allowed the artist to make complicated patterns just by pressing an object with that pattern onto the clay. She also demonstrated how duplicate an object by making a mold and then filling that mold with the clay. LaVerne showed how excess and waste clay can be collected and recycled since it is a precious metal.

In general, LaVerne showed that Silver Art Clay has enabled the artist to become more versatile in what they can create. Thanks LaVerne!

Oregon Prospector Finds Opals in Them Thar Hills

July 20, 2008

By Associated Press

BAKER CITY, Ore. (AP) -- Brian Bolin was a down-on-his-luck would-be gold prospector last September when he kicked a rock and something shiny caught his eye. But it wasn't gold.

After sending the rock to a mineral lab in Canada, Bolin claimed he had literally stumbled over gem-quality opals.

"At first we were disappointed it wasn't gold, until we found out opal is the second-highest selling gem stone in the world," he said.

Bolin got to work over the winter, researching opals. His family filed a mining claim, called the Red Fern Load, in the area where the rock was discovered.

And he said he found more of the opal-embedded rocks. Bolin and his family decided to go public with their find this past week, before the Miners Jubilee in Baker City.

For visitors to the annual celebration, Bolin told the Baker City Herald he's got one message: "If it can happen to me, it can happen to you."

However, he's not giving too much away: the location where the opals were found is still a secret.

Bolin said he was living in a barn in Arizona when his father called and invited him to come to Baker City and do some prospecting.

He discovered that miners apparently unearthed the opal-bearing rocks while placer mining for gold. They unknowingly exposed at least four veins of opals.

"We found a piece of opal the size of a kitchen table that someone had blasted with a shotgun," Bolin said. "They didn't know what it was. It was a very rare form of opal. It was a form of opal that was thought to be extinct. A lot of people have walked past it. They probably thought it was quartz."

Don McClure, owner of Don's Jewelry in Baker City, said Bolin brought in several cut opals and had him set them in jewelry. One pendant featured a 10-carat opal Contra luz stone.

McClure said Bolin has also brought in samples of what appear to be sapphires and diamonds.

"He seems to have many different finds in the mine he's got out there," McClure said.

McClure said the Bolins have apparently found a number of kimberlite volcanic pipes, which help bring gems to the surface. The potential for finding such gems could trigger a new mining era in Baker County.

"If he gets the right people behind him with the right marketing plan, this could be a very big thing for Baker County," McClure said.

Since the initial discovery, Bolin said his family has filed seven claims and they expect to file three more. The claims are on Bureau of Land Management land. They were filed through the county, the state, and the U.S. Department of Interior and BLM.

"When we are done mining, the land reverts to traditional uses primarily for grazing livestock," Bolin said.

Because of the high cost of mining, including obtaining bonding required by BLM to guarantee mined land is returned to its natural state, Bolin said he and his father and brother are looking for investors.

And Bolin said he's hoping news of their opal discovery will spur other people to go out and look.

Interesting story – I can believe that a new opal deposit being found in Oregon; but all the talk about diamonds and sapphires lets me believe that the story is probably a hoax. The Editor

Oregon Opal

David Federman

To most gem connoisseurs, opal means Australia and almost no place else. The few that know of American's role as an opal

producer may have seen some of the beautiful black opals from Virgin Valley, Nevada, that collectors regard as highly as stones from Lightning Ridge, Australia.

Yet the fact that Oregon has for the past few years rivaled Nevada as an opal producer is still pretty much of a secret, even in cognoscenti circles. And it isn't because the state is a newcomer to the opal scene. Opal mining was first reported there nearly a century ago and has been going on, albeit sporadically, ever since. Evidently, prior production was so slim that no one took Oregon seriously—no matter how highly they regarded specimen stones. Mention isn't even made of the state as an opal source in the 1987 edition of the Color Encyclopedia of Gemstones by Joel Arem, a major gem locality reference work.

Nonetheless, Oregon opal is finally starting to attract the attention of collectors.

Oregon opal has already captured a small but devout following among gem and mineral buffs with a taste for lapidary art. Impressive carvings by Kevin Lane Smith almost singlehandedly gained the first serious recognition for Oregon opal by highlighting both the gemological and aesthetic diversity of this material. The trouble was that Smith's immense talent nearly overshadowed the importance of the material on which his reputation stood. It was as if a paint maker had hired a brilliant unknown by the name of Pablo Picasso to help it make a name for itself and the unknown made a bigger name for himself than the company.



Before he became as famous as he is today, Smith devoted his life to popularizing Oregon opal. In 1987, he spent one half of his working life cutting it, the other half mining it at Opal Butte in northeastern Oregon's Blue Mountain Range. Gradually, he focused more on cutting, less on mining. That left Dale Huett, the mine's owner, to run things by himself until 1992 when he had to hire people to help him dig for geodes, the large nodules of stone whose cavities are sometimes lined with crystals or mineral material), in which the opal is found.

Like all opal deposits, Opal Butte produces a certain percentage of material that is prone to cracking (opal dealers call it "crazing") as a result of dehydration. "For the most part, it is our yellows, oranges and reds that are the troublemakers," says Huett. To ferret out unstable from stable material, some crazing-prone pieces of cuttable opal are cured by heating at 150 degrees Fahrenheit for eight hours. A decrease in the number of crackups has Huett optimistic that the percentage of unstable material is declining as he digs deeper into his mountain deposit.

