



July 2026 issue

The next regular meeting will be on Thursday, July 16, 2026, at 6:30 p.m. at the VFW Post at 3400 Veterans Drive in Traverse City. The program will be Gerald Wilgus presenting "The Anti-Atlas of Morocco.

June Highlights

The program was our annual Silent auction. Two rounds of lively bidding took place.

Food Pantry Donations

Linda Keely oversees the food pantry supplies collection and Donna Kukla, the clothing donations. The program has been seeing declining participation. A decision will be made soon on whether to continue at every meeting. Non-perishable food items, **(Please no expired dates on food items)**, personal hygiene products, children's new underwear, for elementary to teens, toothbrushes and toothpaste are desired.

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>

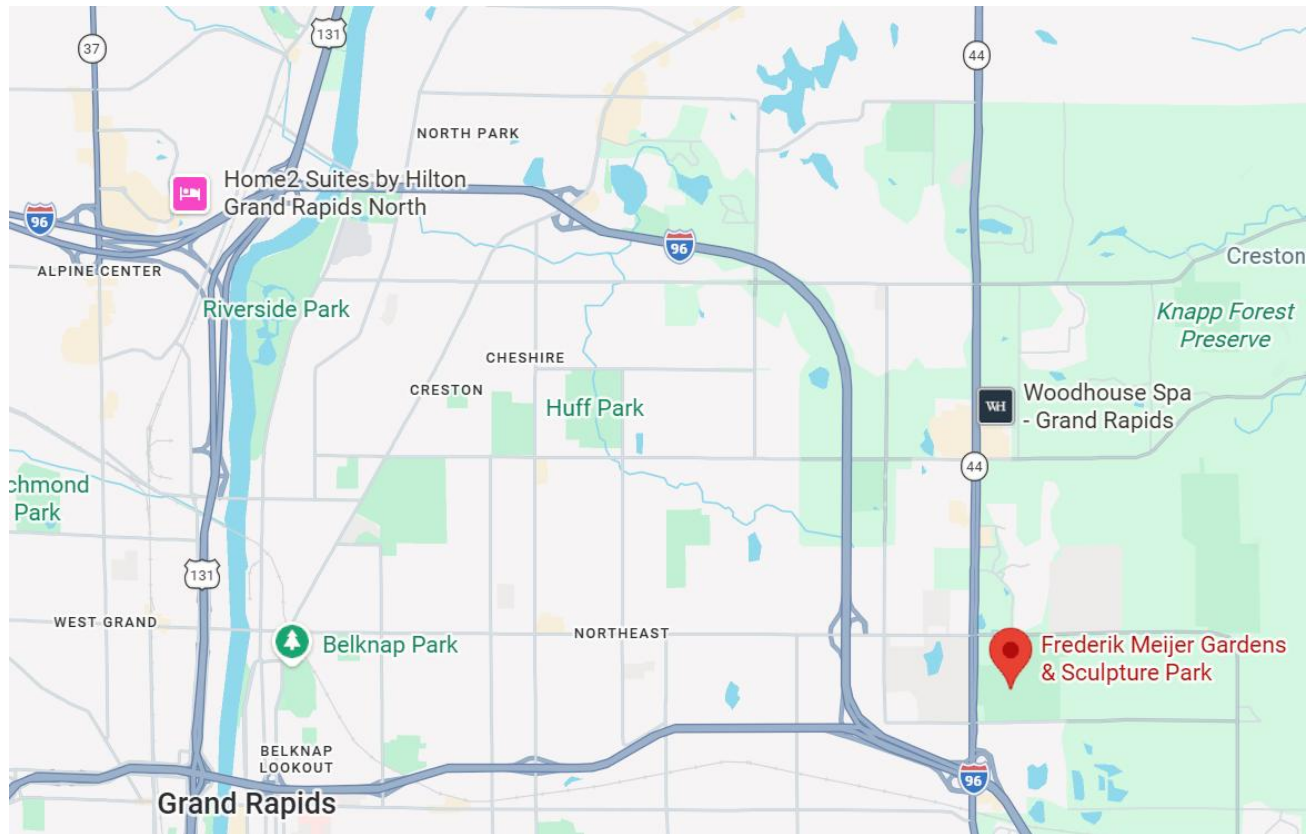
Upcoming Field Trips

Sunday July 19 Outing: Bonsais at Frederik Meijer Gardens (FMG)

We are invited to a "behind the scenes" experience with FMG's bonsai collection. Thanks to Dean Bull, who has curated this collection since 2001, and FMG Vice president Steve LaWarre, who has generously waived the entry fee for this exhibit. Thanks Steve!

