

Southern Maryland Rock and Mineral Club



Rock Talk



March, 2020

A Message to Members by Glenda Jordan, Clearwater Nature Center

The Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission, Department of Parks and Recreation, Prince George's County announced Friday afternoon that they will be closing down all facilities and cancelling all events, classes, programs, etc. through March 31, 2020 (maybe longer depending on reassessment of the situation). Further information from the press release can be found within the attached PDF. Additional information can be found online at: <http://pgparks.com/4826/COVID-19-Information>

• *The Lapidary workshop is closed until further notice - both because of the shutdown and due to potential delays this will cause for the turtle pond renovation. Once we get a better idea on when renovations will happen you will be updated.*

• *The SMRMC meeting scheduled for March 24, 2020 is cancelled.*

With the nature center closed and no staff permitted to work (except for one individual to see to only animal care needs), all membership renewals are suspended until staff is permitted to come back to work and get things up and running again. The 2nd attached PDF is a list of members for the 2 clubs and expiration dates for members noted if you don't happen to remember your dates. For anyone whose membership has recently expired or is set to expire during the month of March, the best thing you can do is to just wait until the April club meetings and renew at that time. Do not mail any check payments for renewals this time around as no one will be here to collect mail and no one will be able to process any transactions during the shutdown.

However, if you are familiar with being able to log into your Parks Direct account, you can always use your credit card to add money to your account (fee schedule listed below). Once you add money to your account – you need to send me an email informing me that you put money on your account for membership renewal purposes. Do not call

the nature center. The staff person seeing to animal care during the day will not be able to help you as we cannot process any transactions during the shutdown period. Putting money on your account just means the money will be there ready to use for when we are finally permitted to come back to work and will speed up the renewal process if you don't want to wait to come in for the April meetings.

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FEBRUARY MINUTES

Submitted by Cheryl Reese

DATE: Meeting was called to order on Tuesday, February 25, 2020 at 7:05 by Sondra

VISITORS/NEW MEMBERS:
None

MEMBERSHIP: No updated report.

NEWSLETTER: Tim's last newsletter will be March 2020 after which Rich Simcsak will take over. Thank you Rich for stepping

up! A motion was made and seconded to make Tim a lifetime member of the club for all the hard work he did for making our newsletters so interesting.

TREASURER: No change.

FIELD TRIPS: March 21st— Joint trip with CMM Fossil Club to Odessa Delaware for petrified wood.

April 17th— The JMU Mineral Museum opens and rockhounds are encouraged to attend.

No other trips planned at this time

MEMBERS FINDS: Joe found a Miocene fish vertebra fossil with bryozoan (coral colony) coating the surface

PROGRAMS: March meeting presented by Tom Hale who is rewriting the "Minerals of Virginia" book. Please bring a flat of any Virginia minerals you may have collected at the numerous sites we have visited. Refreshments - Teresa Jones

WEBMASTER: No report.

OLD BUSINESS: None.

NEW BUSINESS: Dave said the Eastern Federation is starting a Field Trip Group where if your club belongs, you must host a field trip and your club will be invited to the other hosting clubs' trips. He is trying to get more information on this before our club decides to join.

Reminder of Rock swaps and auctions coming up in March and April. Please see January's newsletter for the flyers posted there with info.

As editor, Rich said he will be forwarding newsletters from other clubs that he receives to members of our club.

ADJOURNED: At 7:30 followed by door prizes and a program on mine and quarry safety during field trips by Rich and refreshments by Jennifer.

ITEMS WANTED/FOR SALE

For Sale – Virginia unakite slabs (approx ¼ inch thick) – \$0.50 per square inch (this is half off regular price). Call Dave (240) 427-7062.

For Sale – SMRMC Only 4 remaining t-shirts for sale: size small (1) at \$9.00; and large (3), also at \$9.00 each Contact Tina @ htleague@comcast.net

UPCOMING SHOWS AND EVENTS 2019

March and April events tentative due to coronavirus

Rocks, Minerals, and Fossils in the News

McAbee Fossil Beds site re-opens to public after seven years

BARBARA RODEN

The public can once again visit the McAbee Fossil Beds site east of Cache Creek.

