



Rocky Trails



March 2026

Volume 21 Issue 3

The Newsletter of the Columbia Gem and Mineral Society



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Good day to all!

I heard it was a great presentation by the SC Geology crew. Sadly, Tom and I weren't able to be there. If you went, please share with me. I love hearing everyone's reaction to the presentations.

If anyone has suggestions for presentations please share them with Cat Sawyer.

Please note that we are returning to our regularly scheduled meetings. Looking forward to seeing everyone March 16 @ 7:00-9:00 pm. We are having a special presentation by Ashby Gale who will talk about 180–200-million-year-old Jurassic fossils commonly found in the shale and limestone cliffs along the North Yorkshire coast in England. Ashby is an excellent speaker you won't want to miss!

Respectfully,

Patricia B Stidom
CGMS President

Executive Meeting

March 23, 2026

Dinner: 6 pm, Meeting: 7 pm

Grecian Gardens, 2312 Sunset Blvd., West Columbia.

Members are welcome to attend. Only executive board members can vote.

NEXT MEETING

March 16, 2026

Socializing and refreshments at 7:00 pm.
Meeting at 7:30 pm.

The March 2026 CGMS meeting will be held at **Hope Church** located at 2609 Seminole Road. It is off Broad River Rd. and is easily accessible from I-26 or I-20. Use the side door (close to the main part of the parking lot). We will meet in the Fellowship Hall. Please do not come into Hope Church before 6:30 pm, as we are not allowed in before that time.

PROGRAM:

Ashby Gale, paleontologist from Charleston, will give a presentation on ammonites from the Yorkshire coast of England. He will talk about the geology of Yorkshire and show ammonite specimens he collected. After his presentation, Ashby will ID fossils, so bring fossils for identification. Ashby will also have copies of his book "A Beachcomber's Guide to Fossils" for sale.

Sue Shrader will provide door prizes.

Laura Bailey and Catherine Sawyer will provide refreshments.

About the Programs

For our **March** meeting, we will be welcoming back Ashby Gale, paleontologist from Charleston, who will be giving a presentation on ammonites. Come Join Ashby as he recounts his trip to the Yorkshire coast of England. Ashby will cover his trip from start to finish, sharing information about the geology of Yorkshire. On hand will be ammonite specimens Ashby collected dating back to 183 million years. After his presentation, Ashby has agreed to ID fossils, so bring fossils for identification. Ashby will also have copies of his book “A Beachcomber’s Guide to Fossils” for sale, and if you purchase one he will sign it for you.



Dactyloceras imprint (negative) ammonite shell fossil
Whitby, North Yorkshire (picture courtesy of Yorkshire Fossils)

In **April**, our speaker will be Ellen Price, a professional geologist with Martin Marietta. She will discuss the importance of aggregates in today’s society, how they are produced and how the facilities are permitted and engineered.

EXECUTIVE BROAD MEETING MINUTES

February 16, 2026, Executive Board Meeting of Columbia Gem and Mineral Society

The Columbia Gem and Mineral Society, Inc. held its monthly board meeting on February 16th, 2026, at Grecian Gardens at 2312 Sunset Blvd. Members in attendance were Patricia Stidom, Jim Cobb, Angela Valvasori, Ron Ahle, Steve Coker, Cheryl Coker, Jim Carter, Gary Hert, Pat Hert, Casey Tyler, Terry Gregory, Liz Gregory, and Sophie Grimsley. President Patricia Stidom called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM.

Treasurer: Angela Valvasori gave a report of the club's finances. Jim and Pat Carter have completed an audit of the finances. A few small errors in the spreadsheet were found, and all else was good.

Secretary: Sophie Grimsley stated that she received an email from Martin Marietta announcing that they will be having a Community Day to look for fossils in the pit of the Berkley County Quarry in Cross, SC on April 25, 2026 from 10 am until 2 pm. Ron Ahle gave Sophie some feedback on the minutes from the previous executive board meeting, stating that the minutes can have more general language and focus on big decisions rather than individual opinions, and that if individual opinions are mentioned, then to name that individual.

Webmaster: Terry Gregory stated that he would like to get more use out of the board's Google Workspace, adding that it would increase out efficiency. It would also be helpful in creating email lists and a location to house membership materials that can be easily accessed and updated. Terry recommended that every board member receive a login to access the Google Workspace. He also stated that he has begun creating some email groups, such as "All CGMS Members" and "CGMS Board Members" to make emailing everyone easier. Additionally, Terry stated that he has begun thinking about ways to improve the website and would like to capture ideas for potential improvements and for communication team governance. He will be putting together a Zoom call with the communication team to discuss ideas to bring back to the board. Angela asked to be included on the call. One idea that was mentioned was a "Member's Only" portal on the website to provide easy access to the Rocky Trails, Membership Rosters, and field trip information.

Membership: Liz Gregory asked the board for clarification on some of the membership duties, procedures, and what a membership report to the board or general club should include. In the past, all members have gotten a list of the club roster including names and phone numbers but not addresses. Liz asked if the club would like to continue doing this, and the board discussed some alternative options, such as creating a member only portion of the website where the roster could be posted. Liz also stated that there were around 145 adult members, and around 35 children, but that some have not renewed yet for this year.