Explore/prepare for this outing:

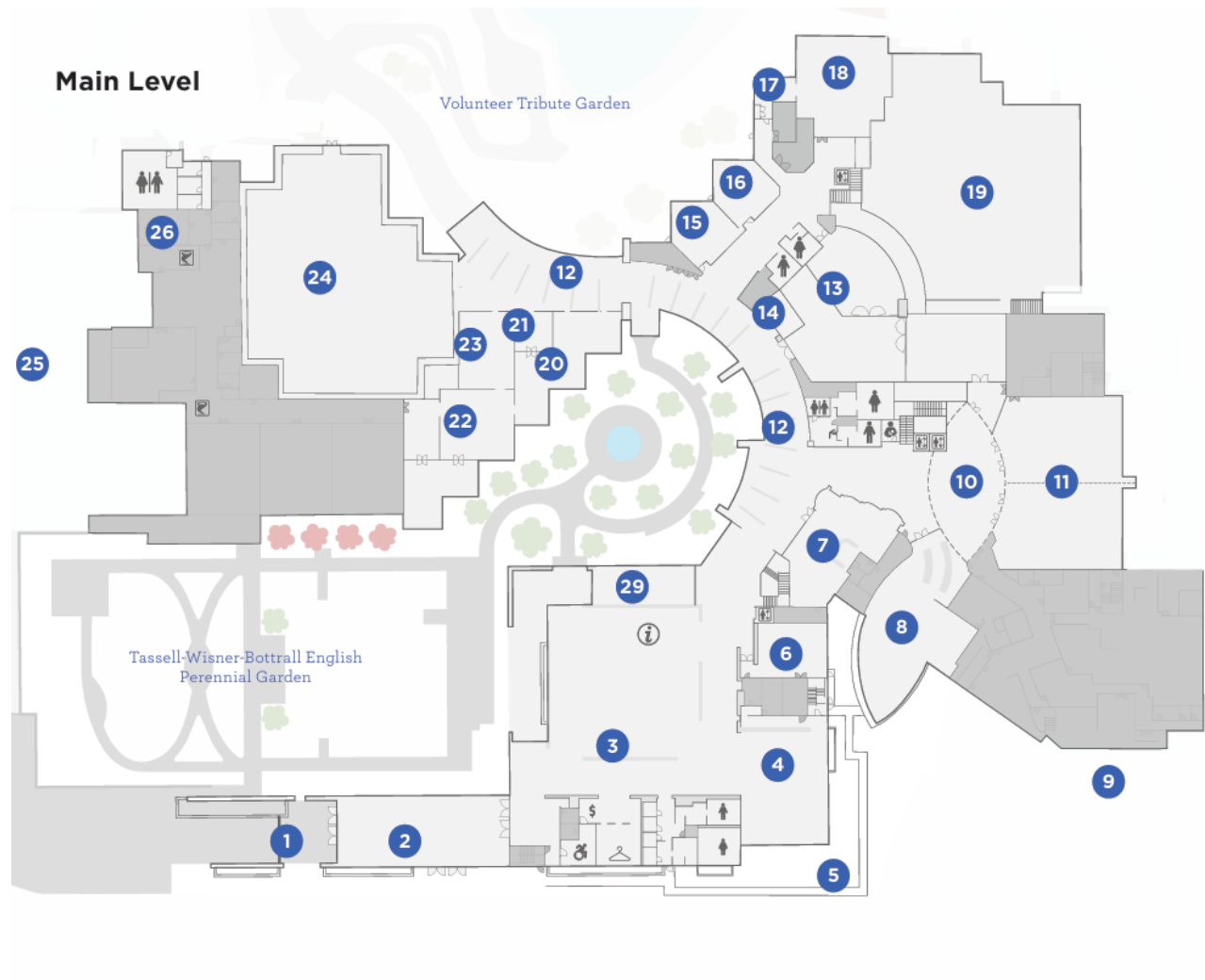
[Maps & Directions » Meijer Gardens | Frederik Meijer Gardens & Sculpture Park](#)