When Huett first started mining at Opal Butte, which is at an elevation of 4,700 feet, in 1987, digging stretched from late spring to early fall when the area is free of snow. But as sorting, selling and marketing have taken a bigger bite of his time, Huett has had to cut back mining to two months a year, which is still ample time to accumulate the new inventory he needs. But it might not be if Oregon Opal becomes a U.S. gemstone staple like Arizona peridot.

At present, nearly 40 percent of the cuttable material from Opal Butte is of what is called "hyalite" opal. This is a transparent to translucent variety with a soft blue sheen, reminiscent of the milder shades of Sri Lankan moonstone. This distinctive color has been dubbed "ghost blue." Almost 80 percent of this hyalite is faceted into rounds and ovals and the remained cut as cabochons.

Another 30 percent or so of Opal Butte production is of rainbow, or color-play, opal. Unlike Australian opal, whose individual colors are usually distinguishable to some degree from one another, this opal is comprised of color particles so fine and tiny they merge and form a prismatic wash. Of this material, most, around 80 percent,

September 2009

looks best in cabochon form, especially when cut in larger sizes to optimize color effects. The rest is faceted.

The last variety of Opal Butte material of interest are the yellows, oranges and reds that are similar in appearance to Mexican fire opal. Of this variety, yellows are the most abundant and reds the least.

For carving lovers, Opal Butte has Contra Luz opal whose holographic color-smears appear mysteriously inside otherwise transparent stones when held up to the light.

From <http://www.modernjeweler.com>

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More about Mexican Fire Opals

From *The Orchid Digest*, <http://www.Ganoksin.com>

Feb 12 & 13, 2009

From Kevin P. Kelly

Hi

I've been avidly reading these recent posts about opals on Orchid. Please, if you have the time, can you direct me to any online sites or books that may help me understand a little bit more about Mexican fire opals.

First of all, as you see I've redirected this to Orchid. I hope you don't mind. I did delete some things that might identify you, just in case. This forum is for sharing information; your question may have a more general interest than you think.

I wish I could have been there (Queretaro). I have less experience with fire opal than other opal; but I love it. As with other opal there's an enormous range of quality. I have a fire opal cab with play of color; I've never seen another like it. That doesn't exclude the possibility of there being another. Last year I saw some work by Patty Bole, who is a wonderful jeweler from Maine, I think. She used some fire opal in ERs that were so special in their color I had to ask what the stone was.

I've also seen and have some Mexican opal in rhyolite that doesn't 'do' it for me. Much, probably all, of the value is in the eye of the beholder. The "opaque orange with multicolored, flashy flakes" you mention could be something special.

But, in spite of what frequently pops up on Orchid one has to be there, to have the stone in question in ones hands to even attempt a valuation or an ID.

As for specifics get a copy of "Gem Cutting" by John Sinkankas. It covers all the basics of gems and is the most accurate source that I know of. I don't know of any book specifically covering 'fire opal'. But you could go to the card catalog of your local library if it has inter-library loans and check out the on-line catalog, a great resource. Value is also in the eye of the beholder. It's auction value; meaning it's worth whatever one is willing to pay. There's a more standard system for diamonds because there's a rigorous grading system and there are a gazillion diamonds sold annually. Makes it easier to determine value 'cause there are lots of 'comps'. The beauty and value of opal is there are so many variables. It's also the reason it's difficult to price.

The biggest stone market in the world is probably Tucson and there are many fire opal dealers there. It's an opportunity to see a great many fire opals and get some idea of prices. It's the best experience there is if you can go. Knowledge of gem material is cumulative; the more you see the more discriminating you become. I took your question to be specifically about 'fire opal' so I haven't gone beyond that particular stone.

HTH KPK

Rick Martin

February 13, 2009

I've been avidly reading these recent posts about opals on Orchid. Please, if you have the time, can you direct me to any online sites or books that may help me understand a little bit more about Mexican fire opals.

I don't wish to bore anyone but first let's discuss the definition of "Fire Opal." Fire Opal is red, orange or yellow opal, generally without play of color. It was so named because its body color reminded people of flames.

Opal with play of color should be called Precious Opal although for years it has popularly been called fire opal. Very confusing. Orange opals from Mexico with play of color are sometimes called Precious Orange Crystal Opal so the terminology is difficult. I own a pair that are mind-bogglingly bright and colorful. Fire opals (without play of color) come not only from Mexico, the most famous, but from places like Nevada, Idaho, Oregon, Brazil, Tanzania, Australia and probably elsewhere.

If you're looking for an inexpensive but comprehensive book about opal buy Fred Ward's Gem Series volume "Opals." It has a chapter devoted entirely to Mexican Fire Opals. If you want a real opal education pony up the \$40 or \$50 for the new Lithographie, LLC book "Opal: the Phenomenal Gemstone." Excellent! (ISBN 978-0-9790998-0-9)

Mexican precious opal with play of color that's cut as part of its native buff or orangy rhyolite matrix is known as "Cantera Opal." Cantera means "quarry," and such stones come from quarries at Magdalena, Queretaro and possibly other Mexican locations. Removing such opals from their matrix can easily break them so they are cut together as one stone.

Beware: I noticed a lot of phony Canteras with man-made opal for sale to tourists on a cruise to the Mexican Riviera a few years ago. Some natural Cantera opals can be very beautiful: I own a natural black Cantera opal I wouldn't part with (well, make me an offer I can't refuse). Many colored gems (not just opals) sold at high-volume tourist locations in Mexico are synthetics or simulants. I noticed lots of synthetic amethyst and "reconstituted" lapis, turquoise, malachite/chrysocolla, etc. for sale.