Programs: Program Chair Catherine Sawyer was not present. The February general meeting will take place at the State Geology Office. The March program will be given by Ashby Gale, and the board agreed to let him use the full 1-½ hours of the meeting for his program, foregoing the business meeting. Ron stated that Casey needs to have time to present on any field trips at every meeting, and the board believed this is reasonable since a field trip report does not take much time. A representative from Martin Marietta Quarry will tentatively speak at either the April or May meeting, details still need to be confirmed.

EXECUTIVE BROAD MEETING MINUTES (continued)

Show Planning: Angela stated that she would like someone to take over the show chairperson position. She said that she is happy to help with the planning beforehand, but that she will not be the chairperson at the show itself. Patricia stated that she would also like someone to take over the position of dealer coordinator. Jim Carter asked when the show planning meetings usually start, to which Patricia responded March or April. Jim also asked when the Jamil Temple lease contract runs out, to which Angela responded that this is the final year of the contract. The board then discussed some possible locations to host the show in the future.

Workshop: Gary Hert made a motion to raise the price per hour at the workshop from \$5 to \$10. New members would still get the first 3-4 hours free to learn the process of creating a cabochon. Jim Carter seconded. The board voted in favor of increasing the price to \$10 per hour.

Field Trips: Casey Tyler gave a field trip report. There will be a CGMS field trip to Diamond Hill Mine this Saturday (February 21, 2026) at 11 am. The price is \$20 for adults, \$10 for ages 13-17, \$10 for seniors 65+, \$5 for children 12 and under, and \$15 for veterans. There is another Dixie Mineral Council filed trip to Diamond Hill Mine hosted by the Aiken Gem Club on Saturday, February 28th.

Sunshine: Pat Hert thanked the club for sending her a card and mentioned that she has been referred to a neurologist in Georgia.

Newsletter: Ron asked that the meeting minutes and other information to be included in the Rocky Trails be sent to him in a timely manner after the meetings. Sophie acknowledged that she would send the meeting minutes as soon as she can after the meetings occur. Ron stated that he would like to go paperless for future editions of the Rocky Trails. Angela stated that there are around 4 longtime members who still request a paper copy of the newsletter be mailed to them. Gary Hert mentioned that some members, such as Audrey Free, would like a paper newsletter and paper membership roster. Ron proposed that all new members receive an electronic copy of the Rocky Trails, and that only the 3-4 who currently receive paper copies continue to receive them. Jim Carter made a motion to approve the proposal, and Sophie Grimsley seconded. All voted in favor and the motion passed.

Historian: Angela stated that she has historian records that she needs to file, but that she cannot access the location of the files in the storage unit due to equipment blocking it. She suggested doing a workshop/storage unit clean-up day in order to make things more easily accessible.

Auctioneer: Ron stated that CGMS received some donations from Sue Shrader. He also stated that in order to conduct an auction, more donations and material would be needed. Let Ron know if you hear of anyone wanting to donate old collections. There is also some equipment, such as scopes, in the storage unit that could be used in a live auction. Pat Hert stated that she has some beads which she can donate. Ron stated that he will ask the club for donations as an auction gets closer.

EXECUTIVE BROAD MEETING MINUTES (continued)

Workshop Location: Angela gave a report on the club's finances as they relate to purchasing a property for a new workshop. Pat Hert asked if anyone had looked into tax sales or foreclosures. Cheryl states that workshop would need to be zoned for commercial use and that the residential tax sales and foreclosures work differently than commercial ones. The board discussed zoning issues related to potential workshop locations and incorporated vs. non-incorporated areas. Cheryl gave an overview of two properties that she has been watching.

The board then discussed the criteria desired for a workshop, such as size, parking needs, meeting space, and storage. Gary stated that purchasing a workshop for the club is a large investment for a small percentage of club members who use it, but that it is an educational tool. Sophie stated that she will reach out to other clubs in the region to see if they have any insight into how they run their workshops, whether purchased or leased. Steve suggested the possibility of sharing space with other non-profits, like an artist collective.

New Business: Gary Hert discussed making the club fun for current and new members, and that in order to keep things running smoothly more people need to get involved. Cheryl said that making an effort to expand membership may help get members involved.

Patricia adjourned the meeting at 8:58 pm.

Respectfully submitted by Sophie Grimsly

GENERAL MEETING MINUTES

The Columbia Gem and Mineral Society, Inc. held its monthly meeting on February 19, 2026, at the South Carolina Geological Survey office at 5 Geology Road, Columbia, SC 29212. The meeting stated at 7:00 pm.

The SC Geological Survey hosted CGMS and told us about their mission, which includes Geological Mapping, Assessing Geologic Hazards such as earthquakes, landslides, and shore changes, and Outreach and Education. The SC Geological Survey is in the Land, Water, and Conservation Division of the South Carolina Department of Natural Resources. Employees spoke to the club about tools that they use to map the geology of the state, how the regions of the state such as the Coastal Plain and the Piedmont differ, and how then they produce geologic maps of the state for publication. The meeting concluded at 8:15 pm.