Arrival times: your choice of 9, 10, or 11 am (on the hour please) - come to the Ticketing Center, and you will be met there. **Please let me know if you will be arriving at 11.** The earlier you arrive, the more time you'll have not just with the bonsais, but also the other stunning gardens and features at FMG. It's about 2.5 hours from Traverse City to FMG.

Park in the main parking lot; the Ticketing Center is Room 4 on this map:

[25-XXX Maps-for-Website-2025.pdf](#)



Lunch: FMG has an excellent cafeteria, or you are welcome to bring a lunch.

Please contact me if you have questions.

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

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August 15 - Change: Point Betsie Lighthouse Beach (was Magoon Creek Natural Area)

I have received consistent feedback that Magoon Creek beach near Manistee is not a great rock hounding spot. At the Norwood Park picnic, we agreed to switch to Point Betsie. Let's meet at 11 am, and we can have a BYO picnic lunch. I will bring a canopy and folding tables. Bring your own lunch, drinks, place setting, and typical lakeshore collecting equipment.

September 12-13 Field Trip - Whitefish Point

During the May and June meetings, a consensus was reached that we will focus on the greater Whitefish Point area for collecting (instead of Grand Marais) in the eastern UP. The suggested collecting areas extend west of the USFS property boundary to as far west as Vermillion. There is no collecting at Whitefish Point itself - its part of the Seney National Wildlife Refuge. We can collect after lunch on Sat 9/12, then again on Sun 9/13, then head home/recreate as you wish.

Other fun activities at/near Whitefish include:

- Great Lakes Shipwreck Museum: [Home - Great Lakes Shipwreck Historical Society](#)
- Birdwatching and Whitefish Point Bird Observatory: [Home Home - Whitefish Point Bird Observatory](#)
- Friends of Whitefish Point Nocturnal Owl Banding: [Visit the owl banding station — Friends of Whitefish Point](#)
- Tahquamenon Falls (Upper/Lower Units)

Timing: I have reserved the covered picnic pavilion at the Lower Falls Portage Campground for Saturday Sept 12; I'll be there starting about 10 am. My suggestion is that we convene for a BYO lunch - arrive whenever. We can discuss target collecting areas, and I can describe birding opportunities during Saturday evening and Sunday morning. We can reconvene for a potluck dinner at the pavilion Saturday evening, sharing our newly found treasures. I will bring a grill and GTARMC can provide burgers/brats. Bring a dish to share.

Lodging: on your own; it's time to start pinning down camping or lodging spots. There are several hotels/B&Bs in the Newberry area. If you don't want to stay overnight, the trip can be done as a long Saturday there-n-back.

Sept 2026 Amethyst Trip - Schedule and Input Needed on Lodging

Calling all September 2026 Amethyst Trip Participants:

I have identified a lodging option for the amethyst trip: **Camp Duncan on Loon Lake**.

Check it out at:

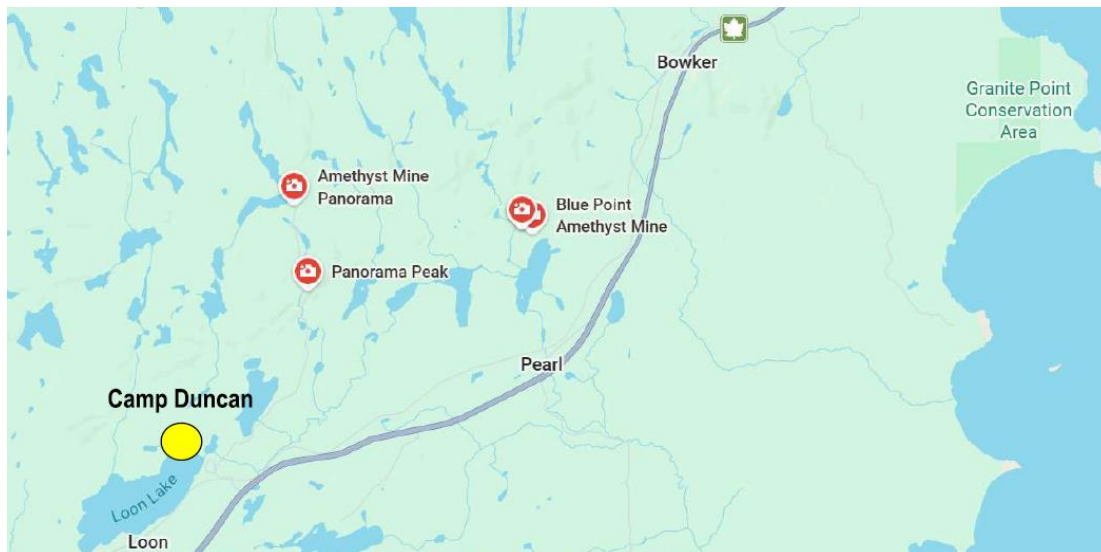
[Camp Duncan Loon Lake Ontario](#)

At the Norwood picnic this past weekend, there was favorable initial feedback on staying at Camp Duncan. If we commit to the camp, I suggest that we arrive on Fri 9/18, collect on Sat/Sun 9/19-20, and break camp on the morning of Mon 9/21 (three nights rental). Folks are of course at liberty to continue hunting at the nearby amethyst mines on 9/21.

Before putting down a non-fundable deposit on the camp, I need more input, soon, from those planning to do this trip. Please look at the camp, and take into account:

- The camp consists of 10 cabins, a lodge with kitchen and fireplace, communal wash/shower houses, firepit. Total capacity is 77 campers, er, amethyst enthusiasts.
- The cabins are bunk-style with baseboard heating. **There is no indoor plumbing.** We would furnish our own bedding (i.e., linens and/or sleeping bags, plus pillows).
- There are 10 cabins; if we have as many as 20 participants, we can still have 2 persons per cabin.
- We are responsible for providing our own meals, leaving the kitchen clean at departure, and for removing our own garbage. We are not responsible for cleaning the washrooms/showers.
- Camp cost is CA\$500/night. If we have at least 10 participants, this comes out to \$100/night per couple, less than most lodging in Thunder Bay or Nipigon. Obviously, per person cost goes down the more GTARMC folks make the trip and opt for the camp.

Camp Duncan would be a convenient location, not far from our three target collecting locations, approximately halfway between Thunder Bay and Nipigon.



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The three amethyst mines available to us are:

Amethyst Mine Panorama: [Home | Amethyst Mine Panorama](#)

Diamond Willow Amethyst Mine: [Thunder Bay Amethyst Mine & Rock Shop | Diamond Willow" - Diamond Willow Amethyst Mine](#)

Blue Point Amethyst Mine: [bluepointamethystmine.ca](#) (Blue Point and Diamond Willow are next to each other)

The camp would provide ample space where we can all gather, at a location only a few miles from the collecting locations, and at a likely lower cost than a motel/hotel. It would eliminate the need to pull a camper trailer. But the cabins would not be as comfy as staying at a hotel/motel in/near either Thunder Bay or Nipigon - about a 30-minute drive from the mines.

Let me know (text, email, call) if you are planning on doing this trip, and I'd like your thoughts about this camp BEFORE our July 16 meeting. If we go with Camp Duncan, we will need to provide the non-refundable deposit by July 20 (earlier is better), which is 60 days in advance of arrival (September 18). The camp has us penciled in, but of course they cannot guarantee availability without a deposit. I don't want to make a deposit unless there's strong majority buy-in for staying there. I'm OK either way. There is other lodging and camping in the area, but either way it's time to pin down accommodations. Getting into the amethyst mines is the easy part!