<https://www.ashcroftcachecreekjournal.com/news/mcabee-fossil-beds-site-re-opens-to-public-after-seven-years/>



Photo: Barbara Roden

After being closed for almost seven years, the McAbee Fossil Beds site has reopened to the public. The beds, which are 13km east of Cache Creek, contain a wealth of 53-million-year-old Eocene epoch fossils, and are also an important cultural and historic site for the Secwepemc people.

In July 2012 the provincial government declared McAbee a Heritage Site and closed it. In 2016 a group of volunteers began working to research ways of getting the site reopened and obtaining funding to allow that to happen.

On June 21 — Indigenous People's Day across Canada — nearly 100 people gathered at the McAbee site to be part of the soft opening, which began with a traditional smudging ceremony. The Bonaparte Band's Frank Antoine, chair of the board of the Thompson Okanagan Tourism Association (TOTA),

explained the significance of the ceremony, adding “It’s always an honourable time when our people are recognized and take part in ceremonies like this. It keeps us strong.”

Deb Amott of Community Futures Sun Country, who has been spearheading the drive to re-open McAbee, declared “We made it! It’s been a hell of a journey over the last three years.”

Former Bonaparte Band chief Ryan Day said “You can see a very, very long span of time at this place. It’s important to take an opportunity to contemplate time. What this place does is allow that.”

Randy Porter, the current Bonaparte chief, said “To have this come to fruition today is huge. In the last two years we’ve had fires and floods. To see the McAbee site developed is huge for our community, and I can see only good things after this point. It will be a success in the months to come.”

Steve Rice, TNRD director for Area “T”, spoke about the formation and history of the McAbee working group, noting the challenges the group faced after the 2017 wildfires. “A turning point came when Ryan Day said that the Bonaparte Indian Band wanted to be involved. The drum was beating so softly then, but it’s beating loud now.”

The Heritage Branch’s Elisabeth Deom spoke of the amazing fossils and the historical and cultural significance of the site, noting that protection of the site, science, and education are priorities, as is tourism.

“The work here has been done in a way of respect that acknowledges our stewardship role. It’s been an inclusive process, and I’m looking forward to the start of the next phase.”

Dr. Thomas Dickinson, the Dean of Science at Thompson Rivers University, said “We need to resurrect stories from the people here and from rocks that are 53 million years old.”

Amy Thacker, the CEO of Cariboo Chilcotin Coast Tourism Association, said that she was trying to

imagine the area as a tropical lake 53 million years ago, and the flora and fauna that would have been there. “It’s hard to do. There have been a lot of changes over time. Now we’re here to celebrate this site.”

“Sustainable and respectful tourism is a focus,” said Ellen Walker-Matthews from TOTA. “It’s so important to the region.” Greg Hopf, also from TOTA, said that “To celebrate the soft opening of McAbee on Indigenous People’s Day is so fitting. The Bonaparte Indian Band and First Nations people will lead this project, not just be part of it.

“Non-First Nations groups have stepped aside and let us lead. That’s true and meaningful partnership. [McAbee] is a huge game-changer for the region, and will combine First Nations stories with history. We will transform visitors.”

Concluding the event, Antoine said “Everyone here is invested in this site, and I look forward to growing it together, and seeing people from around the world coming to visit us.”

The McAbee Fossil Beds Heritage Site is protected under the Province’s Heritage Conservation Act, and removing, disturbing, or destroying the fossils there is not permitted. The site will be open to the public for free guided tours from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Thursday through Monday during summer 2019. Future plans for the site include an interpretative centre, an ethnobotanical garden, a trails system with interpretive signs, viewpoints, and a research and storage facility for ongoing scientific research.



