

SVGMS Field Trips, History, and Classification

Greetings members of SVGMS,

Please take some time to read this important “**Field Trip News**” report.

History of Field Trips -

Most rock hounds I meet join Rock clubs for the field trips, the thrill of the hunt.

“Life is like a box of rocks. . . you just never know what you’re going to find”.

Over the last five years there has been several developments that have threatened the liberty of rock collecting. The most dramatic is the Federal and State regulations; no longer permitting the recreational collecting of minerals on Public Lands. This has virtually closed those areas to collecting. Also the increased mining regulations and safety liabilities for Commercial Mines allowing non- certified persons in Commercial mining areas. These events have created a void in available collecting sites for all rock hounds. This makes developing and scheduling field trips much more challenging.

Other Rock Clubs have been feeling the squeeze and many are starting to engage in “sharing and/or hosting” regional field trips, to invite and include other regional Rock Clubs. I have endorsed this effort for SVGMS to expand the potential field trip experience. More on this going forward.

Field Trip Classification

What does that mean?? When a SVGMS and/or regional field trip has been scheduled by our club it means that it has been reviewed and approved by the SVGMS Field Trip Coordinator and/or SVGMS board. Why is that important? The Club and its Members of SVGMS are covered by the Eastern Federation of Mineralogical and Lapidary Societies, Inc. liability Insurance. By definition it is: *A Commercial General Liability insurance policy that will help protect enrolled Clubs and their members against damage that may be caused to another party (person or property.) It is not the intent of this policy to protect the individual club member from damage they may do or cause to themselves or to their own property, and such is excluded under the policy.*

If there is an insurance claim, there is a deductible amount that you and/or the club would be responsible.

A non-club sponsored field trip would NOT be considered a covered trip. You accept the full liability! Let’s not go there.

This brings me to the point of classifying field trips;

SVGMS Sponsored Field Trip; a field trip that SVGMS has planned, organized and has been approved.

Regional Hosted Field Trip; a field trip that is planned, organized by another regional rock club, but has been approved.

Recreational Collecting Field Trip; a field trip that is open to the public. It is usually privately owned land, but requires a fee to collect. These are collecting sites that you can go to with or without the SVGMS approval. Collect at your own risk. There are a few in VA, more in NC, SC,

Private Land Collecting Field Trip: one that is closed to the public. Is on private land, and requires written or verbal permission from the land owner and/or fee prior to entry on the land.

These require great care in planning. Good public relations with the land owner and the practice of good Rock Etiquette will help insure a return visit.

Note; Private Land owners are great sources for future club collecting. Sometimes a land owner does not know or is not interested in the minerals on their property. If you know of someone who might allow our club to collect on their property, please let me know. I would be glad to speak with them.

Commercial Mining Field Trip; these trips are to a designated commercial mine and require a specific safety dress code and conduct on the part of club members. This is always an approved field trip. Note: if you are not properly prepared for this type of field trip you will not be permitted to participate. Access to commercial mines is not open to the public and your club membership opens the opportunity to be exposed to this type of field trip.

*In one of the responses in the Field Trip Questionnaire a person wondered why they might need MSHA or DMME certification. Currently many commercial mines do not require this certification, some do if you want to enter the mine. It is much easier for me, as the field trip coordinator to open a new commercial mine for club collection if I can say that our members are MSHA or DMME safety certified. This may also be a requirement in the future for collecting at commercial mines.

SVGMS Field Trip Calendar

As new field trips are planned I will do my best to communicate, as far in advance as possible, the specifics of each field trip. Please stay informed by the club's monthly newsletter for the latest field trip information.

You may also want to visit the club's website, under Field Trips, for news on past field trips.

Thank you,

Wayne Peterson
SVGMS, Field Trip Coordinator