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

Please forward ideas for field trips to Dave Regalbuto at:

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

Class Opportunity

Upcoming Classes: Wire Weaving Basics

We're excited to welcome Alinka Lipchinsky, who will be teaching two hands-on wire wrapping classes on August 8 and 9 at the New Approaches Center in Traverse City. Whether you're new to wire weaving or looking to

refine your skills, these classes offer a wonderful opportunity to create beautiful, wearable art.

Saturday, August 8, 12:30 – 4:30 PM – Three-Wire Bracelet

Cost: \$45

This class explores a variety of simple wire weaving patterns used to create a custom three-wire bracelet. You'll leave with a finished piece and the confidence to continue weaving on your own. All materials and instruction are provided.

Sunday, August 9, 12:30 – 4:30 PM – Wrap Your Rock

Cost: \$45

In this class, students will focus on creating a pendant using a wire frame and bail. Techniques will include wrapping rocks, girdled and flat cabochons, and other flat objects. Participants are encouraged to bring their own rocks, cabochons, or found objects. Materials and instruction are provided.

Each class runs for 4 hours, and participants may register for one or both sessions.

Class size is limited to 10 people, and registration is filled on a first-come, first-served basis.

Participants must be current GTARMC members to attend. Payment must be made in advance, as spaces are not confirmed until payment is received. Electronic payment is preferred. Those paying by check should mail payment to Cathy Kowaleski, 801 S. Garfield Avenue #241, Traverse City, MI 49686. Payment must be received by Friday, July 17. After signing up, you will receive an email with a link to the electronic payment page if you are accepted, or notification if you have been placed on the waiting list.

Class Location:

5123 N Royal Drive
Traverse City, MI 49684

Note: Parking and entrance is at the back of the building.

Sign up here: <https://forms.gle/NhJuX5ANnyfnRo9h8>

Beginning Silversmithing Class

This class will be held on October 4 and 11 at the Crooked Tree Art Center (where our club work room is) on Sixth Street in Traverse City. The class will be taught by Janet Ryan and Cathy Prieto-Smith. The cost will be tentatively \$84.00 per person. This class will be for those that have not taken a silversmithing class before.

The end of an era!

After 60 years of business, the C & M rock shop on US-31 between Interlochen and Honor will be closing at the end of the season.

For the entire summer, almost everything inside and outside is being sold at 50 percent off. Visiting early would be a wise idea since once it's gone, it's gone. Store hours are Monday through Saturday from 10:00 am to 5:00 pm. They are closed on Sundays.

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@trockhounds.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 Flickr, enter the following web address:
[GT Rock & Mineral | Flickr](#)

President Eric Hallman 231-620-6567 ehall686@gmail.com	Vice President Bob White 231-676-3644 bluerockcreative@gmail.com	Secretary De Elder 231-463-3793 jde123123@yahoo.com	Treasurer Callee Newhouse Callee.newhouse@gmail.com
Field Trip Coordinator Dave Regalbuto 517-256-4716 dregs9727@yahoo.com	Education & Training Pierre LaFoille 586-907-3512 pals0210@gmail.com	Workroom & Classes Renee Libby scheduling@trockhounds.com	Facebook Page Jenny Burcroff 231-499-4714 burcrofj@gmail.com
Newsletter & Website Lauren Vaughn 231-276-6150 H 231-342-3613 C maple2b@aol.com	Membership Cathy Kowaleski 231-633-0700 ctkowaleski@gmail.com	Refreshments Pat Captain 231-946-3026 H 231-342-6674 C cappat@aol.com	Club Show Chair Lauren Vaughn 231-276-6150 H 231-342-3613 C 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. Also, they need items donated for the Kid's Table. Things like Petoskey Stones, Leland Blue, small and medium polished stones are all welcome.

Pebble Pups News

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

<https://traversepebblepups.blogspot.com/>

Calling All Rockhounds: The Pebble Pups are Hitting the Road!

