

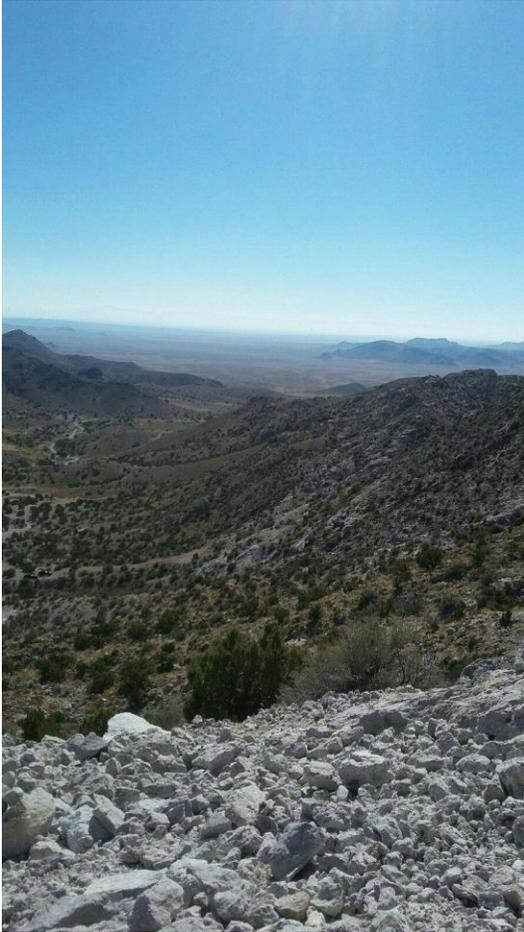
UTAH FEILD TRIP 2016

by: Tina League



On September 14, 2016 six members of SMRMC : Joe, Paula, Ralph, Teri, Harry and Tina flew to Salt Lake City, picked up two rental Jeeps, hit Wal-Mart for supplies and drove to Delta to begin the 10 day rock collecting trip. This was Ralph's first trip to Utah and his first flight....he was very happy to be back on the ground and ready to explore the west! The weather report for the next few days was perfect- sunny and 70's during the day. No chance of rain..hurray!

9/15/16: We planned to spend the first day digging for Dugway *Geodes*. We headed out into the desert and had to stop for a flat tire...Joe put his NASCAR pit crew skills to work and had the spare on in no time. We had purchased a tire repair kit in Salt Lake City for just such an occasion, but unfortunately the tire was too torn to be repaired, which meant that we would have to cut our day short and get back to town in time to go to the tire shop to purchase a new one. We pressed on and made it to the *Geode* collecting area despite the GPS's instructions to turn on to roads that didn't exist. We spent several hours digging and collecting *Geodes*. Then we moved on to the pink *Topaz* site. We briefly collected pink *Topaz* and *Bixbyite* then headed back to Delta. The tire shop promised a new tire would be there first thing in the morning. We went to the rock shop and dinner.



9/16/16: Joe got the new tire first thing in the morning and then we headed to Topaz Mountain. In 2015 "Topaz Mountain Adventures" staked a claim on the floor of the amphitheater and designated that area as a fee site with blasting tours. The area was very well marked and the roads were left accessible to rockhounds collecting on their own away from the fee area. Ralph and Teri collected nice *Topaz* specimens in area 1. Paula worked the washes and found an interesting *Garnet*. She met Joe up on area 2 after he hiked the entire west wall. Harry and I worked on area 3 and found *Topaz clusters*, *Red Beryl* and tiny scorpions.



9/17/16: We headed to Black Rock to collect gold flash *Obsidian*. Joe found a very large *Obsidian* specimen that gave the TSA in Salt Lake airport a puzzled look when they x-rayed his carry-on. We then headed to the Geothermal Plant area to collect *Opal*, silver flash and snowflake *Obsidian*. Then on to Milford for lunch before we went to Rock Coral Canyon to look for smoky *Quartz*. Nice specimens were hard to come by due to time constraints. We hoped to return to this site later in the week. On the way back to Delta we stopped at the Gunnison Massacre site just west of town. The site has a small marker which shows the area where the railroad survey crew was killed by Ute Indians in October of 1853.





