

Tips For Our Upcoming Tourmaline Field Trip

Saturday, June 18, 2016 10am - 3pm

Location: Allow yourself 2 ½ hours to drive from Pasadena. The entrance to the gem dig is: Lake Henshaw 26439 Hwy 76, Santa Ysabel, CA. This is a campground style business. The mine dig is at the far west end of the campgrounds. When you arrive, you will see the Lake Henshaw Resort General Store. If the gate to the resort is not open, go into the store and let them know you are attending the mine dig and ask for the gate code. If you are interested in camping or cabins at the resort, see this web site: www.lakehenshawresort.com/camping.html

The “mine dig”: The mine operator loads a truck with mine tailings - mostly dirt with some rocks - and dumps it in a pile. These tailings have been known to contain collectible specimens that were overlooked by the miners as they tunneled in search of rich pockets a hundred years ago. You will be assigned a sifting table with a tub of water. “Digging” involves walking 15 feet to the dirt pile, shoveling ore-containing dirt into a 3 gallon bucket and pouring it into a sifting screen on a wooden bench. The mine operators provide buckets, shovels, sifting screens, a tub of water to rinse the dirt off of the gravel and a table to set everything on. Their web site is: www.highdesertgemsandminerals.com/html/himalaya_mine_dig.html

What you need to bring:

- Lunch, hand sanitizer or soap
- Wear old clothes, as they will get muddy, and a change of shoes, as they will also get muddy
- Large brimmed sun hat
- Gloves are optional - bring along Playtex gloves (the kind you might wear for cleaning kitchens and bathrooms) if you do not want to get your hands dirty.
- (2) one-quart slide-lock plastic bags to put your finds in
- An old toothbrush for scrubbing dirt from the crystal stones that you elect to bring home
- Plenty of cold drinking water
- A small bucket to take larger specimen stones home
- A folding chair for resting and lunch.
- Shade. The effects of sun and fun are not to be underestimated. A 10x10 EZ-UP or umbrella that you can use to shade yourself while sifting or sitting can make the difference between a great trip and heat exhaustion.

This is a fee-to-dig location. Identify yourself as you arrive so that the mine staff can check you off of the group-fee list, and pay the mine staff at that time. The fee for our group is \$50 for adults, \$25 for children ages 13-17 and children 12 and younger are free. The mine staff will provide all tools for digging at no extra charge! All paid attendees will receive a raffle ticket for a special gem prize from the mine owners.

Some Important Rules:

We want to be able to invite our lapidary club members back to the Himalaya Mine for future gem digs. To do this it is important that we maintain orderly and equitable conduct. Please read and understand these rules.

1. Do not stand at the dirt pile to scrape, dig into or otherwise “mine” the dirt pile. Give everyone an equal chance of finding gems by filling your bucket and taking it to your sifting table.
2. Do not climb on the dirt pile.
3. Don’t sift dirt into your water tub. Try to keep the water clean as long as you can, to avoid “down” time while your water gets changed.
4. Adults are asked to supervise young miners.
5. Do not wander off to search for the mine.

Also available: Bags of high grade gem pocket ore are available for purchase for \$100 each which can be taken home for screening. Faceted gemstones including Himalaya Mine Tourmalines and Sunstones (shipped from a sister mine in Oregon) are also available for purchase on site.

There are toilets nearby the digging location. Picnic tables are available and there are some huge oak trees to sit under. Also, the general store has snacks and goodies.