Get ready to rumble! Our Pebble Pups have been officially invited to take center stage at **five area libraries** this summer! We're bringing the world of geology to the community, and we need **YOU** to help us make it a smashing success. To make this hands-on experience unforgettable, we are providing a fossil, mineral, and rock "dig" for the kids, and we need a mountain of specimens.



What We're Looking For

We need items that are small but mighty! Please check your stashes for specimens **no larger than the size of a quarter**:

- **Tumbled Stones** (Smooth and shiny!)
- **Small Crystals** (Quartz, calcite, you name it.)
- **Crinoid Stems** (The classic "cheerio" fossils!)
- **Fossils** (Brachiopods, trilobite bits, chain coral, Favosites, Petosky stones)
- **Unique Specimens** (Anything cool that fits the size limit!)

How to Donate

Pack up your treasures and bring them to the **next meeting**.

Drop-off Point: Please hand your donations directly to **Steven Veatch**.

Let's show these libraries why our club rocks! Thank you for supporting the next generation of geologists and the growth of our club.



During the summer, pebble pups can work on individual projects. I have fossils, rocks, and minerals that any pup can work on. As a special bonus, the specimen can be kept by the pebble pup and it can be added to their collection.

The project starts by a parent letting me know of an interest in doing this. Next, we meet at the TC District library or the Kingsley library to make a research/writing plan and then we image the specimen. The pebble pup then spends several weeks researching and writing. The pebble pup then meets Steven Veatch via zoom to review the work the pup has done one or two times, then the article is finished up and published here:

GTARMC newsletter, AFMS Crack the News, Mini Miners Monthly

This is a valuable opportunity to have three publishing credits at a young age. The experience is also helpful for school. Just let me know your interest. And, when you see Wyatt at a field trip this summer, congratulate him.
Steve

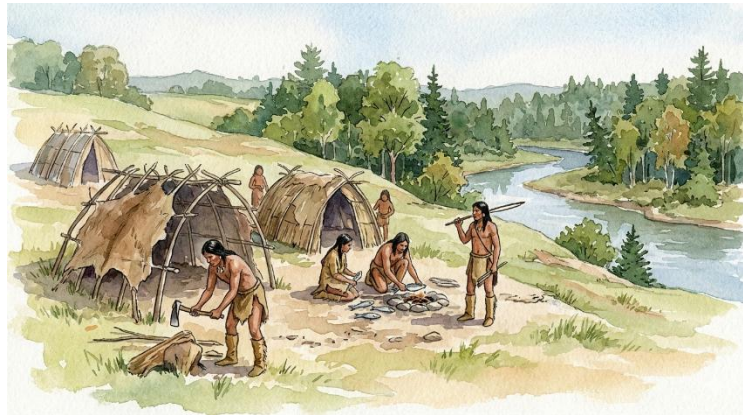
PEBBLE PUP FIELD TRIP

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 ANNOUNCEMENT

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!

Here is an article by Pebble Pup, Wyatt Meader. This article also appeared in the June "Mini Miners Monthly" national newsletter.

Studying A Fossilized Fern

By Wyatt Meader

The fossilized fern pictured in this paper (Figure 1) was found in the famous Mazon Creek fossil beds near Morris in Grundy County, Illinois. Paleontologists have identified this specific specimen as *Ptychocarpus unitus*. These renowned fossil beds have been actively studied since the middle of the nineteenth century.

Together, the matrix and fossil weigh 14 grams (0.5 ounces). The fossil and its surrounding matrix measure 3 centimeters (1.2 inches) in length. The fossil itself is 1 centimeter (0.4 inches) wide, while the matrix is slightly over 2 centimeters (0.8 inches) wide. This specimen is estimated to have formed during the mid-Pennsylvanian, roughly 309 million years ago.



Figure 1. *Ptychocarpus unitus* is an extinct fossil fern from the Pennsylvanian Period, preserved in the Mazon Creek Fossil Beds Photo date 2026 by Wyatt Maeder.

As you can see in figure 1 the fern fossil and matrix are a reddish-brown color. This means it is preserved in an ironstone concretion. Some studies show that there could be traces of organic carbon. I do not know this because I don't have access to a gas spectrometer.

