TC ROCKHOUNDS

April 2026 issue

The next regular meeting will be on Thursday, April 16, 2026, at 6:30 p.m. at the VFW Post at 3400 Veterans Drive in Traverse City. The programs will be announced at the meeting.

The next meeting of Pebble Pups will be at 5:30 p.m. on April 16th. The topic will be “The Gilman Story” about the mine and company town in Colorado. For poetry month, Pups can turn in poems on a rock, mineral, or fossil.

March Highlights

The programs were “How to Use a Cement Mixer to Tumble Glass and Stones” by Callee Newhouse and “How to Identify Agates” by Bob White and his able assistant Ellie. The club voted to be a Silver sponsor for $200.00, for the Petoskey Stone Festival in Eastport on May 16. Volunteers are needed to staff the club booth from 10:00 am to 4:00pm. The day can be split in two three hour shifts if that makes it easier for someone. Contact Lauren Vaughn if you are interested.

Food Pantry Donations

Linda Keeley oversees the food pantry supplies collection and Donna Kukla, the clothing donations. The successful program will continue at every meeting. Non-perishable food items, ***(Please no expired dates on food items, they can’t be used by food banks),*** personal hygiene products, children’s new underwear, for elementary to teens, toothbrushes and toothpaste.

Facebook Page

Visit the club’s Facebook page at this web address. There is also a link on our club website. https://www.facebook.com/TCRockhounds

Upcoming Field Trip and Special Event Information

All club members: Gary and Debbie Bull will be opening their home (and yard) for a Metal Detecting Party and Open House on Saturday April 18th from 11am-3pm. Bring your metal detector (and a snack to share) to the Bulls for detecting practice & exploration, and general club fun and camaraderie.

Calling all Pebble Pups!
Sunday April 19th from 10am-1pm the Bulls will have a guided tour of their collection and a fossil collecting opportunity. We will be outdoors, so wear outdoor gear. If you cannot make it on Sunday, please come on Saturday during the Open House and we will hit all the highlights!

All club members: if you cannot make it to the Open House on Saturday, we will welcome you after the Pebble Pups event wraps up, from (1-3)

Questions? Call Deb at 231-590-2316

Field Trip Survey

Dave and Renee have created a survey to explore the interests of members for future field trips. Here is the link to the survey:

https://forms.gle/femNiQXHNH7VcDno8

Please forward ideas for field trips to Dave Regalbuto at:

Dave Regalbuto
GTARMC Field Trip Coordinator
517-256-4716
E-mail: dregs9727@yahoo.com

NMC Trilobite Exhibit

Some members have already attended the “Trilobite Treasures” exhibit at the Dennos Museum at NMC and said that it is a very nice exhibit. It runs through May 31 and admission to the museum is $10.00.

Membership Information

From Cathy Kowaleski, Membership Chair:

You must be a paid member to continue to receive club benefits (participation in classes, outings and receiving club newsletters.)
Dues are $20 per Adult, Students (8-17) $5, and those under 8 are free with an adult membership. Name badges are $8 per badge.
Thank you!

Make checks out to GTARMC.

Membership dues may be mailed to:

Cathy Kowaleski, Membership Chair
801 S. Garfield Avenue #241
Traverse City, MI 49686

Club Email Addresses

gtarmc@tcrockhounds.com (is our main club email address)

To send a request for classes or workroom time, please send an email request to our club scheduler.

scheduling@tcrockhounds.com

If you have any photos that you would like to share of club events or members, those can be sent to:

noonanjohntc@gmail.com

To view club photos on Flicker, enter the following web address:
GT Rock & Mineral | Flickr

President	**Vice President**	**Secretary**	**Treasurer**
Eric Hallman	Bob White	De Elder	Callee Newhouse
231-620-6567	231-676-3644	231-463-3793	
ehall686@gmail.com	bluerockcreative@gmail.com	jde123123@yahoo.com	Callee.newhouse@gmail.com

Field Trip Coordinator	**Education & Training**	**Workroom & Classes**	**Facebook Page**
Dave Regalbuto	Pierre LaFoille	Renee Libby	Jenny Burcroff
517-256-4716	586-907-3512		231-499-4714
dregs9727@yahoo.com	pals0210@gmail.com	scheduling@tcrockhounds.com	burcrofj@gmail.com

Newsletter & Website	**Membership**	**Refreshments**	**Club Show Chair**
Lauren Vaughn	Cathy Kowaleski	Pat Captain	Lauren Vaughn
231-276-6150 H	231-633-0700	231-946-3026 H	231-276-6150 H
231-342-3613 C	ctkowaleski@gmail.com	231-342-6674 C	231-342-3613 C
maple2b@aol.com		cappat@aol.com	maple2b@aol.com

The above contact list will be included in each newsletter so that you know who to contact for various items.