Buyers should be aware that a new synthetic fire opal marketed as "MexiFire" is currently being sold, as is a synthetic Peruvian blue opal called "PeruBlu." I'm not sure why anyone would bother since natural stones are fairly abundant and reasonably priced but a Thai company has. Details here: <http://tinyurl.com/bdops7>
Rick Martin www.artcutgems.com

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Need Help with Dopping Wax Problem

From LA Rocks

(<http://tech.groups.yahoo.com/group/LA-Rocks/message/9045>)

Mar 31, 2009 to April 1 2009

[LA-Rocks] From crestoncoyote

Hello Group:

I am having problems with my black dop wax not sticking to the stone (it sticks nicely to the wooden dopstick.) Since I have had similar problems in the past with green and red dop wax, I am thinking there may be something I am doing wrong or else there is something about the nature of dop wax of which I am not aware. My wax was purchased two or three years ago at a rock show and I use a diamond Pacific dop wax pot to heat and melt the wax (presumably to the correct temperature - although I have the same problem when I heat it with a propane torch.) I keep the dop-pot covered when not in use to keep out any dust or debris.

Does dop wax get old and lose effectiveness?

Does it lose effectiveness by being melted too many times in the dop-pot?

Is there a trick (add a drop of vinegar, dance a jig, recite a poem) that I need to know???

HELP! I can't figure it out and I have lost a few good stones from flying off the dopstick while they were being sanded. Any advice will be much appreciated!

Jim

From wffiii

Hi Jim,

I had a batch of wax stop melting once. Someone at the club suggested I may have gotten some polish in the wax. Since I use cat food cans for holding the wax, I just chucked the can of wax in the trash.

Are your dop sticks dry when you dop? A wet stick can lead to air bubbles in the wax. We put a little shellac on the stone before dopping.

Hope this helps. Regards,
-Frank

From [kennethronney](#)

If you follow these steps, you should not have problems with your stone adhering to the dop wax:

First, the stone must be completely clean and oil free. Use soap and water or acetone or lacquer thinner to remove oil from the stone. Your cleaning method will depend on the type of cutting fluid, type of stone, and the stone's porosity. After cleaning, water should not bead up on the stone, indicating the stone is completely oil-free.

Choose a dop stick that is as large as possible to use with your stone. The dop stick diameter should be at least 50 percent of the diameter of the stone. 75 percent is better. This gives more area for adhesion and also minimizes bending forces on the dop wax.

Next, the stone must be heated for wax to stick. Are you heating the stone before putting it on the hot wax? That is a critical step. Put the stone on the flat surface of the wax heater; face down, with a small bit of wax on the back side of the stone. When the small bit of wax starts to melt, the stone is hot enough to dop properly.

Now, dip the dop stick in the hot wax, gather a good sized glob of wax and press it onto the back of the stone. Center the stick as accurately as possible on the back of the stone, and align it perpendicular to the rear of the stone.

The stone is very hot now, so be careful. As you lift the stone off the heating area, hold the stick straight up and you will be able to manipulate the stone to get it centered and at a perfect right angle to the stick. Wet your fingers and form the wax into a fillet around the base of the stone, giving more support.

Blow on the stone and wax to cool it off. The wax will harden rapidly. After the wax is no longer soft, set the dopped stone aside and let it cool further.

When the stone has cooled to room temperature, apply medium pressure on it with your fingers, to verify adhesion. If the stone has been dopped properly, it will not come off the stick easily.

After the stone is completely finished, I have found the best way to remove the dop stick is to place the stone in the freezer for about 5 minutes. The stone and the wax have different rates of thermal expansion, and when the wax and stone are cooled, stress is placed on the wax which loosens it. After 5 minutes in the freezer, the stone should pop off the end of the dop stick with finger pressure.

I hope this helps you out.

Ken

From [walkingsticks19](#)

If the wax is melting it will stick, the main key is to heat the stone also, stick the waxed dop to the heated stone and set aside undisturbed until cool, both the stone and stick must be dry also.

Joel

From [crestoncoyote](#)

Thanks to all of you who responded to my dop wax question (and there were a LOT of you!) Numerous issues were identified and I think I may have been guilty of not doing any of them correctly! I was heating the stone - but just a little and definitely not enough. I cut with oil in my trim saw and was not doing a proper job of cleaning (now I am using acetone to really get it clean). There were some really excellent additional suggestions on how to determine if stone is hot enough (chip of dop wax on the stone will melt when the stone is hot enough, etc). this is a fantastic forum and I thank everyone for their time and kind advice.

Jim

From [dirtyanddust](#).

I didn't see the first note but I have two suggestions from experience. 1. Use lacquer thinner or acetone to clean the cab before dopping. 2. If you work in a cold shop the rock will pop off. I had to switch to epoxy in mine.

Doug on the High Desert

New Acquisitions - Opal

Smithsonian Natural History Museum, Washington D.C.

Photography by Ken Larsen. Gift of Opalinda and EyaOpal, 2009.