The Columbia Gem and Mineral Society thanks the SC Geologic Survey for hosting us and providing wonderful presentations about their work and the geology of South Carolina. We give special thanks to the speakers who gave wonderful presentations and spent their Monday evening with us.

Respectfully submitted by Sophie Grimsly

News Worth Digging Up

The Dolomites

Source: Science.NASA.gov

[Reaching Top Speed in the Dolomites - NASA Science](#)

Date: February 12, 2026

By Lindsey Doermann

and

Source: UNESCO World Heritage Convention

[The Dolomites - UNESCO World Heritage Centre](#)



Nestled among high snowy peaks in northern Italy, Cortina d'Ampezzo hosted athletes in the 2026 Winter Olympics and Paralympics competing in skiing, sliding, and curling. Cortina sits in the Dolomites, a mountain range in the northern Italian Alps known for its sheer cliffs, rock pinnacles, tall peaks, and deep, narrow valleys. In this three-dimensional map, several peaks over 3,000 meters (10,000 feet) tall rise above the town. To create the map, an image acquired with the OLI (Operational Land Imager) on Landsat 8 on January 27, 2026, was overlaid on a digital elevation model. Overall, 18 peaks in the Dolomites rise to over 10,000 feet.

The Dolomites World Heritage property protects this series of highly distinctive mountain landscapes. The areas represent a diversity of spectacular landscapes of internationally significant geomorphology marked by steeples, pinnacles and rock walls. The site also contains glacial landforms and karst systems. It is characterized by dynamic processes with frequent landslides, floods and avalanches. The quantity and concentration of highly varied limestone formations is extraordinary in a global context, and the exposed geology provides an insight into the recovery of marine life in the Triassic period, after the greatest extinction event recorded in the history of life on Earth.

Social Media Helps our Club Stay Social!

CGMS website: www.cgms.rocks

Facebook, Columbia Gem and Mineral Society, Inc:
<https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100066320452494>

Facebook, Columbia Gem and Mineral Society, Group:
<https://www.facebook.com/groups/322192978738281/>

Instagram: [Columbia Gem and Mineral Society, Inc. \(@cgms_rocks\)](https://www.instagram.com/cgms_rocks/)

YouTube:

https://youtube.com/playlist?list=PLMgAMgnIt49_IvIzQtsZZRF0EwfbY38kc&si=VrPx2vPIGOR81ZSR

Please like/follow our Facebook and Instagram pages and share posts to increase our reach on social media.

Membership Notes

If you have not yet renewed your annual membership in our group, **March** is the last month to do so before you are removed from our email list for club announcements and the newsletter!

There are several ways to renew your membership:

- 1) Online at our website! Go to www.cgms.rocks and look for the “Join” button. Click it and use the form to mail in your information, and either pay online with your credit card, or mail a check to our address: CGMS, P O Box 6333, Columbia, SC 29260. Don’t forget to fill out the form, as well, and mail it in with your check!
- 2) Pay us in person at our next club meeting, Monday, March 16! You can bring cash or check to me and fill out the form there. I will be by the snacks! Or, you can see our treasurer, Angela, and pay with a credit card! I will have forms available for you to fill out, as well, over by the snacks.

As always, if you are having any problems getting your emails or newsletter, let us know! If any of your information has changed, let us know that, too! Thank you all!

Sincerely,

Liz Gregory

Membership Chair

South Carolina State Museum**<http://scmuseum.org/events/upcoming-events/>**301 Gervais Street
Columbia, SC 29201
803-898-4921

Advance online ticket purchases are encouraged, especially if you wish to see planetarium and/or 4D shows.

Hours of Operation:

Mon: CLOSED.

Tue – Sat: 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Sunday: 12 to 5 p.m.

Planetarium/ Theater Shows**BUGS: A 4D Experience®**

Explore the extraordinary hidden world of bugs! Narrated by the beloved Dame Judi Dench, Bugs 4D brings viewers on an up-close-and-personal adventure in the Borneo rainforests, using innovative technology that magnifies these insects up to 250,000 times their normal size. Join the amazing giant Asian mantis and stunning swallowtail butterfly and many more as they hatch and grow in this unforgettable, spectacular 4D Experience® that reveals the tremendous life of bugs.

Arora

Explore the beauty of the Northern Lights in the new digital dome planetarium experience, *Áróra!* This immersive cinematic journey takes guests across remote Icelandic landscapes and into space to find and understand these mystical, eerie lights. During this award-winning show created by some of Iceland's best-known scientists, writers, photographers, and musicians, you will not only witness the beauty of the aurora above Earth but also explore how these stunning displays of colors have also been seen on other planets and moons throughout our galaxy.

21 mins. Tues. – Fri: 1:30 p.m., Sat: 11:30 am & 2:30 pm, Sun: 2:30 p.m.

Habitat Earth

Frances McDormand narrates this full dome planetarium show. The show features stunning visualizations of the natural world, as it takes you below the ocean's surface to explore the dynamic relationships found in kelp forest ecosystems, travel beneath the forest floor to see how Earth's tallest trees rely on tiny fungi to survive, and journey to new heights to witness the intricate intersection between human and ecological networks.