Thanks to exceptional preservation like that found in this fern, scientists can reconstruct ancient equatorial ecosystems, helping us learn more about late Paleozoic plant life, climate, and evolutionary history.

Table. 1 Identification	
Taxon:	<i>Ptychocarpus unitus</i>
Family:	Marattiaceae
Locality:	Mazon Creek, IL
Time Period:	
Era	Paleozoic
Period	Middle Pennsylvanian

References

Hoskins, J. H. (1933). A *Ptychocarpus* Type of Fructification from Illinois. *The American Midland Naturalist*, 14(6), 726–728. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2420131>

Jennings, J. R., & Millay, M. A. (1979). Morphology of the fertile *Pecopteris unita* from the Middle Pennsylvanian of Illinois. *Palaeontographica Abteilung B*, 170(1-3), 51–65.

Tripp, M., Schwark, L., Brocks, J. J., Mayer, P., Whiteside, H. J., Rickard, W., Greenwood, P. F., & Grice, K. (2023). Rapid encapsulation of true ferns and arborane/fernane compounds fossilized in siderite concretions supports analytical distinction of plant fossils. *Scientific Reports*, 13(1), Article 19851. <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41598-023-47009-8>

About the author: Wyatt Maeder is a member of the Grand Traverse Area Rock and Mineral Club's pebble pups. He is 11 years old and in 6th grade.

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During the summer, pebble pups can work on individual projects. I have fossils, rocks, and minerals that any pup can work on. As a special bonus, the specimen can be kept by the pebble pup and it can be added to their collection.

Here is what I have to work on:

1. **"Alabama Impact Wood"** (often referred to as Brilliant Petrified Wood) is a rare, sparkling, petrified wood found in Elmore County, near the **Wetumpka Impact Crater**, and the Coker Member of the Tuscaloosa Formation. It was formed roughly 85 million years ago when an asteroid struck the region. The wood glitters with quartz crystals. I have a large piece for you to work with and to keep.
2. **Zoisite**: a striking green metamorphic rock with a red ruby in the middle. This specimen is from Africa. The ruby strongly reacts to a black light.
3. **Unusual banded chert**: Some of it has crystals all over it. Stunning samples.
4. **Upper Peninsula**: native copper in basalt. A nice museum quality piece.
5. **Amethyst crystals**
6. **Thomsonite minerals**

The project starts by a parent letting me know of an interest in the Pebble Pup in doing this. Next, we meet at the **TC District library or the Kingsley library** to make a research/writing plan and then we image the specimen. The pebble pup then spends several weeks researching and writing. The pup then meets Steven Veatch one or two times via zoom to review the work the pup has done. Next the article is finished up and published here:

- GTARMC newsletter
- AFMS *Crack the News*
- *Mini Miners Monthly*

This is a valuable opportunity to have three publishing credits at a young age. The experience is also a helpful experience for school.

Just let me know your interest and your availability to meet at the library. Provide your top two specimen choices. The specimens will be given out in the order in which I receive responses.

Also reserve your spot today to the Semels Farm trip in August. Let me know who is coming and how many.

We are planning a beach expedition to collect specimens for early next month. Keep an eye out for the date.

Steve

And to finish this month's newsletter is version two of a great poem by Steven Veatch! He has made several changes and improvements to the poem in the June newsletter.

What Are Rocks For?

A Liturgy of Deep Time

For being older than memory or myth.
For giving up a hidden history, layer upon layer.
For recording the silent closing of a vanished sea.
For marking the unconformity of time itself.

For the slow-moving magma that cooled miles beneath the surface,
forming the crystalline foundation of continents.
For bearing the stress of mountain building,
and teaching the craton¹ how to endure.

Exposed, rocks stand against relentless weather,
yielding only to the slow insistence of wind, rain, and ice,
and then erosion claims the rock rubble.

For the igneous birth in the furnace of the rift.
For sedimentary strata laid down in silence.
For the metamorphic weight that pressures and heats
old rock until it forgets what it was.

