

Our First Visit to a Quarry by Kimberlynn Jurkowski



We (Orion, Arion, and Kimberlynn Jurkowski) are excited about our new membership with the Southern Maryland Rock & Mineral Club (SMRMC). As new members, we decided to join other members of SMRMC and go on a field trip to Vulcan Manassas Quarry in Manassas, Virginia. This was our first visit to a quarry and we were not sure what to expect. Orion went shopping a few days ago to buy supplies (hard hats, steel toe boots, goggles, gloves, buckets, hammers, backpacks, and snacks) for our visit.



On Saturday, August, 26, 2017 at 6:45 am, we arrived at the quarry office and Orion pulled into a parallel parking space. We were told to arrive by 7:15am, so we were early. We noticed two other cars on the parking lot and a few large trucks moving toward the back area of the main building. Looking across the area, we noticed several large piles of dirt and a long wall near the back of the parking area. We exited the car and walked over to the long wall. Looking over the wall, we could see an amazing deep, large, hole with carved paths, equipment, piles of dirt, large rocks, and layers of internal walls (the size of a small town).

A few minutes after 7:00am, several cars arrived in the parking area including members from SMRMC. About 25 people gathered into a small group for the field trip. Vulcan's Safety Officer ("KT") explained to the group, rules, expected behavior, required equipment, and emergency procedures. "KT" led all cars down a long winding road down deep into the quarry. We learned two key safety points --- recognize the high wall and keep safety gear on at all times. We did our best to follow the experienced members.



Dave Lines, was a big help and educator. He explained many concepts, demonstrated how to use several tools, and he made sure we practiced safe habits as we collected rocks (Thanks Dave!).



We noticed most of the calcite, feldspar, prehnite, and mordenite were hidden “inside” the gray rocks. Teams of people worked for several hours on large rocks to chip around vugs, cavities, and areas of interest filled with crystals.

Finally, it was time to pack up, thank everyone for helping us, and head out up the long and winding road. We made it back to the main entrance and received a light car wash as we exited. We enjoyed our time and learned so much about rock identification, safety, team work, and tools during our field trip. We received help and support from many people.



And we did not go home empty handed --- several beautiful specimens and rocks were shared with us. Orion and Arion worked hard, while I took pictures, and learned about the quarry and rocks in my own way (smile).