Figure 1



Figure 2

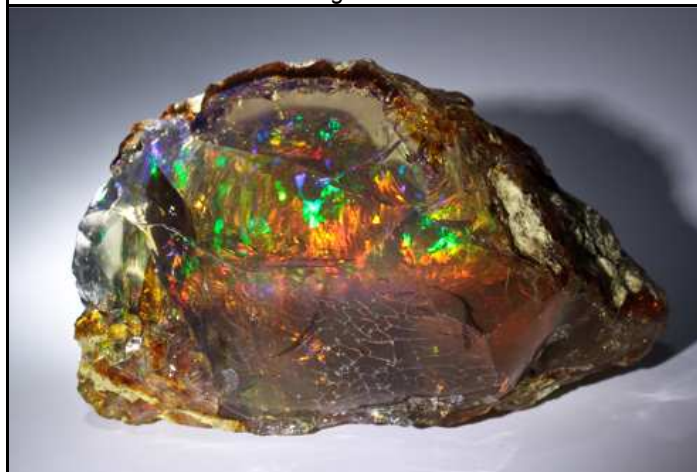


Figure 3

Opals from Mezezo have been well-known for more than 10 years for their play-of-color chocolate opals. Other deposits discovered more recently from Welo yield precious white, fire, crystal and sometimes black opals. The opals you see here are a chocolate opal from Mezezo (8.86 ct) (Figure 1), and a crystal opal (33.15 ct) (Figure 2) and rough specimen (643.9 ct) (Figure 3) from Welo. Gem opal consists of tiny silica spheres tightly packed together; the voids or spaces between the spheres contain air or water. The play-of-color in opal is due to the orderly arrangement of these spheres acting like a diffraction grating, breaking visible white light in to separate colors. Opals are typically cut en cabochon or polished free-form to best show the play-of-colors. These beautiful Ethiopian opals are a wonderful addition and upgrade to the National Gem Collection and the first from Welo.

From, <http://mineralsciences.si.edu>

Southern California Man Finds Gold Nugget Worth \$10,000

*KTLA News
May 29, 2009*



*\$10,000 Gold Nugget
(Courtesy Ventura County Star)*

MOORPARK -- Terry Hughes' seven-year hobby may have paid off big time after he found a rare gold nugget with an estimated value of \$10,000.

The 62-year-old Moorpark resident has been searching the California desert for years in hopes of finding the big one. On Memorial Day, he apparently did just that. He spotted a rare 8.7-ounce gold nugget.

Hughes says others were hunting for gold as well, but he was alone when his metal detector signaled a find.

On Thursday, he took it to Patrick Keene, co-owner of Keene Engineering, for the official weigh-in.

Keene Engineering is one of the world's largest suppliers of portable mining equipment.

A nugget that big is extremely rare, Keene said.

Hughes began searching for gold as a hobby years ago after his oldest son found a "dot of gold" during an outing at Lake Isabella. That's when he says he got the "gold fever."

Until now, the largest nugget Hughes had unearthed was a 1-ounce, 7-pennyweight nugget found the week between Christmas and New Year's.

Keene said that to his knowledge, Hughes' latest find is the largest piece to come out of the desert in the last 20 years.

Hughes says he's received collectors' value estimates as high as \$20,000 on his nugget. But, he has no plans to cash in. He says he values the treasure of the find more than it's worth.

Gold in the United States is primarily found in California, Alaska and Oregon but is also unearthed in other southwestern states.

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How to Care For Opal Jewelry Advice from a Jeweler, Opal Miner, Opal Cutter and Polisher

By Gary Hocking

Today one of my customers who had bought a \$1,000 opal ring from me told me that her friends had told her to keep her opal ring in a solution of clear mineral oil.

Hmmm! Please don't do that. I have also heard lots of other advice such as keep your opals in water, vinegar, and other solutions. Rub soluble oil on them is another terrible thing that I have heard given as advice.

Some twelve years ago I spent about three months with George Roberts who still cuts and facets gemstones for a living like he has been doing for a very long time. George is a miner and gemologist so he knows what he is talking about when it comes to opals.

When George put an opal in a small ultrasonic machine I was horrified. All that I had heard was that this would surely destroy the opal. George told me that he had never broken one this way.

As a rule I don't tempt fate by doing that anymore but I did some experiments on opals because I wanted to see first hand what would happen when I did.

I got every conceivable solution that I thought people might put opals in and I put them in jars. I put a couple of opals in citric acid, a few more in vinegar, some more in oils, in pickling solutions, numerous solvents such as acetone, then petrol, methylated spirits and the list goes on. I left them there for weeks, months and years and some are still in their solutions.

The result? Nothing happened to the opals! Or, at least on a level that I could perceive.

As an opal miner I can tell you that when you are lucky enough to find opal it is in dry opal dirt, not soggy wet stuff. The mines are generally dry and the temperature is pleasant. The opals have been there like that for millions and millions of years so why should anyone think that they need to be put in oil or some other solution?

As an opal cutter I can tell you what I have been taught to do. In order to cut an opal you need to put it on a stick so that you can hold it to the grinding wheel. We heat the opal up a little and apply hot wax and push the stick and the opal together. After cutting we put the opal in the freezer for a couple of hours so that the wax and the opal contract differently and come apart. In my opinion that is pretty harsh treatment but the opal survives all of this and survives in those horrible solutions that I experimented with.

Here is what my research eventually led me to believe is the best way to care for opal jewelry.

1. Keep it apart from your other jewelry so that it does not get scratched. Abrasion of metal against an opal stone will surely scratch and damage it.
2. Occasionally clean it with a soft brush, perhaps the softest toothbrush in a solution of luke warm water and very mild detergent. Then rinse and lightly dry with an absorbent cloth but don't rub it dry.
3. If your opals are doublets or inlays then they are held in place with glue so wash them only when necessary.
4. Don't bother putting any solutions on your opals as what ever you use will be absorbed into the stone and may do more harm that good.