Black Holes: Unimaginably powerful, relentless, and invisible, black holes are some of the most fascinating and extreme objects in the universe. They warp space

Mars: One Thousand One: takes viewers away from planet Earth, into space, and across our solar system to our neighboring planet. This thrilling planetarium experience follows the fictional story of the Mars IRIS 1 mission, a daring 1001-day voyage to fly an international crew to the planet and return them safely to Earth. The crew faces a few dangers along the way, including a solar coronal mass ejection that threatens their safety. And, once on Mars, viewers will see the team work on the planet's surface, exploring the landscape, looking for water, and retrieving rocks in a search for the history of water.

Showtimes are valid through Friday, March 27th.

CGMS Fieldtrips

Casey Tyler, our fieldtrip coordinator, has developed two exciting fieldtrip opportunities for CGMS members. If you are interested in either of these, it is very important that you contact Casey to let him know. Text Casey Tyler at (803) XXX-XXXX to RSVP. As a reminder, only CGMS members are allowed to attend CGMS fieldtrips

[Michigan Keweenaw Field Trip May 1-8, 2026](#)

This field trip completely hinges on people wanting to actually go and signing up. Here are the options of things we can do in those seven days, coming one day or coming every day.

The "Dig Your Own" Adventure (Pay-to-Play)

This is where you are guaranteed to find something cool to bring home.

- [Caledonia Mine \(Mass City\)](#): A true "finders' keepers" operation. You pay a fee (group pricing, ~\$50-\$300 depending on size), they give you a pile of mine rock, and you sort through it for copper and datolite. Pro tip: Bring a small metal detector and a bucket for your treasures.
- [Delaware Mine \(near Copper Harbor\)](#): A self-guided tour mine where you can see pure copper veins in the walls 100 feet below ground. You can collect on surface piles here as well.
- [Champion #4 \(Painesdale\)](#): Just 15 minutes south of Houghton. It offers a fascinating above-ground tour of the rock house and steam engine, giving you a real feel for the mining operation without going underground.

The "Beach Comber" Circuit (Free Public Access)

These are your bread-and-butter spots for Lake Superior agates, yooperlites ([Discover Yooperlites: A Guide to Michigan's Luminescent Treasures | Michigan](#)) and just relaxing.

- [Calumet Waterworks Park](#): A local favorite. Easy access for a quick hunt. Look for agates, prehnite, and beach glass. If you go at night with a UV light, this is a prime Yooperlite spot.
- [McLain State Park \(Hancock\)](#): Great for agates, rhyolite, and Yooperlites. Plus, if you time it right, the sunsets are legendary. There is a campground here if you want to stay put.
- [Great Sand Bay \(between Eagle River & Eagle Harbor\)](#): Don't let the name fool you—it has rocky sections perfect for hunting quartz and agates, plus sandy spots for swimming.
- [Esrey Park](#): A small roadside park with a pebble beach known for small, whole agate nodules, prehnite, and thomsonite. It's also on the scenic drive route.
- [Bête Grise Beach](#): A bit more remote, known for copper and gorgeous sunsets. It's a great "end of the day" spot.

The "Indoor Options" (Rainy Day or Rest Day)

- [A.E. Seaman Mineral Museum \(Houghton\)](#) ★: Non-negotiable. It's the official mineral museum of Michigan. See the 19-ton native copper vein and one of the best fluorescent mineral displays in the US (\$9 adults).
- [Keweenaw National Historical Park \(Calumet\)](#): Free ranger-led tours and exhibits that explain the story behind all those holes in the ground.
- [Prospector's Paradise \(Allouez\)](#): Known as "The Rock Walmart." Bins of mine rock outside, treasures inside. Also, a "mysterious vortex" if anyone in the group is into that sort of thing.
- [Keweenaw Gem & Gift \(Houghton\)](#): Great for seeing finished products (jewelry, bookends) and picking up local knowledge.

CGMS Fieldtrips (continued)

The "Scenic Drive & Stretch Legs" Stops

- Cliff Mine (Phoenix): The site of the first profitable mine in the region. You can explore the ruins and tailings (check for collecting rules signs first).
- Central Mine: Sometimes open for collecting when gates are closed and no work is being done. Look for "flipped" piles during special events.
- Brockway Mountain Drive (Copper Harbor): Stunning views. If you have someone in the group who isn't into rocks, this view usually keeps them happy.

Quick Reminders for the Group

- The 25lb Rule: It's real. Michigan DNR does check. Since you're flying, this is a natural limit anyway.
- Night Hunting: Bring a 365nm UV flashlight. Calumet Waterworks and McLain are goldmines for Yooperlites after dark.
- Post-Storm Hunting: The best time to hit the beaches is immediately after a big storm churns up the lake.

If the trip gets the green light and you need specific advice on renting a UV light vs. buying one, or the best place to ship rocks home instead of packing them, just holler.

