

Windy, Cold and Sunny --- Perfect for Finding Delaware Petrified Wood

By Dave Lines



This past winter of (almost) constant rain was not helpful for farmers – but it was GREAT for finding petrified wood in the field at the John Wolf Memorial Trip in Odessa, Delaware held on March 23rd, 2019.



Last fall, farmers everyone around here had to wait and wait and wait to find a short window of opportunity to combine their crops because it was so rainy. And even then, the soil in the fields was often still too wet and soggy --- resulting in leaving many deep ruts from the large combine wheels sinking down in the soft ground. All this is a very risky situation because getting a huge (and expensive) combine stuck in the mud often spells disaster --- combines tend to “pull apart” if you

try to tow one when it is stuck. But farmers must try to harvest the crops, or else the deer and geese would eat every scrap of it. Another factor this year was that the crop was soybeans – which leaves very little post-harvest residue on the ground after the crop is removed.



This trifecta of events --- the soybean crop, the rainy season, and the ruts --- proved to be fantastic for the 40 or so folks from several local rock and fossil clubs who participated in this Field Trip. Petrified wood was laying exposed everywhere. It was a bonanza! It was simply easier to see the pieces this year, because in a normal year, the surface of the field is literally covered up in crop residue. And small gullies were everywhere --- again a great place to look for washed pieces of wood.



Six members of our club attended --- Tim S. and his wife Lorna and daughter Francesca, Sondra, Rich and Dave. We did very well. In fact, Lorna found the largest piece of wood --- by far! It was a huge chunk almost a foot long and very heavy. Well done! (When you see her next time, ask her what her secret to success was.)

We all initially met at a Park and Ride lot and caravanned in a long convoy to the field about 10:15 a.m.. And within a few minutes of our arrival at our destination, people were scattered out all over the huge (over a mile across) field – and finding plenty of pieces of wood. It was a great start to a very productive trip. Rich and I were the very last people to leave and that was at 2:30 p.m.. In four (4) hours, we hit the jackpot of petrified wood. The pictures of our finds speak for themselves.