9/18/16: We visited Fort Deseret first thing in the morning. Fort Deseret was built in 1865 by Mormon settlers for protection from the Blackhawk Indian war. It is a mud and straw fort that was built by 98 men in 18 days. It still stands today.

Next stop on our sight seeing tour was to photograph the Indian Petroglyphs near Devils Kitchen. After the photo session we moved on the Painter Springs to collect *Quartz*, *Garnet*, *Diopside*, *Vesuvianite*, *Chalcopyrite*, and other minerals. The scenery was beautiful! We hiked and explored for hours. Most of the minerals were micros which made them very easy to carry in pockets. Joe explored the caves near the top of the mountain and spotted a mountain lion.

9/19/16: Fossil day: We went to U-Dig Trilobites and collected for 4 hours.

Terri honed her slate breaking skills and revealed several nice *Trilobite* specimens. After U-Dig we headed to the Red Quarry area and found very small multi-colored *Trilobites*. We drove for quite some time trying to find the Swasey Spring collecting area, but were not successful at locating it. We did get to hang out with the wild horses. That alone was worth the drive!!

9/20/16: Ralph and Teri spent the morning boxing rocks and packing, they were heading home the next day. They talked to a man at the post office who invited them to collect at his very large dump pile by his shop. They were pleasantly surprised by the quality of the material they found there: *Picasso stone*, *Fluorite*, *Zebra stone*, *Calcite*, *Septarian nodules*, *Azurite*, *Wonderstone*, *Lepidolite/Tourmaline*, *snowflake Obsidian* and much more. Joe, Paula, Harry and I spent the morning hunting for artifacts to photograph. We went to Sunstone Knoll and collected *Sunstones* on the way back to town. Ralph told us about the dump site when we got back to town, so he, Paula, Harry and I went there to collect. The specimens were very nice! We took our buckets to the rock shop, weighed and paid and then went on to dinner.

9/21/16: Joe and Paula took Ralph and Teri to the airport in the am. They stopped at some sites closer to Salt Lake on their way back to Delta and then went back to the Geothermal Plant area *Obsidain* site. Harry and I spent the day at Topaz Mountain collecting *Topaz and Red Beryl*. We left early in the afternoon due to rain showers.

9/22/16: We had not visited Fossil Mountain on our previous trips to Utah, so we decided to spend the day in that area. The collecting area was listed as having *Brachiopods*, *Trilobites*, *Echinoderms*, and *Cephalopods*. We found very impressive conglomerate plates loaded with ancient sea creatures. On the way to the Ibex area Harry got to put the tire patch kit to use on our Jeep. Money well spent. After collecting fossils we drove to Crystal Peak several miles southwest of Fossil mountain. The weather report was for scattered severe storms, so we kept our eyes on the sky. We ended up driving thru a short burst of rain on the way to Crystal Peak, but on arrival we had blue skies and

sunshine....briefly. We collected *Spotted Quartzite* until the black clouds on top of the mountain chased us away.

9/23/16: A cold snap and rain descended on Delta. Snow was in the forecast for the higher elevations that night. We spent the morning boxing rocks and making a post office run. After the post office we went to the dump pile and spent several hours collecting specimens in the light rain. Of course that led to another post office run.... We had dinner at the Cafe and packed our bags for the trip home.

9/24/16: In the hotel lobby that morning Harry ran into Dave and Jennifer Kneis-former members of SMRMC who had moved to Colorado. They were in town for the weekend with 30 members of the Colorado club collecting at Topaz Mountain with the Topaz Mountain Adventure tour. There had been a blasting incident the day before which shortened their collecting time. Jennifer showed us her *Topaz* specimen she found. She and Dave are signed up for the Mt. Ida, Arkansas crystal dig in October. It was great to see them and we hope to visit with them in Colorado someday. We stopped to take pictures of the snow capped mountains on the drive back to Salt Lake City. We spent some time in the Rockpick Legend rock shop in Salt Lake before heading to the airport. We bid a fond farewell to Utah and flew home.