[Rockhound Field Trip: Vero Beach Fossil & Shell Dig](#)

A Partnership with Nigel's Private Site Access

We're heading back to Vero Beach! Thanks to a new connection, we have exclusive access to a massive tailings pile from a nearby mine. This isn't just clams anymore—we're talking a diverse mix of marine fossils and shells waiting to be uncovered.

- **Date: Saturday, April 4**
- Time: 9:00 AM (Sharp!)
- Location: Vero Beach, Florida (Address provided upon RSVP - see below)
- Host Site Contact: Nigel
- Trip Coordinator: Casey Tyler

The tailings pile is rich with fossilized clams, oysters, olive shells, snail shells, conch shells and other marine fossils. Fossilized clams from Vero Beach, Florida, often feature stunning, 2-million-year-old *Mercenaria* shells filled with honeycomb, drusy, or "dog tooth" calcite crystals, making them highly prized by collectors.

This is a unique opportunity to pull a variety of specimens from one convenient location.



CGMS Fieldtrips (continued)

Pricing (The New Deal)

We now have two pricing tiers based on group turnout:

- If we have 5 or more members: \$75 per person, per bucket
- If fewer than 5 attend: \$100 per person, per bucket

Grab your buddies and carpool down—the more the merrier (and cheaper)!

Important Logistics & How to RSVP

1. Payment: Cash only, please bring exact change. Nigel on-site collects fee.
2. Mandatory RSVP: You MUST text Casey to receive the exact address.
 - Text Casey Tyler at (803) XXX-XXXX if you plan to attend.
 - You will receive a confirmation text back with the precise address and any final updates.
 - Address is not being publicly posted to respect the landowner's privacy.

What to Bring & Wear

- Attire: Dress for Florida summer weather
- Footwear: Sturdy, waterproof boots are essential. The site can get muddy.
- Tools: Shovels, trowels, buckets, sifters, brushes—whatever you need to dig and sort.
- Supplies: Plenty of water, snacks/lunch, sunscreen, work gloves, and knee pads.
- Safety: First aid kit, hat, sunglasses.

Optional Pre-Trip Social

Casey will be heading down Friday, April 3. If you're arriving early and want to grab a drink Friday evening in Vero Beach, text Casey to coordinate!

Disclaimer & Reminders

- This is a working dig site. You are responsible for your own safety, tools, and well-being.
- Please respect the land, the host, and fellow members. Fill any holes and leave the area cleaner than you found it.
- All digging is at your own risk.
- Rain or shine unless conditions are deemed unsafe.

Ready to dig? Text Casey Tyler at (803) XXX-XXXX to RSVP and get the address!

Let's get a group of 5+ and lock in that \$75 rate. See you in Vero Beach!



**Graves Mountain
Rock Swap and Dig
April 17, 18,19
Lincolnton, Georgia**

As of this posting, the dig is scheduled for April 17-19. No reservations are needed. If something changes, it will be posted here.

The mountain will be open to collecting from 8 am to 6 pm each day. All attendees must stop at the welcome table to sign a liability release and make a contribution/donation to help with the cost of providing porta johns, four wheeled vehicles, and golf carts. The dig will end, and everyone must be off the mountain by 6:00 p.m. each day.

Rock Swap and Hot Food/Drinks:

Junior will set aside an area in the upper parking lot for tables to be set up for daily rock swaps. Anyone who would like to set up a table(s), please contact Junior at the phone numbers listed below. Hot food cooked on the grill, cold drinks and chips will be available for purchase on the mountain during all three days of these events. There will be an area in the parking lot for vendors to sell and trade minerals. If you would like to set up a booth, contact Jr. at the phone number listed below. Hot food and drinks will be available for purchase on the mountain all three days.

<https://www.gamineral.org/ft/commercial/ftgravesmain.html>

Contact Information:

Clarence Norman Jr. (Junior) - 706-359-1544 (his business) or 706-401-3173 (his cell)

THIS DIG IS OPEN TO ALL CLUBS and ROCKHOUNDS!

GRAVES MOUNTAIN CODE OF CONDUCT!

Park your vehicle in the designated area at the end of the paved access road.

ALL pets must be kept under control and on a leash. The caretaker, Jr. Norman has final and absolute say as to where you may safely work. Ladders or power tools of any kind will not be allowed. (HAND TOOLS ONLY!). STAY AWAY FROM ALL HIGH WALLS! NO RAPPELLING OFF OF ANYTHING! NO ONE IS ALLOWED TO DRIVE THEIR VEHICLE ON ANY PART OF GRAVES MOUNTAIN BEYOND THE PARKING AREA! (The caretaker must accompany anyone driving beyond the parking area!) EVERYONE NEEDS TO BE OFF THE MOUNTAIN BY 6:00 p.m. (Absolutely no one is allowed on Graves Mountain after dark.)

DIRECTIONS: From Washington Georgia, drive east 11 miles on SR-378, look for mine entrance on right. From the Hardee's in Lincolnton, Georgia, drive approximately 5-1/2 miles west on SR-378. Look for the sign at the entrance to Graves Mountain on the left side of the road.

Motels and Camping:

Cullars Inn, Lincolnton, Georgia, 706-359-6161

Soap Creek Lodge, Clarks Hill Lake, Lincolnton, 706-359-4100

Elijah Clark State Park, 706-359-3458 / 800-864-7275



Dixie Mineral Council Field Trips

The Southeast Federation of Mineralogical Societies, Inc



The Friendly Federation - Founded in 1976 to serve
DMC Program of the SFMS Field Trip Committee
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An Official Field Trip of the Mid-GA Gem and Mineral Society (Macon, GA) (HOST)
An Official Field Trip of the Columbia Gem & Mineral Society

Sunday, March 15, 2026
Time 10:00 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. Eastern Time
Summerville Lace Agate
Summerville, Georgia
Limit: 70 People
Registration Required (Link is below)
Fee: None

TRIP: This is a great site for children and adults of all skill levels. Summerville Lace Agate, found near Summerville, Georgia, is a unique, banded agate formed from silica-rich groundwater filling cavities in older limestone (chert) layers, creating intricate patterns, often grey, white, and smoky. It's a type of cryptocrystalline quartz that is known for its delicate lacy textures, drusy pockets, and oolitic structures (tiny calcite spheres) from ancient tropical beaches, making it prized for lapidary work despite being found in accessible but often private areas.

COLLECTING: This location is known for its colorful lace banded chert/agate. You can also find some drusy quartz and oolitic material. Some of the material is good for lapidary use and some of it makes great specimens.

BRING: Rock hammer, small/big sledge, chisel, scratching tools (for example a small hand rake), buckets, and a spray bottle or bucket with water to wet or rinse the rocks to see the color better. You will also need a hat, safety glasses, sturdy shoes, sunscreen, and gloves. A small cart or hand truck is great for hauling larger pieces. We will have water, donuts, and chips, but you may also want to bring more water and lunch. This is March so please bring warm clothes, be sure to check the weather for Summerville for the day of the dig and dress as needed.

REQUIREMENTS: Please have this safety equipment: **hard hat, safety glasses, sturdy shoes** (no open toe shoes), and **gloves. No power tools.**

IMPORTANT: This is an active quarry. **STAY AWAY** from all heavy equipment and quarry machinery and any places that the trip lead has declared off limits. Anyone who violates these rules will be asked to leave because any violation could jeopardize future access to this site. Stay away from and don't climb any high walls.

TERRAIN/SPECIAL CONDITIONS: Be careful of climbing on loose rocks and stay away from high walls.

FEE: There is no fee.

**An Official Field Trip of the Middle Tennessee Rockhounds (Nashville, TN) (HOST)
An Official Field Trip of the Columbia Gem and Mineral Society**

**Saturday April 25, 2026
9:00 AM to 4:00 PM Central Time
Coon Creek Science Center
Adamsville, TN**

**Limit: 30 people
Registration Required (Link is below)
Fee: \$20, CASH ONLY!!**

TRIP: The Coon Creek Science Center has been a long time favorite of many clubs for its diversity and ease of collecting.

COLLECTING: Upper Cretaceous marine fossils in a sand/clay matrix.

BRING: Small digging tools, trowel, small pick or shovel, etc., paper to wrap fragile specimens in, bucket, bug spray, etc. I will have water. Be prepared for wet and muddy conditions.

REQUIREMENTS: Common sense safety rules apply. This will be in a creek setting so be aware of slippery conditions, poison ivy, snakes and the like. No open toe shoes or sandals please.

FEE: \$20 per person. **CASH ONLY! No other form of payment is accepted.**

CHILDREN: Children 8 and older are welcome but must be supervised at all times. No pets are allowed.

FACILITIES: There are restroom and shower facilities on site.

REGISTRATION: Click [here](#) to fill out a registration form. If you register and are unable to attend the trip, **please be considerate** to your fellow rockhounds and let us know as soon as possible so someone on a potential waiting list can take your slot(s).

DIRECTIONS AND WHERE TO MEET: Directions and meeting place details will be emailed to registered participants.

CARPOOLING: The registration form has a place for you to indicate if you **need** a ride; if you can **offer** a ride; or if you would like to **drive or share** a carpool ride. If you choose any of these options, your **name**, **email address**, and **club name** will be shared with other members who also choose one of the options. Then, you can communicate with one another to arrange carpools.

CONTACT: Randy Gentry - (615) 332-5696 - rgentryrockhound1@gmail.com

IMPORTANT: DMC field trips are open only to members of clubs in the SFMS DMC field trip sharing program. SFMS DMC club members are covered by liability insurance and they are bound by the AFMS code of ethics (click [here](#) to read them), but the general public is not and could jeopardize access to a collecting location.

AREA SHOWS

To verify the accuracy of a show date, go to the show's website or contact them directly.

March 6-8, 2026...HICKORY, NORTH CAROLINA: Catawba Valley Gem Mineral Club Show. Hickory Metro Convention Center, 1960 13th Ave. Dr., SE, Hickory, NC 28602. Hours are 10:00 a.m. till 6:00 p.m. on Friday, 10:00 a.m. till 6:00 p.m. on Saturday, and 10:00 a.m. till 5:00 p.m. on Sunday. 35+ vendors are scheduled to appear. Admission is \$6.00, which is good for all three days. Children 12 and under are admitted free. Website: [Catawba Valley Gem & Mineral Club Special Events](#)

March 6-8, 2026...CLEARWATER FL: Suncoast Gem and Mineral Society 55th Annual Gem And Mineral Show. Fri & Sat 10 am -6 pm, Sun 10 am -5pm. Polish Center Of John Paul II, 1521 N Saturn Ave, Clearwater Fl 33755. Donation: \$10, kids under 6 (with parents and I.D) free. Admission is good for all 3 days. Free parking.

March 13-15, 2026AUGUSTA, GEORGIA: Annual show; Aiken Gem Mineral & Fossil Society and Augusta Gem & Mineral; Julian Smith Casino, 2200 Broad St; Fri. 10-6, Sat. 10-6, Sun. 11-5; \$4 adult, \$6 weekend pass, children under 12 free with adult, cash at door only, please; Grab bags, Geode sales & cutting, Treasure Dig, Member displays • Lapidary demos • Hourly door prizes • Educational resource End-of-show GRAND PRIZE on Sunday! (Attendance not required to win.) Dealers: • Gold • Silver • Fine and everyday jewelry • Loose gemstones • Cabochons • Crystals • Minerals; contact Debra Baer, (803) 295-7897; Email: debbie.aikenrocks@gmail.com; Website: <https://aikengmfs.org/>

March 14-15, 2026...GASTONIA, NORTH CAROLINA: Annual show; Gaston Gem and Mineral Club; Gastonia Farmers Market, 410 E Long Ave; Sat. 10-6, Sun. 10-4; Free Admission & Free Parking; contact Bob Winstanley; Email: GastonGemAndMineral@gmail.com; Website: gastongemclub.weebly.com

March 20-22, 2026...MARIETTA, GEORGIA: Annual show; Bellpoint Gem Show; Cobb County Civic Center, 548 South Marietta Parkway; Fri. 10-5:30, Sat. 10-5:30, Sun. 10-4:30; contact BJ; Email: mbellpoint@gmail.com; Website: www.bellpointpromotions.com

March 27-29, 2026...LEXINGTON, KY: Bluegrass Gem and Mineral Club KY is hosting their annual Gem and Mineral Show at the Clarion Hotel and Conference Center, 950 Newtown Pike, Lexington, KY 40511. Admission Friday is \$10 and includes admission all weekend and one entry for the Friday night and Sunday afternoon prize drawing. Saturday/Sunday admission is \$5 (cash only) for adults. Children 12 and under and Scouts in uniform with an adult are free.

April 11, 2026...APOPKA, FL: Wekiva Gem & Mineral Society "Circle Up Rock and Gem Market". 1937 Lakeville Road Apopka Fl 32703; 9:00 am to 3:00 pm. Rock clubs and individuals are invited to set up and buy, sell, and swap anything LAPIDARY related. Everything from slabs, rough specimens, polished stones, finished cabochons, handmade jewelry to tools and lapidary equipment can be swapped or sold. Limited to 50 spaces. Outdoors in the circle under the trees, \$40 per 12'x20'space You bring your tables, tent and chairs. No electricity provided. Rain or shine event. For more information contact Nancy Allman, 407-739-0051 or email faceittoday@gmail.com.

April 18–19, 2026...ORLANDO, FL: Central Florida Mineral & Gem Society, Inc. is hosting a Rock, Mineral, Gem, Jewelry & Fossil Show Saturday 9am to 5pm and Sunday 9am to 4pm. Florida National Guard Armory, 2809 S. Fern Creek Ave., Orlando, FL 32806. Admission: Adults \$6, Kids \$3 and Scouts in uniform free. Contact: President Salvatore Sansone 321-278-9294 or e-mail: ssfossilhunter@aol.com.

April 18–19, 2026...MEMPHIS, TN: Memphis Archaeological and Geological Society is hosting the Memphis Mineral, Fossil & Jewelry Show. Agricenter International, 7777 Walnut Grove Rd, Memphis, TN 38120. Sat. 9–6, Sun. 10–5. Admission: Adults \$6.00. Children 12 & under \$2.00. Free Parking.

April 18-19, 2026...ORLANDO, FL: Central Florida Mineral & Gem Society; Saturday 9AM - 5PM, Sunday 9AM - 4PM; Admission: Ages 16 and up is \$6.00, Kids 6-15 \$3.00; Florida National Guard Armory, 2809 S. Fern Creek Ave., Orlando, FL 32806; Enjoy demonstrations, kid activities, door prizes, and silent auctions. Link: www.cfmgs.org

April 26, 2025...Marietta, GA: Cobb County Gem and Mineral Society Annual Spring Rock Show and Swap. Free event! 10am to 4pm Saturday April 26th rain or shine. We will have outside dealers and demos in our lapidary shop. 516 West Atlanta Street, Marietta, GA 30060.
Link: www.ccgms.org

News From SFMS from Cindy Reed, SFMS Loadstar Editor

Link for the March edition of the **SFMS Lodestar**:

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1jZk99INei2i1Qaep92LuLs6drOM8GnHi/view?usp=sharing>

Link for the March **AFMS newsletter**:

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1v9ZoeqDMylzfl9PcAs74Rf6fR9G5U5Fq/view>

The flyer and application for the Rockhound Roundup is located at the end of the Lodestar. Dates are 3/6-8/2026 at the Spirit of the Suwanee Music Park. The first quarterly SFMS meeting will be held there on 3/7/26.

Be sure to check out David Liles article on Rocks at the Douglas Dam Site. You too can be published. Send your submissions to “editor@southeastfed.org” by the 25th of the month.

As always, if you have any suggestions or additions, please let me know.

Cindy Reed
SFMS Lodestar Editor

8th Annual
Southeast Federation
Mineralogical Societies

Rockhound Roundup

March 6-8, 2026
9am to 4pm

Suwanee River Music Park Live Oak, Florida

Join the fun at this outdoor event!

- **Rough Rocks and Slabs**
- **Polished Stones**
- **Handmade Jewelry for Sale**
- **Lapidary & Silversmithing
Tools & Equipment**

*Vendors must
be a current
member of an
SFMS Club or
Join a SFMS
Club.*



For more information contact Barbi Beatty at treasurer@southeastfed.org

CGMS Name Tag

Would you like to have a CGMS name tag? They can be obtained at Irmo Trophy. An example is shown below. If you would like one, please contact Irmo Trophy by email so they have the correct spelling of your name and tell them you are requesting a Columbia Gem and Mineral Society name tag. The cost is \$7. **Irmo Trophy Co.**, 803-798-3735; 5430 Old Bush River Rd., Columbia, SC 29212 irmotrophy@gmail.com



The Club is selling T-shirts

We have two colors available, tie-dyed (shown below) and black. We have small, medium and large sizes currently available. If you would like to buy a T-shirt, contact one of the officers in the club.



Columbia Gem and Mineral Society



MEMBERSHIP FORM

Year _____

(Membership Year runs January 1 – December 31)

<https://www.cgms.rocks>

Check one: **MEMBERSHIP DUES**

	<i>Jan 1</i>	<i>July 1</i>
Individual	\$25 _____	\$12.50 _____
Family	\$30 _____	\$15 _____

Name: _____ Birth Date: _____
 Address: _____
 City _____ State _____ Zip: _____
 Home Phone: _____
 Cell Phone(s): _____
 Email Address: _____

For those with privacy concerns: If you do not want your home phone or physical address published in the Club Roster please circle or highlight: No phone No address.

FAMILY MEMBERSHIP: Spouse and children under 18 yrs. living at the same address.

Spouse: _____ Birth Date: _____
 Child: _____ Birth Date: _____

CLUB PARTICIPATION: Please indicate which committee you can help with:

Field Trips__ Membership__ Newsletter__ Programs__ Social__ Faceting Guild__
 Workshop__ Show Chair__ Publicity__ Sunshine__ Rookie Rockhounds__

May we call on you to work with a Board Member on a committee or project? _____

Make checks payable to: Columbia Gem & Mineral Society (and) mail to: PO Box 6333
Columbia, SC 29260

Previous Membership in another Mineral Society? Club _____
 Have you held an office in another club? Club/Office _____
 Do you collect minerals and/or fossils? _____
 What lapidary skills and interests do you have? _____

The Columbia Gem and Mineral Society is an organization of persons associated together to promote popular interest in and to provide means for the exchange of knowledge of the Earth Sciences – Geology, Mineralogy, and Paleontology – and of the related Arts – Lapidary and other. The Society is a member of the Southeast Federation Mineralogical Societies Inc. and an affiliate of the American Federation of Mineralogical Society Inc.

2026 OFFICERS and COMMITTEE CHAIRPERSONS

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

President..... Patricia Stidom.
 Vice President..... Jim Carter.
 Treasurer..... Angela Valvasori.....
 Secretary..... Sophie Grimsley.....

COMMITTEES

Membership Liz Gregory.....
 Auctioneer Ron Ahle.....
 Club Liaison..... Jim Cobb.....
 Faceting Guild..... Tom Daniels.....
 Facebook..... Sue Shrader
 Field Trip..... Casey Tyler.....
 Historian..... Angela Valvasori.....
 Librarian..... Sheila Frame.....
 Newsletter Editor..... Ron Ahle.....
 Program..... Catherine Sawyer.....
 Show.....open
 Sunshine Sheila Frame.....
 Website..... Terry Gregory
 Workshop..... Gary Hert.....
 Workshop Location Special Committee.... Cheryl Coker.....



CGMS Website

Please visit our website:

<http://www.cgms.rocks>

Webmaster: Terry Gregory

Monthly Meeting

Typically, the meetings are held the third Monday of each month. Socializing and refreshments at 7:00 pm; Meeting at 7:30 pm.

Executive Board Meetings:

Typically, the meetings are held on the fourth Monday of each month. Meal is at 6:00 pm. Meeting is at 7:00 pm.

**Rocky Trails
PO Box 6333
Columbia, SC 29260**