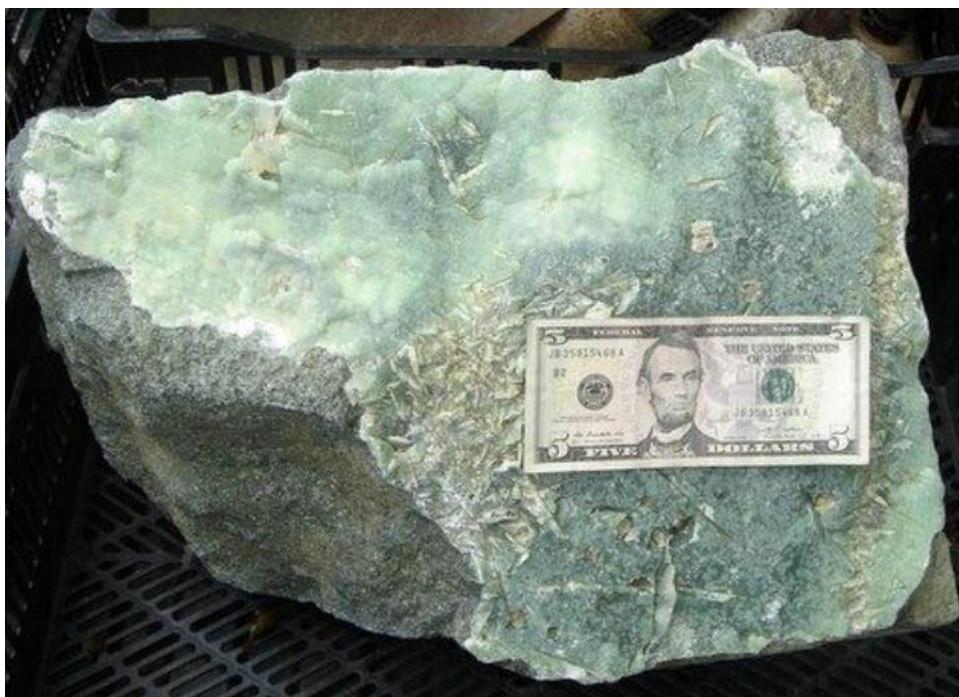


Field Trip Report for Vulcan Quarry Manassas, VA on June 4, 2016

(text by Dave Lines; photos by Dave Fryauff)



Attending this joint trip hosted by the Montgomery County Club were ten (10) of us from various local clubs (including Tim and Dave from SMRMC). We met in the parking lot at the Quarry Office at 7:00 a.m. for the Safety Brief with the quarry rep --- K.T.. After the usual safety reminders, he strongly reiterated that it was paramount they we remain clear of all highwalls and not cross any berms. Additionally, he said we could go anywhere inside the pit unless it had signs specifically saying to keep out. The weather forecast was perfect --- cloudy and temperate in the morning and the rain holding off until after we were to leave at noon.

K.T. lead our long convoy of vehicles into the huge quarry --- all driving on the left. We all parked at the end of the bench near the most recent “shot” (mine blast). We quickly examined the fresh rock, but it only contained thin seams of prehnite and prehnite mixed with calcite.

Shortly afterward, the group began a slow dispersal into the various benches of the pit. I returned to an area about 200 yards away which I had noticed while driving in which contained a stockpile of large boulders. I also spent about 20 minutes digging out a seam of prehnite I discovered in the quarry floor. No vugs, but you never know until you try. I recovered several pounds of massive green prehnite around 1” thick – some suitable for cabbing.



From there, I found K.T. and asked for permission and directions to the new series of benches in the upper southwest corner of the quarry. K.T. generously lead me back out of the pit to the entrance to the perimeter road around the upper edge of the quarry. It was about a mile to the new area. And once there I found that two (2) of our group (Bob and Dave M.) had already searched it --- and declared that it only contained calcite and some basaltic pegmatite. Still I did a quick perimeter check only to confirm what they had said – i.e., no zeolite material. I did find one chunk with a nice vug of calcite crystals covered with tiny spikes of laumontite crystals --- which I later gave to Tim who enjoys micros. Dave M. showed me some of the basaltic pegmatite material – which indeed seemed plentiful. It contained finely disseminated pink feldspar with black specks of something else throughout. I picked up a few pieces for interest sake as well as some small rocks of more solid pink feldspar.



After 30 minutes or so, I returned to the main portion of the quarry and investigated an interesting pile of loose rock on the left just above the 40 foot level. Most of the rock was covered with dirt, but off to one side I spotted a little sliver of "light green". "Ah ha!" I thought --- "some prehnite." And when I turned the heavy rock around, it was indeed prehnite. And as "yard rock" goes, it was quite a find, actually. Colorful prehnite in several shades of light green up to half an inch thick covered one whole side of the 12" by 15" rock. Wow --- I was elated! This trip's rating suddenly went from a D- to a C+. But I did not have it in the truck yet --- and it easily weighed over 100 pounds. I carefully cleared away all the big rocks in the area and backed my truck as close as possible. Then I dragged and rolled the big fella into a heavy duty black plastic bulb crate, cinched up my back support belt and heaved that baby up onto the truck bed. Whoa. [And now after a trip through the local car wash it looks pretty doggoned good in our flower bed at home.]

By now, it was 10:00 a.m., so I decided to try to re-locate the stellarite outcrop on Level 40 where Polly and I had had such good luck on a trip several years ago. After a few attempts, I finally spotted some dark yellow stellarite crystals on the floor of the bench. They were very damaged, but that was to be expected when trucks and other heavy equipment run over the soft zeolite crystals. The key thing was the location --- I just needed to clear the relatively thin overburden of crushed gravel and start digging into the solid rock quarry floor. I called Tim on the cell phone to join me, but he did not check his phone until too late. For the next 1-1/2 hours, I hard rocked mined. I pounded both pointed and flat bladed steel chisels into one layer after another and removed a good deal of rock. I found a few nice vugs with crystals of stellarite --- some with smaller cubes of red chabazite --- but no large pockets. I earned every specimen the tough rock gave me, but it was enough. There is plenty more left for next time --- it will just take sweat equity to get it out.

We all left the quarry precisely at 11:45 a.m. so that K.T. could leave by noon. Back at the Quarry Office lot, we compared our finds. The pictures show some our calcite, stellarite and chabazite specimens found that morning.