But they are reasonably hardy and they can be repaired and re-polished so enjoy them. People say they like being worn. I think that's true as they are exposed to temperatures and conditions that your body is used to and this suits opals as well.

Gary Hocking is an Australian manufacturing jeweler who has his own website: <http://www.opaljewelryexpress.com> He will make you a beautiful piece of custom opal jewelry. You may copy and distribute this article as long as you keep the bio and a live link to his website.

Rockhounding in State Parks & BLM Mining-Related Fees

By John Martin

AFMS Conservation & Legislation Committee

Rockhounding in California State Parks

During the last several months there have been several incidences where rockhounds have had an encounter with an authority figure over collecting in a California State Park or on a California State Beach. After lengthy searches on the internet, hours of reading regulations and several trips to the local State Senator's office, there is light at the end of the tunnel, and it is not the headlight of the approaching train.

Yes, Virginia, there really is rock collecting within the boundaries of California State Parks and California State Beaches. The collecting regulations are intermixed within several dozen California Code of Regulations documents, which give explicit collecting requirements and conditions. This does not mean that collecting is allowed at all parks and beaches nor does it exclude collecting from all parks and beaches. As it turns out, each unit within the California State Parks System, through its own regulatory processes, may, can and will regulate rockhounding within its own boundaries within the regulations established at the state level.

During the search of the regulations covering rockhounding, it was discovered that there is no actual reference to the collecting of paleontological resources, such as fossils, petrified bone or petrified wood, nor is there any exclusion for these. So, during visits to California State Parks and Beaches for rockhounding activities, just keep in mind their definition of rockhounding as defined in the California Code of Regulations.

There are over 200 units within the California State Parks System, and therefore there could be over 200 different collecting regulations. After surfing several State Park and State Beach web sites, I discovered no consistency in published unit regulations. For example, Hearst San Simeon State Park allows rockhounding as published in the California Code of Regulations; Carpinteria, El Capitan and Gaviota State Beach web sites had no mention of rockhound opportunities.

Some of the State Park web sites included Providence Mountains, which includes Mitchell Caverns, Silverwood Lake, which borders the National Forrest, had no mention of rockhound collecting while Red Rock Canyon State Park states that "All plant, animal, natural and cultural features are protected. Collection is prohibited without a permit."

So to be on the safe side and to avoid any confrontation with that big guy with the gun, check at the entrance to the park for the bulletin board where there will be the "Posting of Notices" where special instructions pertaining to areas where activities are curtailed or restricted are to be found for the particular state park or beach.

If there is no posting of restrictions, check with park personnel before collecting to avoid loosing the collected specimens or worse yet, receiving a citation from a park ranger where the fine could be between \$10 and \$1,000 or more.

Just remember to follow the California Code of Regulations for Rockhounding and you should be safe. "Check before you collect." Below is the California Code of Regulations pertaining to the California State Parks and Beaches to serve as a guide while rockhounding.

California Code Of Regulations

Title 14. Natural Resources

Div. 3. Dept. Of Parks & Recreation

Chapter 1. General

§ 4307. Geological Features.

(a) No person shall destroy, disturb, mutilate, or remove earth, sand, gravel, oil, minerals, rocks, paleontological features, or features of caves.

(b) Rockhounding may be permitted as defined in Section 4301(v).

§ 4308. Archaeological Features.

No person shall remove, injure, disfigure, deface, or destroy any object of archaeological, or historical interest or value.

§ 4309. Special Permits.

The Department may grant a permit to remove, treat, disturb, or destroy plants or animals or geological, historical, archaeological or paleontological materials; and any person who has been properly granted such a permit shall to that extent not be liable for prosecution for violation of the foregoing.

CALIFORNIA CODE OF REGULATIONS

TITLE 14. NATURAL RESOURCES

DIV. 3. DEPT. OF PARKS & RECREATION

CHAPTER 1. GENERAL

§ 4301. Definitions.

(i) Posting of Notices. The term "posted" as used herein, unless otherwise indicated, shall mean and require that the Department shall set aside at the district headquarters and at the unit affected and in a location convenient to the general public, a bulletin board or similar device upon which shall be posted all special instructions, orders, pertaining to units of the district including but not limited to special hours of operation, swimming and boating restrictions, hunting and camping restrictions, and special instructions pertaining to areas where activities are curtailed or restricted. Proof of posting shall be filed in the offices of the division chiefs or the Sacramento California Office of the Division of Off-Highway Motor Vehicle Recreation.

(t) Unit. Unit means any named and classified unit under control of the Department of Parks and Recreation, as well as any Department projects which have not yet been named or classified.

(v) Rockhounding is defined as being the recreational gathering of stones and minerals found occurring naturally on the undisturbed surface of the land, including panning for gold in the natural water-washed gravel of streams.

(w) Float Material is defined as materials only occurring naturally on the surface of the land.

Title 14. Natural Resources

Div. 3. Dept. Of Parks & Recreation

Chapter 6. Provisions Limited To Specific Units

§ 4611. Rockhounding.

(a) Rockhounding is authorized by Section 5001.65 of the Public Resources Code.

(b) Units and portions thereof open for Rockhounding will be posted in accordance with Section 4301(i).

(c) Commercial Use. Rocks or mineral specimens gathered within a unit may not be sold or used commercially for the production of profit.

