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April meeting

Monday, April 20 at 7 pm

At our April meeting Lisa Rammell will talk about digging for fossils in Fossil, Oregon and also about the John Day area. Do you have fossils? If so, you might consider bringing one or two for Show and Tell. Of course you are welcome to bring a different rock or mineral instead.

Paul Newby will have another Silent Auction for us to bid on. This is an excellent chance to add interesting and beautiful specimens to your collection. Perhaps, he will dig up a fossil from his stores to auction off.

If your last name begins with a letter from M – Z, please bring a snack to share with the members.

Banner Image

The banner photo shows precious black matrix opal in tertiary-aged vesicular basalt. This specimen is from the Tablon mine near Erandique in western Honduras. The photo is by [James St. John](#) and is published here under the license, [CC BY 2.0](#).

Classes in Lapidary Arts



Stone Carving Basics and Wet Angle Grinder

**June 25 (tentative)
from 6:30 to 8 pm**

Ever wondered about carving stone? This discussion will show basic hand tools, power tools, stone, and safety gear. There will be a basic demo as weather and space allow.

How to Clean and Prep Stones

**July 23
from 6:30 to 8 pm**

The discussion will focus on a handful of methods to clean quartz, epidote, pyrite, and other materials we find locally in the Pacific Northwest. There will be samples of before and after. The discussion will include chemicals needed and related safety.



Don Wilcox

Don has been a member of Maplewood Rock and Gem Club for over 18 years. He has served on the board including 2 terms as president. He has been creating art for over 25 years and is a member of the Northwest Stone Carving Association. He created Tundrafox Designs as his business where he makes and sells lapidary items, pushed glass, sculptures, and more. You can find Don and his work at Etsy https://www.etsy.com/shop/TundrafoxDesigns?ref=shop_profile&listing_id=1657011904 And on the web <https://tundrafoxdesigns.com/>

Here are two of Don's sculptures.



Rock Candy

This dragon is carved from jade and is part of Bruce Samuels' collection. It was purchased from a Smithsonian catalog many years ago.



Your turn?

We are fortunate to have so many members who share their time and talents with our club, making this place richer in opportunities to learn and practice our lapidary arts. But, life is busy for each of us, meaning time has limits.

"Service to others is the rent you pay for your room here on earth."

~ **Muhammad Ali**

If every member took a turn at helping to keep this place humming, a member could

- help with single-day commitments like setting up for an event
- team up with friends to plan or lead committees
- serve on the Board for a while and then move on to do something else



Money isn't enough

Membership dues don't bring speakers to the meetings or plan an event. They don't set up tables and purchase food for celebrations. Money doesn't pay Shop Stewards to be in the Lapidary Shop so we can use the tools. Generous members give their time to make all the services and benefits possible.

A famous politician talked about helping out:

*"We make a living by what we get.
We make a life by what we give."
~ Winston Churchill*

How can you help our club? We offer a few ideas on the next page.

The Board

Our Board members work together as a team, form task-teams to accomplish specific projects, and also work independently on projects. They support one another in a mutually beneficial micro-community.

If you are adept at both team and independent work styles, and if you are keen to keep our club strong as it serves our members, please consider joining the Board. You might start by attending Board meetings which are the first Monday of each month. Talk to a member of the Board or the Nominating Committee to learn more about serving on the Board.



We are seeking people for the following roles:

- Vice President: A key leadership position that supports the President and oversees club programming and special initiatives.
- Secretary: The "memory" of our club. This individual is responsible for maintaining accurate records of our meetings, managing correspondence, and ensuring our history is preserved.

Teach us please



When you joined the club, did you look forward to learning from our knowledgeable members? Were you eager to work a raw stone into a gorgeous, finished piece? Were you curious about the seemingly impossible way that beautiful crystals form inside plain rocks? Have you wondered how to read the geography of a landscape?

While curiosity still compels you to learn, you likely hold knowledge that others would delight in knowing.

Each month a member or guest shares their knowledge with our community during the General meetings and at the Juniors' meetings. The topics are as varied as our members' curiosities and expertise: for example,

- geography as a clue to finding rocks
- how fluorescence or iridescence works
- fossils
- terminology
- rock identification
- a lapidary skill

"You have two hands: One to help yourself, the second to help others."