For echoing the violence of volcanic eruptions.
For gold that rose with superheated water and hid itself in veins of ore.
For hosting the silent, reflective fire of the geode's heart.

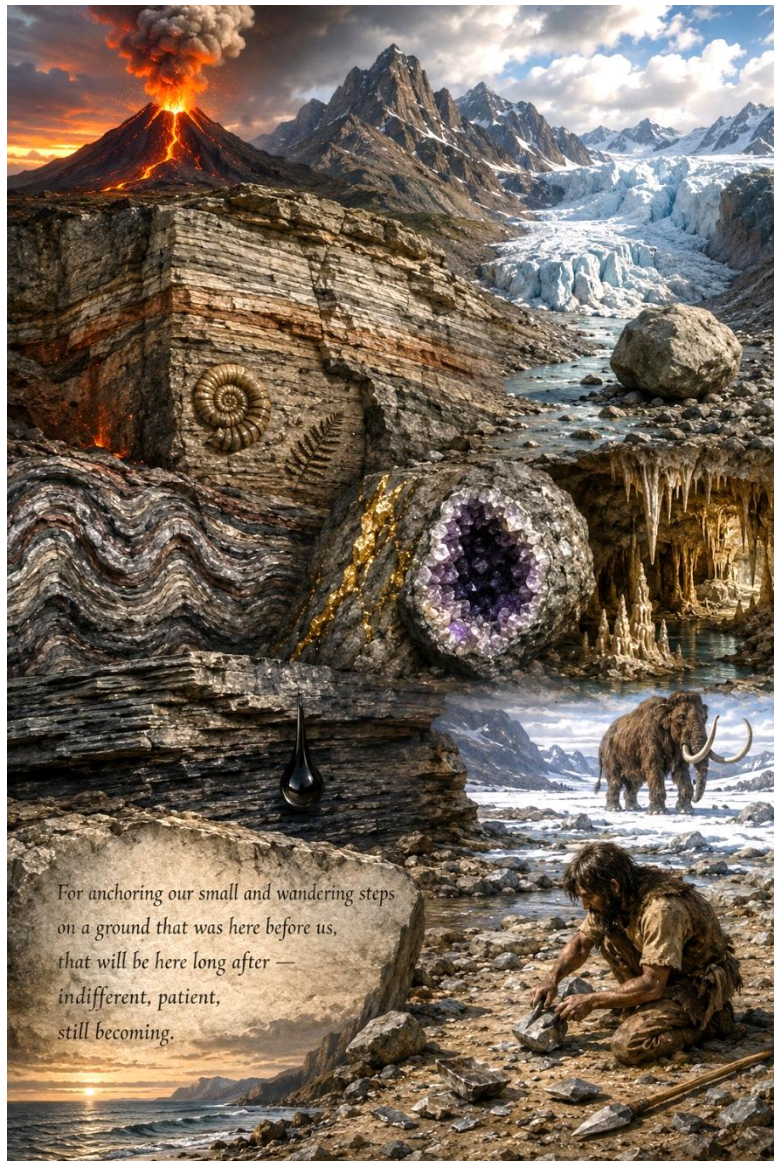
For keeping secrets deep in solution caverns,
where calcite drips down stalactites slowly over centuries.
For holding the liquid memory of the sun and ancient plants
within the oil locked in shale.

For marking where glaciers melted and shed their stony drift.
For erratics—those displaced giant boulders dropped by vanishing ice.
For the frozen silt and sand that holds the weight of the mammoth's grave.
For the hunter's chert to make a sharp edge.

¹ A craton is an ancient, stable part of the Earth's continental crust that has survived tectonic plate activity and mountain-building processes for billions of years.

For anchoring our small and wandering steps
on a ground that was here before us,
that will be here long after —
indifferent, patient,
still becoming.

By Steven Wade Veatch



*For anchoring our small and wandering steps
on a ground that was here before us,
that will be here long after —
indifferent, patient,
still becoming.*

What rocks are for.

Image generated by S. W. Veatch using ChatGPT.