(d) Maximum Take. One person may gather, in one day in one unit, not more than 15 pounds of mineralogical material or not more than one specimen plus 15 pounds of mineralogical material.

(e) Use of Tools. Tools, except goldpans to be used in gold panning, may not be used in rockhounding within a unit.

(f) Areas for Swimming and Boating. In state recreation areas rockhounding may not be practiced in areas designated for swimming or for boat launching.

(g) Areas Limited for Collecting. In state recreation areas rockhounding is limited to beaches which lie within the jurisdiction of the Department and within the wave action zone on lakes, bays, reservoirs, or on the ocean, and to the beaches or gravel bars which are subject to annual flooding on streams.

(h) Indian Artifacts. Rockhounding in a unit specifically does not include the gathering of Indian arrowheads, Indian stone tools, or other archeological specimens, even when such specimens may be found occurring naturally on the surface.

(i) Panning for Gold. Panning for gold is considered to be "rockhounding" as the term is applied in the Department. The goldpan is the only exception permitted to the exclusion of tools from rockhounding in a unit as provided in Section 4610.5. Muddy water from panning operations must not be visible more than 20 feet from the panning operation.

California State Beach Regulations General Regulations (14 Cal. Code of Regs.) 6) Geological Features. No person shall destroy, disturb, mutilate, or remove earth, sand, gravel, oil, minerals, rocks, paleontological features, or features of caves except rockhounding may be permitted as defined and delineated in Sections 4611 (a) through (i) (14 Cal. Code of Regs. 4307). 7) Archaeological Features. No person shall remove, injure, disfigure, deface, or destroy any object of archaeological or historical interest or value (14 Cal. Code of Regs. 4308).

BLM Announces Adjustments to Mining-Related Location & Annual Maintenance Fees

In June, the Bureau of Land Management published in the Federal Register a notice that it is adjusting for inflation its fees for the location (or "staking") and maintenance of unpatented mining claims, mill sites, and tunnel sites. The location fee will increase from \$30 to \$34 and the maintenance fee will rise from \$125 to \$140 for such unpatented claims, in which no federal land has been transferred to the individual or company staking the claim.

The adjusted fees are due on or before September 1, 2009. Mining claimants must pay the new location fee for any mining claim or site located after the effective date of this final rule, which is today (June 29, 2009). Those who have already submitted maintenance fees for the 2010 maintenance year will be given an opportunity to pay the additional amount without penalty upon notice from the BLM.

Since Fiscal Year 1993, mining claimants staking new claims or sites have been required to pay a one-time location fee. Claimants must also pay an annual "maintenance" fee in lieu of performing annual assessment work and making annual filings.

In accordance with the Mining Law of 1872, as amended, and in light of recent related regulatory actions, the BLM is announcing today a new final rule that establishes a regular schedule for adjusting mining-related location and annual maintenance fees. Specifically, the new rule authorizes adjustments to these fees to reflect changes in the Consumer Price Index every five years after September 10, 1993, or more frequently if the Secretary of the Interior determines an adjustment to be reasonable.

The BLM has not adjusted location and maintenance fees since 2004. The adjustments made in this final rule are based on the change in the Consumer Price Index from December 31, 2003, through December 31, 2008, as reported by the Bureau of Labor Statistics.

The link to the final rule in the Federal Register is: <http://edocket.access.gpo.gov/2009/pdf/E9-15248.pdf>
From the 8/2009 CFMS Newsletter, NOTES FROM JOHN

September 2009 Gem & Mineral Shows

4-6--SANTA BARBARA, CA: Gem Faire; Gem Faire Inc.; Earl Warren Showgrounds/Exhibit Hall, 3400 Calle Real; Fri. 12-7, Sat. 10-6, Sun. 10-5; \$5 weekend pass; contact Yooy Nelson, (503) 252-8300; e-mail: info@gemfaire.com; Web site: www.gemfaire.com

4-7--FORT BRAGG, CA: Show; 48th annual show; Mendocino Coast Gem & Mineral Society; Town Hall, Main and Laurel; Fri. 10-6, Sat. 10-6, Sun. 10-6, Mon. 10-4; free admission; contact Don McDonell, 643 N. McPherson, Fort Bragg, CA 95437, (707) 964-3116

5-7--CANBY, OR: Show, "Willamette Valley Gem, Mineral, Jewelry & Fossil Show"; Jean Mill; Clackamas County Fairgrounds, off Hwy. 99 E; Sat. 9-6, Sun. 9-6, Mon. 9-4; free admission; free pearl pendant to 1st 100 ladies daily, drawing Mon., 75 outside booths; contact Jean Miller, P.O. Box 136, Molalla, OR 97038, (503) 829-2680; e-mail: shadow92337@molalla.net; Web site: www.ogmshows.com

5-7--SILVER CITY, NM: 26th annual show; Grant County Rolling Stones Gem & Mineral Society; Silver City Recreation Center, 11th St. and Gold St.; Sat. 10-5, Sun. 10-5, Mon. 10-4; free admission; more than 60 dealers from the U.S., Mexico and Asia, free daily field trips, silent auction, Wheel of Fortune, raffles; contact L. Lett, (575) 538-3216; e-mail: show09@stockmanfamily.net; Web site: http://rollingstonesgms.blogspot.com/