A new “Stop of Interest” sign has been erected at the McAbee site. Photo: Barbara Roden

A Dinosaur ‘Stomping Ground’ Surfaces on the Isle of Skye

By [Brigit Katz](#)

SMITHSONIANMAG.COM

MARCH 12, 2020

<https://www.smithsonianmag.com/smart-news/dinosaur-stomping-ground-surfaces-isle-skye->

Two sites preserve around 50 footprints, a discovery that highlights the richness of prehistoric life on the island



Deltapodus prints offering the first strong evidence that stegosaurian dinosaurs were part of the Middle Jurassic landscape on Skye (Steve Brusatte)

The Isle of Skye, which sits off the northwest coast of Scotland, is today known for its windswept mountain ranges, rugged sea cliffs and crumbling castles. But millions of years ago, the landscape was very different—part of a subtropical island filled with beaches, shallow lagoons and dinosaurs. The richness of Skye’s prehistoric past came to light with the recent discovery of two fossil sites that preserve some 50 dinosaur footprints, among them a type of track that has never before been documented on the island.

According to the *Guardian*’s Nicola Davis, the prints were found at the cliffs of Rubha nam Brathairean, or Brothers’ Point. One of the track sites had been explored before, but its paleontological treasures remained hidden until storms shifted some boulders, revealing footprints among sedimentary rocks that are about 170 million years old. During the Middle Jurassic period, which spanned from 161 to 176 million years ago, this site consisted of mudflats bordering a lagoon, where an array of dinosaurs ambled about, leaving tracks that were preserved across the ages.

Among the footprints, a team of researchers reveal in the journal *PLOS One*, were three-toed tracks belonging to various sizes of camivorous theropods, a bipedal dino subgroup. Other tracks have been tentatively connected to large-bodied, herbivorous ornithopods, a group that includes the hadrosauridae (or duck-billed dinosaurs).

But perhaps the most exciting among the prints were Deltapodus tracks—a general descriptor for delta-shaped tracks likely left by plated or armored dinosaurs. (As *Gizmodo*’s George Dvorsky points out, paleontologists are sometimes wary of ascribing prints to specific species, opting instead for broad morphotypes.) In this case, researchers believe that the prints belonged to a stegosaur, a subgroup of plate-backed, beaked dinosaurs that included the iconic *Stegosaurus*. These Deltapodus prints are the oldest ever found, and provide the first strong

evidence that stegosaurian dinosaurs were part of the Middle Jurassic landscape on Skye.

The discovery of a dinosaur “stomping ground” on the island enhances experts’ understanding of prehistoric life in Scotland, where dinosaur fossils are “so rare,” Stephen Brusatte, paleontologist at the University of Edinburgh and co-author of the new study, tells Nina Pullano of *Inverse*. The prints thus help researchers “get a better sense of the variety of dinosaurs that lived near the coast of Skye during the Middle Jurassic,” explains Paige dePolo, a PhD student at the University of Edinburgh and lead author of the report.

The find has broader implications, too. Around the world, according to the study authors, body fossil remains from the Middle Jurassic are sparse, which is unfortunate, because this was an important period of evolutionary diversification for many dinosaur groups. Footprints, as the track sites show, can offer a compelling glimpse into the prehistoric past when other types of remains do not survive. Skye has proven itself to be a particularly fruitful location in that regard; previously, the same research team documented prints left by both carnivorous theropods and towering sauropods were found there.

“We knew there were giant long-necked sauropods and jeep-sized carnivores, but we can now add plate-backed stegosaurs to that roster, and maybe even primitive cousins of the duck-billed dinosaurs too,” Brusatte says. “These discoveries are making Skye one of the best places in the world for understanding dinosaur evolution in the Middle Jurassic.”