Help Wanted

The club is still in need of a secretary. It is a position that does not require a huge time commitment. Notes are taken at club meetings and then the minutes of the meeting are created and shared with the club. Please see President Eric to volunteer for this important club position.

Also, Dianne Hallman needs a helper or two for the Kid's Table preparations for the annual September show. Please see Dianne to volunteer.

Pebble Pups News

For more information about the Pebble Pups, check out their website.

https://traversepebblepups.blogspot.com/

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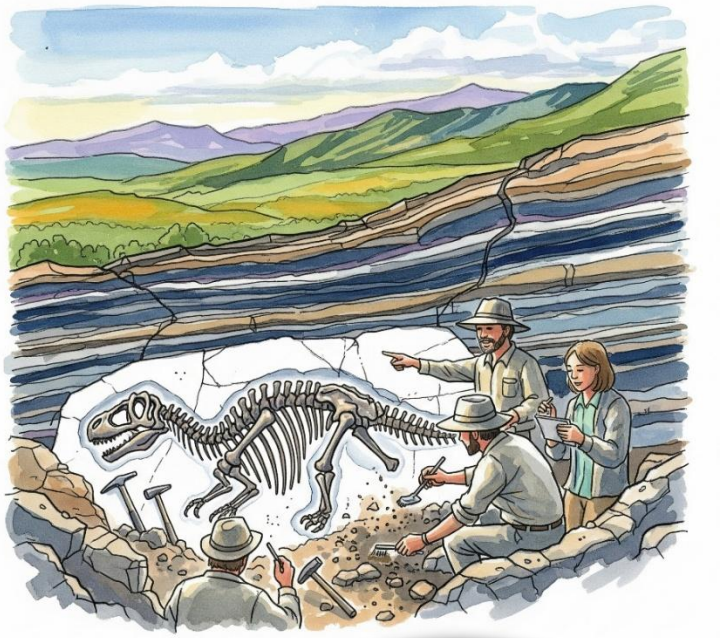
The Bull Home Rocks! A Backyard Geological Expedition!
Location: **Home of Deb and Gary Bull**
6091 Creighton Rd SW, South Boardman, MI 49680
Theme: Geological discovery
Date: **April 19, 2026**
Time: 10 am to 1 pm.

Get ready for an exciting field trip that will transport you to a world of ancient wonders and geological marvels!
What Awaits You:



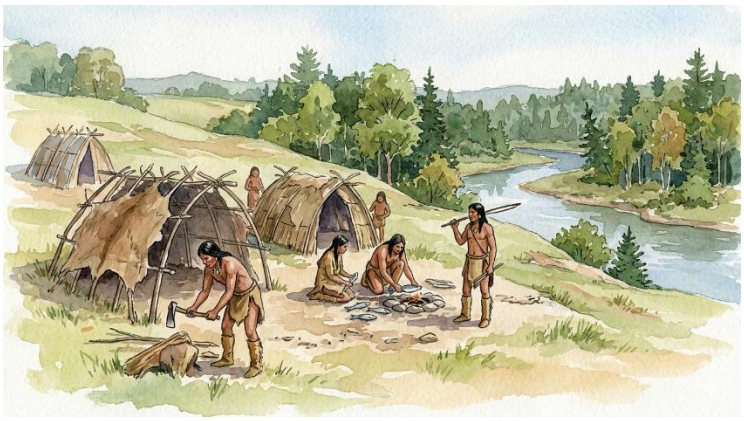
- Journey Around the Globe: See rocks, minerals, and fossils from every corner of the Earth, presented up close and personal for an unforgettable experience!
- Explore a Hidden Treasure Trove: Dive into a private collection brimming with incredible specimens, including dinosaur bones, dazzling assorted gemstones, unique Michigan fossils, and beautiful agates.
- Witness the Power of the Saw: Prepare to be amazed by a live rock saw demonstration amidst the largest collection of rock saws Up North! See how rough stones are transformed into polished beauties right before your eyes.
- Discover Lapidary Secrets: Explore a vast array of lapidary equipment, giving you a glimpse into the art and science of shaping and polishing gemstones.

- Magnify the Miracles: Grab a geological magnifier and delve into the intricate details of mineral wonders and even insects perfectly preserved in amber!
  Important Info: Light snacks will be provided to keep your energy up for all the exploring. Please remember to dress for the weather to ensure you're comfortable during this incredible indoor and outdoor adventure!

PEBBLE PUP FIELD TRIP ANNOUNCEMENT

Ancient Echoes Expedition: Journey into the World of Fossils
Location: Sabin Loop- Fossil Beach
Theme: Fossil Discovery Hike
Date: Saturday, **May, 9 2026**
Time: 10 am to 12 pm
Where: meet at Meadows Pavilion Natural Education Reserve
Joint trip with the Boardman River Nature Center (Grand Traverse Conservation District—GTCD)
Registration: Free, **registration with the Grand Traverse Conservation District (Boardman River Nature Center) is required.**
Description: Join GTCD and the Grand Traverse Rock and Mineral Club's Pebble Pups on a trip back in time to learn how recent geological history shaped the landscapes we know and love today! Embark on a thrilling adventure that invites you to step back in time and explore the geological wonders of our planet. This immersive hike will guide families through a captivating landscape rich in ancient echoes, where fossilized remnants tell the tales of prehistoric life. Led by seasoned experts in paleontology, the expedition combines the excitement of a scenic hike with hands-on fossil discovery, offering participants the chance to learn about ancient creatures.

PEBBLE PUP FIELD TRIP
The History and Archaeology of Samels Farm



YOU'RE INVITED: A Deep Dive into Samels Farm!
An exclusive archaeology and ancient history adventure for the GT Area Rock and Mineral Club's Pebble Pups.
Attention Pebble Pups! Are you ready to trade your rock hammers for archaeology tools? Samels Farm cordially invites the Pebble Pups to a private, hands-on exploration of their historic grounds. Pebble Pups aren't just going to look at the surface—they will dig into the stories hidden beneath it.

On the Agenda for Visiting Pebble Pups:

The "Dirty" Work (shovel testing): Put your observation skills to the test! The Samels Farm will set up a special shovel-testing station where Pups can learn to screen soil for artifacts. They have "seeded" the area with replica treasures to teach the professional techniques of archaeological recovery.

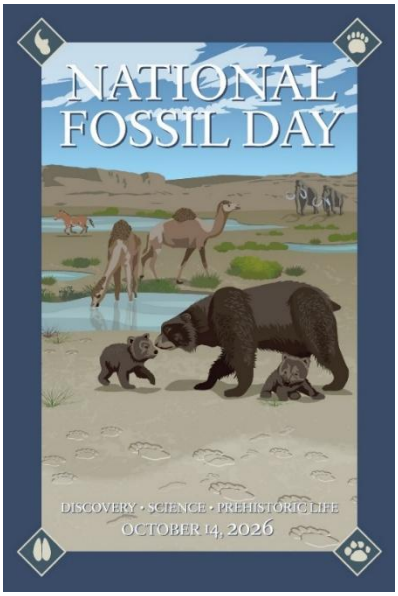
The Forest Secrets: Join in on a trek into an Old Growth Forest. Then hunt for Cache Pits—ancient storage features—and discuss how the geology of the land influenced how people lived hundreds of years ago.
Artifact Show & Tell: Get up close and personal with genuine and replica artifacts found on the farm. Their experts will discuss the history of the farm and archaeology.
Grounds Tour: Experience a guided walk through the farm's immediate footprint to see how the landscape has changed (and what stayed the same) over the centuries.
When & Where
🗓️ **DATE:** August 5, 2026
⏰ **TIME:** 1 pm to 4 pm
📍 **LOCATION:** Samels Farm, 8298 Skegemog Point Rd, Williamsburg, MI 49690
🥾 **What to bring:** Wear your favorite hiking boots or sturdy shoes and water. Dress for a summer afternoon.
Note to Parents: This is a fantastic opportunity for Pebble Pups to see how artifacts and this ancient occupation site tell the story of human history. It's interactive, educational, and—most importantly—a lot of fun.
RSVP
Please let us know if your family will be joining the expedition by **July 20, 2026**
Contact: Steven Veatch, steven.veatch@gmail.com
We can't wait to see what the Pebble Pups Learn!

SAVE THE DATE
EARLY ANNOUNCMENT

Earth Science Week and National Fossil Day Celebration

When: Wednesday, October 14th from 5:30 - 7:30 pm
Where: Boardman River Nature Center
Registration: Free, registration is required through the Boardman River Nature Center
Audience: Families and children

Celebrate Earth Science Week (October 11-17)
and National Fossil Day (October 14) with Pebble Pups and the Boardman River Nature Center! This celebration will showcase the incredible ways Earth science is conducted by a diverse range of people and professions, as well as how they work together to solve critical problems that our planet and communities face. Through this year's theme, "Critical Minerals for a Thriving Society", minerals that are essential for modern life and how professionals source them responsibly will also be highlighted. Marvel over a collection of truly amazing fossils and uncover the secrets they hold about ancient life and Earth's history. You won't just learn about fossils – you'll leave with one of your own to start your personal collection!



Following is an essay by Steven Veatch on the Red Elephant Mine in the Crystal Peak Area in Colorado

The Red Elephant Mine:
Crystal Peak Area, Colorado

Steven Wade Veatch

For as long as I can recall, I wanted to experience what it would be like to find the legendary crystals and gemstones that Pikes Peak is famous for. In some places Pikes Peak Granite contains an incredible suite of minerals that formed magnificent crystals in cavities at least a billion years ago. Large crystals of white microcline or feldspar are common. Amazonite, a variety of microcline, is present in well-formed crystal groups in varying shades of blue, ranging from a faint pale-blue to a brilliant blue-green color. The distinctive color is thought to be derived from varying levels of lead present in the amazonite when it formed, although this is still debated by mineralogists.

Microcline feldspar variety Amazonite with smoky quartz from the Halpern Mineral Collection, Colorado, USA. This file is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution-Share Alike 2.5 Generic license. Photo Date 2006 by Eric Hunt.

The amazonite from the Lake George area is distinctive because of its large, well-formed crystals, and its large size, and its intense blue color. Amazonite, named after the Amazon River where unusual, rounded pebbles of this gemstone were found, was part of the Pharaoh Tutankhamen's ring and was described as the third stone in Moses' breastplate.

Smoky quartz crystals are associated with the amazonite crystal groups, and most of the smoky quartz crystals are flawless—ranging from pale brown to midnight black, all with a stunning gem clarity. The smoky color is caused by radioactive elements in the granite. Slowly, over the millennia, the quartz darkens in response to the radiation. Purple, greenish, and light blue fluorite crystals also occur in this suite of minerals. These magnificent gemstones eluded me for over four decades.

One summer day, I asked my rock hounding friend, Dave Jackson, to go with me to the Crystal Creek area, which is noted for deposits of these gems, and to look around. The area is reached by following a two-track Pike National Forest road that begins at Lake George, Colorado then branches off at a towering raw granite formation known as Sheep’s Head, fords Crystal Creek, and then follows a steep grade to a ridge.

On our first trip there, I noticed the hillsides were perforated by numerous holes dug by previous prospectors. I thought that was a good sign that others searched here before us. After parking Dave’s truck, we manhauled our gear in five-gallon buckets the rest of the way. We each carried two buckets: one in each hand; one bucket was empty; the other bucket had our tools. The empty bucket was for the gems we might find.

We began our hike up the steep hill. It was a beautiful climb: granite boulders were

spotted with various species of lichen; mountain mahogany dotted the landscape; and kinnikinnick grew near the top of the ridge, where a cool mountain breeze passed through the pines. Dave and I decided to go to where the pine trees edged a small opening in the ground and to dig under the dumps of several small, abandoned prospects.

My old friend Rich, a first-rate prospector, ran into us on that sunny summer day and showed us an old gem mine next to where we were: he knew this site would be a good one for us to work. Rich said, “I worked the area next to this spot with good results. I’m telling you this is a good place to dig.” Rich is one of the rare people in life whom you run into who are doing exactly what they were meant to do. Rich is an exemplar in the mineral world and spends most days outdoors working at his mines. His face and hands are weather-beaten—almost like leather—from a lifetime of mining, both as a profession and a hobby.

Discussions with Rich that day brought back to me a number of pick and shovel moments of chipping crystals out of a cave together six years before in the mining town of Ouray, Colorado, and being run out by the property owner. Rich and I did not know it was private property. Four years earlier we had collected blood-red agates on a hill of volcanic ash near Cañon City, Colorado. Exposure to the weather turned the ash into bentonite clay, and recent rains made it swell up with a surface slippery as ice. While trying to pluck red agates out of the bentonite with Rich, I tripped and slid down the hill on my back, getting covered with wet bentonite clay. It took forever to get the clay out of my clothes and inside of the car. Rich laughed for hours.

I was glad we ran into Rich that day and got his help finding a good place to dig for gems. Dave and I followed his advice and began the arduous work of digging with picks,

shovels, pry bars, old screw drivers, and rock hammers. When the pick struck the granite, it would vibrate in our hands, sometimes sparks would fly, and the thud of the pick against the granite filled the forest. The granite would break up from the relentless pounding with the pick—leaving piles of crumbled granite. We shoveled the granite gravel into a bucket and then hauled it to the surface and dumped the gravel on the ground, forming a “tailings pile.”

In the Crystal Peak area, the gemstones and crystals occur inside of what is called a “pocket” or ancient bubble in the Pikes Peak Granite. This granite was formed just over a billion years ago as a melting, monstrous blossom of red magma pulled off the Earth’s mantle in a stately phenomenon forming a magma plume in that hostile and hellacious inferno. This molten plume made an unrelenting climb through the beleaguered crust, mixing the mantle and crustal material together and forming the Pikes Peak Granite.

Amazonite and Smoky quartz diorama, located in the First-Level Rocks & Minerals Exhibit at the Denver Museum of Nature and Science. Representing an unspecified 'Crystal Peak' location in Colorado.

A view of Crystal Peak near Florissant, Colorado. The area is known for its gem mining sites, most are under claim. Photo date 2006 by S. W. Veatch.

Parts of the Pikes Peak Granite became pegmatite, a coarse granite that sometimes yields precious gems. The granite pegmatite is derived from magma in the Pikes Peak Granite that formed during the last stages of its cooling. At this point volatile components trying to escape the magma, were trapped in the granite as bubbles. As the granite cooled and contracted, the bubbles or open cavities provided a space for crystals to grow to unusually large sizes and line the interiors of the voids. Our prospect hole was in just such a granite pegmatite.

Rich's directions paid off; after digging a few hours, Dave and I made a-six-foot-deep excavation that we could both fit in. We took turns with the pick and shovel work. The pick would break up the granite. When the disintegrated granite became deep, one

of us would shovel it into a plastic bucket and haul it to the surface to dump. It was cool and damp in our excavation pit, and the scent of fresh dirt and moist gravel was strong.

There is an abrupt change in the pegmatite as one approaches a gem cavity. The feldspar and, quartz that form the pegmatite change in appearance near a pocket. The component minerals become elongated or contorted, revealing what look like small swimming tadpoles or cuneiform writing—a mysterious script with an important, yet coded message declaring gemstones are near for those who are clever enough to follow the clues and find them. This is known as graphic granite.

Once a pocket is opened, we switched to working with wooden tools so we do not scratch the pocket minerals. Photo date 1998 by D. Jackson. R-4.

View of a pocket with a cluster of blocky amazonite crystals held in place by tree roots. Photo date 1998 by S. W. Veatch. R1-5.

Suddenly Dave yelled, “Look at the granite, it is changing—it is graphic granite for sure! See that old pine tree-root? It has worked its way through granite cracks and disappears straight into the rock. There must be a pocket behind the root.”

“Let me take a look,” and I yanked out the root, and then took my glove off and carefully put my finger into the hole. I said to Dave, “Holy God, I can feel the crystal faces!” My throat tightened, my heart almost beat out of my chest, and Dave’s eyes were open wider than an owl’s at night.

The root sought out moisture in a small cavity, leading us to that discovery. We immediately switched to wooden tools: tree branches, wooden skewering sticks, and wooden mallets, to open up the cavity slowly, carefully, and methodically. Metal tools can

nick or fracture the valuable crystals and gems. Once we enlarged the hole to the cavity, our flashlight revealed shining smoky quartz crystals; a gemmy, sky-blue amazonite-crystal group; and sparkling deep purple and light blue cubic fluorite crystals. One group of fluorite crystals clustered around the base of a gleaming smoky quartz crystal.

Our next step was to empty the pocket, about the size of a grapefruit, of its gem hoard. Each crystal and gem had to be carefully wrapped in newspaper for carrying it down to Dave's old truck. This pocket was the sign we needed to continue working the gem mine. If there is one crystal pocket, there will be others.

Dave Jackson is expanding the main pocket area of the Red Elephant. He put his jacket over a massive plate of stunning amazonite and smoky quartz crystals. Photo date 1998 by S. W. Veatch. R1-6.

About an hour's work of c
from the claim's pocket. P
Veatch. R1-7.

Our digging and removing crystals from the pocket burned up most of that first day. The shadows were shifting in the forest, and the sky was filled with pastel colors. I took one last look to the west and watched the setting sun redden the clouds over the boundless, tree-covered ridges; it was time to leave. Soon the dark blue of evening would spread, and it would be hard to travel along the old road in the dark. The moon was beginning its rise over Crystal Creek, and it was time to leave.

We came back the following weekend working the claim for a few hours and then having lunch near some fallen pine trees blown down by a violent summer storm. But on this day, the logs were our seats for lunch under a thick canopy of towering aspen trees. We each had a can of Red Elephant, an imported beer that has a great flavor and comes in giant cans and has a punch—it even made my lips numb. We decided to name our mining claim after the beer.

While relaxing and finishing my Red Elephant beer, I noticed a nearby decaying stump was full of life and realized that one day the forest would consume it. The stump was actually a dwarfed ecosystem. Many types of insects lived in the stump. A beetle stuck its head out from a hole it had bored in the bark. It left a pile of frass just below on a blanket of pine needles. I spotted a pill bug and a centipede, and noticed the different colors of moss and lichen that covered the stump. During the stump's decomposition, new niches for life opened and old ones closed as the stump evolved from fresh-cut wood leaking resin to rotting wood dripping nutrients into the soil. The stump will eventually become crumbled fragments and mold, invaded by roots of plants and covered by dead twigs and leaf litter fallen from the canopy of the trees above. It was time to stop thinking about a stump and return to the hard pick and shovel work of the afternoon.

After several hours of moving rock and gravel, we had a hole that was ten feet deep—straight down. I found out just how hard this work is: breaking through granite by dint of force and muscle with a pick is not easy at this depth, the gravel and rocks have to be hauled to the surface in a bucket on the end of a rope. The deeper the excavation, the harder the work is—gravity is constantly working against us. In our deep hole, we opened up a pocket larger than a watermelon.

A treasure trove of mineral specimens lined the pocket. Some crystals had detached from the pocket ceiling due to local vibrations from earthquakes and freezing and thawing cycles over many winters and fell flat on the pocket floor. The pocket floor was filled with flawlessly formed amazonite crystal groups—most over nine inches across—on sections of pegmatite granite. There were clusters of 12-inch-long smoky quartz crystals radiating out in various directions. Most of the crystals were as black as midnight.

I took my jacket off and covered the crystals on the floor of the pocket so they would be protected as we removed the ceiling crystals and as we broke away more of the granite rocks above. Removing the crystals and gems requires care. Any rush to extract them could make an ugly chip or fracture. All of the crystals were carefully removed by hand and then wrapped in newspapers to protect them. I carefully cleaned the pocket out with a wooden chop stick and whisk broom, and then sprayed the interior with water for a good view. At this point, the world's problems melted away and we are focused on protecting these gems. We were the first ones on the planet to see these primordial, unique, and quite valuable crystals.

On the way out, the buckets full of wrapped gems in one hand and the buckets of

tools in the other hand balanced us as we walked down the hill. Crystal Creek was flowing with a murmuring joy within its banks. Willows lined the creek until the road crossing where we drove through it. Some little birds were dipping at some of the pools of Crystal Creek. Deer were keeping an eye on our activities. Dave and I glanced at each other, and I said, “We sure hit it big, Dave; we made a big strike today.” Our excitement filled the gem fields.

* * *

On our last trip to the Red Elephant that summer, Dave’s truck was being repaired, and I was willing to risk my brand-new Jeep on the forest roads and all of its hazards to get to our mine. I drove my new Jeep Cherokee up the road and got stuck. Dave and I pushed, pulled, swore, and sweated, but remained stuck on the old 2-track road in the middle of Pike National Forest. My biggest concern was what my wife would do to me if I banged up our new Jeep. Cell phones did not exist yet, so I could not call out for help.

Soon we heard the sound of another car, and it was headed in our direction. I could not believe we would run into anyone on this road on a weekday. It was Ray Berry, a member of the local rock club (Colorado Springs Mineralogical Society) I belonged to. Ray is another mineral exemplar. On his way to work his claim, he pulled us out in seconds with his winch.

Dave and I began to work the Red Elephant, and soon we were down to 14 feet when our pick shattered the typical granite and revealed graphic granite—a sure sign we were close to a pocket of gemstones. We discovered several more pockets ranging in size from a softball to a basketball. Some of the pockets we found were located by following quartz veins to the crystal-lined pockets. The color of the granite also provides a

clue that a pocket is nearby—reddish granite tends to bear more pockets. Other pockets that day were located by pure luck.

* * *

The entire Crystal Creek area has been yielding amazing gemstones for centuries, providing material for an expanding gem market and yielding specimens that provide clues to help scientists understand the nature of the Pikes Peak Granite. Today there is still gemstone mining activity over the entire Crystal Creek landscape.

This land also has meaning beyond the valuable gems and as a gateway to scientific understanding. I noticed an old cabin and a few outbuildings in the forest. The cabin is deeply weathered. Parts of the buildings are gone or caved in. The chicken coop, always an important homestead structure, is still in good shape, built as strong as Fort Knox. Eggs and skillet fried chicken were important to a family that eked out a living in this remote forest a century ago.

Before homesteaders, this quiet land once belonged to the Ute people. Chief Ouray and his wife, Chipeta, camped in tepees during the summer, and Ute braves hunted in the area. When they were not hunting, the men climbed hilltops with good views and made arrow and spear heads from stone. The women made clothing from deer and bison hides and attended to other duties. Children played games in the aspen trees.

* * *

Currently, the area is an active gem mining site, and the place where I finally experienced the excitement of making a rich strike. On weekends, countless hobbyists work their claims. Some people work their claims all summer long.

It was the last day of our mining season. Leaning back on a ponderosa pine on the surface near the Red Elephant, I reflected on the season. After hunting the elusive Pikes Peak amazonite for decades, I finally found it. I learned from this experience to never give up on something you want to accomplish. If you give up, you will never know what could have been. This is an important lesson for many aspects of life.

Then there is the hard work—the digging; digging deep into the ground that yielded the elusive gems. The digging that put me into direct contact with the nature of the granite gave me a deeper insight to the geology of the site and the architecture of Pikes Peak Granite over wider areas. I realized that I could physically keep up with the hard digging. I learned about people: that Dave was fair and split the specimens we found evenly, and that Rich was a good friend to direct us to a site that he knew contained valuable gemstones. Rich did not have to provide that information. I also experienced nature on a deeper level. When I took a break from digging, I saw the cycle of life at the decaying stump. It was truly a season with nature, one without the technology that has invaded every dimension of our lives. I knew there was more to learn out there in the forest, and that means to continue digging, always deeper.

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It was getting late on our last day of the mining season. We packed up our gear and headed down the trail, crisscrossed by deer tracks, to my jeep. With darkness fast approaching, we drove down the old forest-service road. As the Jeep forded Crystal Creek, a small herd of deer—waiting to get a drink—watched us from the trees. A hawk silently flew overhead, towards the setting sun.

Location of the Red Elephant

Mileage Log	Location
0.00	At the intersection of U.S. Hwy 24 and Trail Creek Road (Pike National Forest work center sign marks this) in Lake George, Colorado, turn left if you are heading west on Hwy 24
3.1	Junction of Trail Creek Road and Crystal Peak Road - go left
3.6	At Junction go straight
4.1	Sheep's Nose rock formation to the left - continue down road
4.3	Forest Road 201 - turn left
4.5	Pike National Forest Boundary
4.9	Old prospectors shack - stay to the left
5.3	Ford Crystal Creek - stay to the left
5.8	Ford Crystal Creek on last time - turn left
5.9	Park here and hike up trail to top of hill - pegmatite minerals are in this area

Acknowledgment

I am deeply grateful to Bob Carnein for his meticulous editing and insightful guidance. His keen eye for detail and commitment to the integrity of this story helped transform a rough draft into a finished narrative. This memoir is significantly stronger because of his expertise.