11-13--FERNDALE, CA: 5th annual show, "Wildcat Gem Fest"; Wildcat Gem Society; Humboldt County Fairgrounds, 1250 5th St.; Fri. 12-7, Sat. 10-6, Sun. 10-5; free admission; raffles, demonstrations, classes, silent auctions, world-class exhibits; contact Mike Martin, P.O. Box 189, Miranda, CA 95553, (707) 943-1575; e-mail: micknorma@directv.net

11-13--ONTARIO, CA: Gem Faire; Gem Faire Inc.; Ontario Convention Center/Exhibit Hall B, 2000 Convention Center Way; Fri. 12-7, Sat. 10-6, Sun. 10-5; \$5 weekend pass; contact Yooy Nelson, (503) 252-8300; e-mail: info@gemfaire.com; Web site: www.gemfaire.com

12-13--ONTARIO, CA: Show, "Jewelry, Gem, & Variety Expo"; Green New Media & Life Expo Inc.; Ontario Convention Center, 2000 E. Convention Center Way; Sat. 10-7, Sun. 10-5; adults \$14, seniors two for \$14, children under 12 free; book signing, speakers, demonstrations; contact G. Fisher, (702) 467-9411; e-mail: GEFisher39@aol.com; Web site: www.GreenNewMediaLifeExpo.com

12-13--ROSEBURG, OR: Show, "Rock Round-Up"; Umpqua Gem & Mineral Club; Douglas County Fairgrounds, I-5 Exit 123; Sat. 10-6, Sun. 10-4:30; free admission; dealers, rough, gems, minerals, fossils, beads, jewelry, tools, equipment, books, displays, demonstrators, UV mineral exhibit, silent auction, wheel of fortune, geode cutting, raffles, door prizes, gold panning, kids' rock hunt; contact David Snyder, (541) 679-7553; e-mail: dwilliams@mcsi.net

12-13--VISTA, CA: Show; Vista Gem & Mineral Society; Antique Gas & Steam Engine Museum, 2040 N. Santa Fe Ave.; Sat. 10-5, Sun. 10-4; free admission; 13 dealers, books, equipment, beads, jewelry, rough materials, demonstrators, cases, free gem identification; contact Fred Wilson, (760) 433-8446, Cherie Wilson, (760) 941-7073, or Lois M. Harr, (760) 724-0395

12-13--WALLA WALLA, WA: Show; Marcus Whitman Gem and Mineral Society; Walla Walla County Fair Ground Community Center, 9th St. and Orchard; Sat. 10-5, Sun. 10-5; contact Warren Rood, (509) 522-2330; e-mail: wrood@coffeycomm.com

18-20--SAN RAFAEL, CA: Gem Faire; Gem Faire Inc.; Marin Center/Exhibit Hall, 10 Avenue of the Flags; Fri. 12-7, Sat. 10-6, Sun. 10-5; \$5 weekend pass; contact Yooy Nelson, (503) 252-8300; e-mail: info@gemfaire.com; Web site: www.gemfaire.com

19-20--JACKSON, CA: 9th annual Tailgate Gemboree; Fossils For Fun Society; Kennedy Gold Mine, 12954 Kennedy Mine Rd.; Sat. 9-5, Sun. 9-5; free admission; indoor exhibits, outdoor dealers, rocks, gems, minerals, fossils, Sat. night auctions, surface mine tours, gold panning; contact Debbie Bunn, P.O. Box 255702, Sacramento, CA 95670, (916) 929-6665; e-mail: fossilsforfun@hotmail.com; Web site: www.geocities.com/fossilsforfunsociety/index.html

19-20--REDWOOD CITY, CA: 43rd annual show, "Harvest of Gems"; Sequoia Gem & Mineral Society; Redwood City Community Activity Bldg., 1400 Roosevelt Ave.; Sat. 10-5, Sun. 10-5; adults free; displays, dealers, glass bead making, kids' cab polishing, silent auction; contact Carol Corden, (650) 248-7155; e-mail: ccorden@earthlink.net; Web site: http://sgms.driftmine.com/

19-20--STOCKTON, CA: Show, "Earth's Treasures Gem Show"; Stockton Lapidary & Mineral Club; Scottish Rite Masonic Center, 33 W. Alpine Ave.; Sat. 10-5, Sun. 10-5; adults \$4, children 12 and under free with adult; lapidary and jewelry demonstrations, 40 exhibits, silent auction, kids' activities, \$1 off coupon on Web site; contact Nettie Meissner, P.O. Box 357, Lathrop, CA 95330, (209) 858-2263; e-mail: footsey1@yahoo.com; Web site: www.stocktonlapidary.com

25-27--SAN BERNARDINO, CA: Annual Tailgate; Orange Belt Mineralogical Society; Little League Baseball Park, Western Regional Headquarters, 6707 N. Little League Dr.; Fri. 10-5, Sat. 10-6, Sun. 10-5; free admission; silent auction; contact Emma Couveau, P.O. Box 1545, Colton, CA 92324, (909) 288 6182; e-mail: 1d4frog@aol.com

26-27--DOWNEY, CA: Show; Delvers Gem & Mineral Society; Woman's Club of Downey, 9813 Paramount Blvd.; Sat. 10-6, Sun. 10-4; free admission; demonstrations, exhibits, vendors, raffle, grab bags; contact Nancy Bird, (562) 697-0636; e-mail: nancyjbird@verison.net