Member’s Finds

(Photos and Article by Dave Lines)



These are my finds for February 29, 2020 (Sadie Hawkins Day!!) Saturday afternoon's blowout tide at Purse State Park (now named "Nanjemoy Wildlife Management Area") in western Charles County, MD. I arrived at about 2:00 pm at the parking lot --- wind was howling from the NW and cold. I bundled up and headed to the beach. Predicted low tide was about 4:00 pm, but it was already w-a-a-y out --- at least 1-1/2 feet below normal low tide and least 10 to 20 feet of extra beach showing. Lots of rocks were sticking up -- a good sign. A fellow from Virginia was already looking and he had found about 20 small teeth. I quickly walked well past him --- at least a mile down the beach. There was lots of fallen trees down with lots of fallen cliff sections on the beach. A lot of obstacles to get past. If the tide had been normal level, I definitely would not have been able to get past all the downed trees. The beach past the first major point was in excellent condition --- no seaweed -- just gravel and big rocks -- with some sections of sand. I found a good deal of turrifera fossils that had been released from the fallen cliff sections by freezing and thawing.



My longest turritelles were almost 4" with 8 to 9 "curls". I found one piece of petrified wood --- I have several of this light colored petrified wood there in past years. I also found some purple beach glass --- very old --- at least 120 years. Also found a fossil "moonsnail" mold. Plus a few shark's teeth. And a good deal of Potomac (or Patuxent?) River Stone --- the Maryland State gem stone. Some nice translucent pieces up to 3" long.

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The Chesapeake Gem & Mineral Society

Presents

Living Estate Auction of Virginia & Gary White

To be held in two auctions with Hall of Fame Auctioneer Glenn Freeman

First Auction

Date: Friday, March 13, 2020

Time: 7:00 pm (viewing at 6:30 pm)

Second Auction

Date: Saturday, April 4, 2020

Time: 5:00 pm (viewing at 4:30 pm)

Cash & Checks only

Place: Location

Westchester Community Center

2414 Westchester Ave., Oella Md.21043

***Some items to be auctioned are Gemstones,
Cutting rough, Jewelry, Minerals, Fossils.***

Full listing on our website

Refreshments are available.

Directions:

From the north: Take I-695 to US 40 west (exit 15B). Turn left on N. Rolling Rd. Turn right at Old Fredrick Rd. (You will pass through 1 roundabout). Turn right on Oella Ave. Turn left on Westchester Ave. Westchester Community Center is on the right.

From the south: Take I-695 to Fredrick Rd. (exit 13). Turn left on Fredrick Rd. Follow Fredrick Rd. approx. 2.7 miles. Turn right on Oella Ave. Turn left on Westchester Ave.

Westchester Community Center is on the right.

[<chesapeakegemandmineral.org>](http://chesapeakegemandmineral.org)



You're invited...



We hope you'll join us in celebrating the grand re-opening of JMU's Mineral Museum. View icons of the mineral world as we publicly premiere the **Peter L. Via Collection**. Enjoy food and drink and take a tour in the museum's dazzling new location which made room for its impressive, expanded collections.

Mineral Museum Grand Re-Opening Festival Drum Lower Level

Friday, April 17, 2020
4:30 - 6:30 pm
4:45 pm Welcome remarks

Please RSVP by [April 3rd](#)

Parking:

- Complimentary parking in Convocation Lots A, B, E.
- Shuttle service provided
- No parking pass required



Calling All
Rockhounds!

Rock Swap 2020

May 2, 2020
10:00 AM - 3:00 PM

@NHSM, 6908 Belair Rd, Baltimore, MD 21206

There are three ways to participate:

1. **SELL & SWAP** – \$30.00 for a space. If you are a member of NHSM, the fee is only \$15.00. **NOTE:**
2. **SWAP ONLY** – The table fee is \$10.00.
3. **TREASURE SEEKERS** – Admission to the event is \$5.00 per person. Children 10 and under are free.

**For more information and to register
please visit our website at:**

www.marylandnature.org



Natural History Society of Maryland

Exploring and Preserving Maryland's Natural Treasures
P.O. Box 18750, 6908 Belair Rd, Baltimore, MD 21206

410.882.5376
www.marylandnature.org

The Southern Maryland Rock and Mineral Club

Meetings take place on the 4th Tuesday of each month at 7:00pm

Clearwater Nature Center, 11000 Thrift Road, Clinton, MD.

For More information, call:

(301) 297-4575

We're on the web:

