

Utah Trip 2013
by: Tina League



Eight SMRMC members traveled to Utah September 3-13 to collect a variety of minerals. Tina, Harry, Joe and Paula flew out to Salt Lake and drove down to Delta to meet up with Carole, Al, Paul and Linda at the campground for dinner at Carole and Al's trailer. Carole, Al, Paul and Linda were on a cross country RV trip and met up with the "flyers" to collect in this area. We had dinner and discussed plans for the next 9 days of rockhounding.

The first trip was to collect Dugway Geodes. When we got to the site that we had collected on in previous trips, we found that there was a claim posted in the "hot spot". We got the information of the claim owner off of the sign to contact them when we got back to town that evening. We dug for geodes at another area and then decided to try our luck at pink topaz. We went to the pink topaz area and everyone found pink topaz and bixbyite. Oh, and Joe found a dead rattlesnake along the way. We contacted the claim owners which had a shop in town called The Bug House (which is affiliated with the U-Dig claim). We went to the shop and paid our permit fee to collect geodes the next day. The shop owners were very friendly and had some beautiful specimens for sale.

The next day we went back to Dugway and collected geodes for half the day. Then we went to Agate Hill and gave our Jeep Grand Cherokee's a run for the money driving up the steep incline to the hill. We collected many beautiful colors of agate on the hill and enjoyed the magnificent view. We saw wild horses running across the road on the way back to town. We visited the local rock shop and called it a day.

Topaz Mountain was the next day's agenda. This was Paul and Linda's last day to collect before they headed back out on their cross country trip. Linda was determined to make it up the mountain and with lots of help and encouragement she did just that! Everyone made it to my favorite red beryl ledge. We collected topaz and red beryl. We also met some local rockhounds who suggested we try another area where the red beryl was easier to find. They found some very nice large topaz along the trail and even stood on the edge of the ledge to take a group picture for us.

The rest of the trip was sort of like being on an episode of Storm Chasers. Black clouds and rain threatened us wherever we went. We started at the Sevier Dry Lake Bed to try our luck hunting for meteorites. It was a pretty surreal experience- you felt like you were walking on the moon. We didn't find any meteorites, but we did find some salt and shell fossils. We headed out to Fossil Mountain and discovered an interesting formation along the way that produced white marble. We collected a few samples and headed on to the mountain. The clouds got darker and the rain started coming down pretty hard, so we ended up heading back to town. After dinner the rain let up, so Harry, Paula and I went to Sunstone Knoll and collected Sunstones until dark.

Milford day was next. We headed down towards Milford and stopped at the Obsidian collecting site. We collected beautiful Mahogany Obsidian with gold flash. Even though it was cloudy, you could still see the gorgeous gold flash on the rocks. We then went to the Marietta Mine (a working gold, silver and copper mine) to collect on the dump. Security was tight, so Paula had to work her magic on the security guard to obtain permission to collect on the dump. He was very helpful and personally escorted us to the dump pile. We found vibrantly colored Chrysocolla and blue marble. The last stop of the day was the Frisco Ghost Town Gold Mine. It proved to be a great photo opp. The old workings and buildings were still intact enough to imagine what the town looked like in its hay day. We collected some small samples of Azurite, Malachite, Wulfenite and other minerals. The small cemetery was a somber reminder of how hard the life of a gold miner and his family was back then. We stopped at the Diner for dinner and then headed back to Delta in the dark. Driving at night proved to be a knuckle whitening experience. There were cows everywhere....very big cows....in the middle of the road. They are a whole lot bigger than the deer we have around here and can do some serious damage to a vehicle and it's occupants. It was long, scary ride back to town!



We spent the next three days collecting on Topaz Mountain. The area that the local rockhounds suggested turned out to be a red beryl hot spot for me. Harry and I pulled out 65 pieces of red beryl and 3 jars full of topaz in a 3 foot circle. Each day the storm clouds hovered over us and threatened to chase us off of

the mountain. The last day on the mountain we were forced to leave a little early due to some particularly dark clouds that crept over the top of the mountain behind us. As we were driving away, we saw a funnel cloud in the sky just over the area we had been working in- we got out of there just in time.

On our last collecting day we went to the Post Office in the morning and mailed 22 flat rate boxes of rocks home. We decided to spend our last day collecting at Rock Corral Canyon. This was an area we had visited on a previous trip, but didn't get a chance to collect there. The rain chased us out for part of the morning, but by the time we had lunch in the town of Milford, it had stopped. The canyon had very impressive rock formations and a little bit of everything that each of us wanted to collect. Carole and Al spent the day gold panning (they did find gold). Paula and Joe went in search of obsidian. Harry and I followed the creek looking for large smoky quartz crystals. We all found nice samples of what we were looking for and had an enjoyable day. We had dinner at the Hub in Delta, said our goodbyes to Carole and Al and packed up for the long journey home.