26-27--MONTEREY, CA: 50th annual show; Carmel Valley Gem & Mineral Society; Monterey Fairgrounds, 2004 Fairgrounds Rd.; Sat. 10-6, Sun. 10-5; adults \$3.50, children free with adult; contact Sky Paxton, (831) 262-2492; e-mail: sky@familystones.net; or Janis Rovetti, (831) 657-1933; e-mail: janis12@sbcglobal.net; Web site: www.cvgms.org

26-27--OSHKOSH, WI: Show, "Prehistoric Time Returns to Oshkosh"; Oshkosh Earth Science Club; Sunnyview Expo Center, 625 E. County Rd. "Y"; Sat. 9-5, Sun. 9-4; adults \$2, students free with ID, children under 12 free; Weis Earth Science Museum "Teeth Thru Time", more than 80 vendor tables, free kids' events sponsored by Jewelers Mutual Insurance, exhibits, silent auctions, speakers, demonstrations, club sales; contact Robert Fox, (920) 235-4669; e-mail: foxbooks@northnet.net

26-27--SAN DIEGO, CA: Annual show; San Diego Lapidary Society; Bernardo Winery, 13330 Paseo Del Verano Norte; Sat. 10-4, Sun. 10-4; free admission; 40+ vendors, gems, minerals, fossils, beads, jewelry, demonstrations, kids' activities, lapidary rough, slabs, cabochons; contact SDLS, (619) 295-6905, or Kim Hutsell, (619) 294-3914; e-mail:

info@sandiegolapidarysociety.org;

Web

site:

www.sandiegolapidarysociety.org

30-4--JOSHUA TREE, CA: 34th annual show, "Gem, Mineral, and Handicraft Jamboree"; Sportsman Club of Joshua Tree; 6225 Sunburst Ave.; Wed. 8-5, Thu. 8-5, Fri. 8-5, Sat. 8-5, Sun. 8-3; free admission; minerals, fossils, crystals, gems, meteorites, jewelry, beads, geology supplies, raffles; contact Boo or Chad Barker, Sportsman Club of Joshua Tree Gem Show, 6225 Sunburst Ave., Joshua Tree, CA 92252, (760) 368-7859 or (760) 368-7327; e-mail: jtsportsmans1@verizon.net; Web site: jtsportsmansclub.com

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Are Your Dues Due Now?

PLEASE CHECK YOUR ADDRESS LABEL. If your label shows the current month/year your dues are DUE NOW. If the date is older, your dues are overdue.

A Renewal Grace Period of two months will be provided. If your dues are due now you will receive two additional issues of the newsletter. Please note, however, that as the system is now set up, if your renewal is not received you will be AUTOMATICALLY dropped from membership thereafter. It is your responsibility to assure your dues are current.

Thank you,
The Editor



The Opal Express

American Opal Society
P.O. Box 4875
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**Volume #42 Issue #9
September 2009**

TO:

Some Topics In This Issue:

- Oregon Prospector Finds Opals
- Oregon Opal
- More about Mexican Fire Opals
- Need Help with Dopping Wax Problem
- New Acquisitions - Opal
- So Cal Man Finds \$10,000 Gold Nugget
- How to Care For Opal Jewelry
- Rockhounding in CA. State Parks
- BLM Mining-Related Fees

Important Dates:

September 8 - Board Meeting

September 10 - General Meeting

Speaker: Jim Pisani will give a slide presentation on the Tecopa Opal Fields in California.

September 10 Jim Pisani on the Tecopa Opal Fields^N

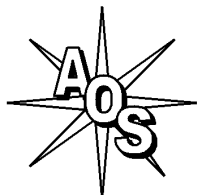
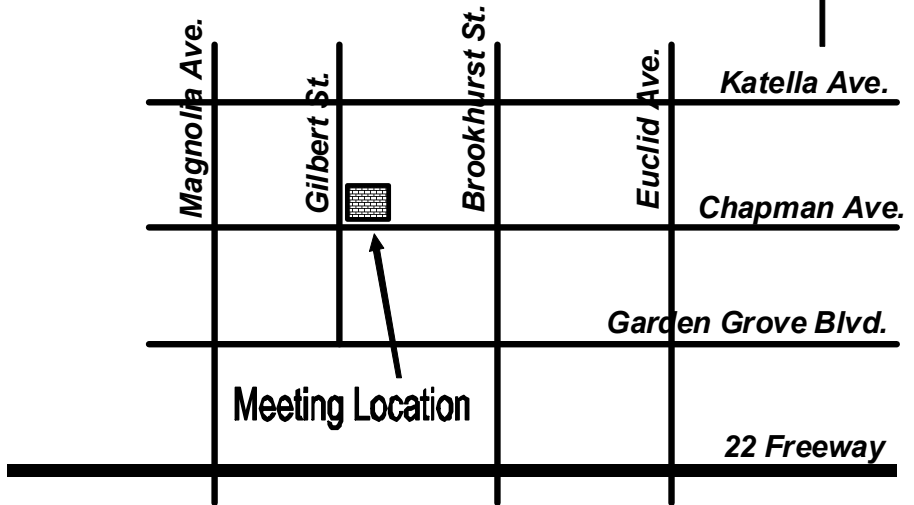
— GENERAL MEETINGS —

2nd Thursday of the Month
7:00 pm - 9:00 PM

Garden Grove Civic Women's Club
9501 Chapman Ave.
Garden Grove, CA 92841
(NE corner of Gilbert & Chapman)

MEETING ACTIVITIES

Opal Cutting, Advice, Guest Speakers,
Slide Shows, Videos, Other Activities



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