~ **Audrey Hepburn**

Please think about what you know and consider giving a little of your knowledge to our members during a monthly meeting. Then, at the other meetings, you can sit back and enjoy learning from others. Talk with a Board member to learn more.



Calendar of Events

Here are some important dates for your calendar. Parties and social time are such valuable ways we get to know each other that we dedicate two meetings a year to them. In August we have a summer celebration and in December we have a holiday party. All our other meetings are on the third Monday at 7 pm.

Event	Date	What's happening
Stone Carving Basics and Wet Angle Grinder	June 25 (tentative)	Class
How to Clean and Prep Stones	July 23 6:30 – 8 pm	Class
Summer show	August 8 - 9	Show
Summer Celebration	August 17 usually at 6 pm	Summer celebration and August meeting
Holiday show	December, first or second weekend	Show
Holiday Party	December 14 at 6 pm	Potluck dinner and party instead of the December meeting



Rock Candy

This gorgeous agate was photographed by [James St. John](#) and is published here under the Creative Commons license, [CC BY 2.0](#).

NW Crystal Sale

Saturday April 18th

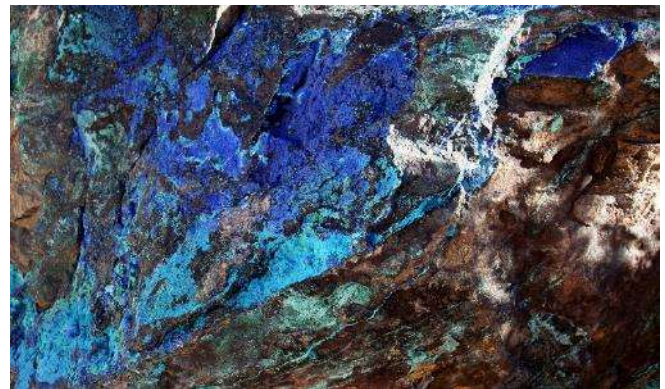
10 am to 6 pm

Joel Clark is renting our building on the 18th to host the Northwest Crystal Sale. He has 10 to 12 vendors lined up who will sell specimens, geodes, and slabs they have collected in Washington and beyond. The wide variety of rocks for sale will include

- Agates
- Calcite crystals
- Quartz of all varieties
- Barite crystals
- Fluorite crystals
- Scheelite crystals
- Dolomite crystals
- Magnesite crystals
- Azurite
- Malachite
- Aragonite stalactites
- Tourmaline crystals or sprays
- Feldspar crystals
- Beryl crystals
- White river geodes
- Zektzerite crystals



"Tourmaline in quartz" by Judy Gallagher, CC BY 2.0



Malachite



Fluorite



"Zektzerite: Twinned Micro-crystals"; by Jake Slagle; license [CC BY-NA 2.0](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-na/2.0/); collected at Washington Pass, Okanogan Co., Washington

Opalized “Bog” from the Yakima River Canyon

By Jim Miller

In the fall of 2010, a friend and I were hiking in the Yakima River Canyon and hunting for chukar high above the river. This scenic canyon wanders through several basalt ridges between Ellensburg and Selah, Washington. The arrow in the photo below shows the ridge we traversed.



After hours of walking through sagebrush and climbing steep basalt slopes, we found no chukar in gun range. Views from the ridge were great though, including the view northward of the Mt. Stuart complex (see below).





We were also lucky enough to see a group of desert bighorn sheep, three of which were considerate enough to pose for my camera.

The scenery was great, but with no luck hunting we realized that the birds were smarter than us. Tired and somewhat discouraged, we stopped hunting and started hiking back to my Jeep

along the crest of a very steep north-facing slope that descended to Canyon Road and the river below.

Partway back, I spied some light-colored rocks about 40 feet below us on the side of a steep slope. Knowing the general geology of the area, I guessed that the rock was probably petrified wood. We laid down our shotguns and scrambled down the rocky slope to investigate. The rock that I had noticed wasn't petrified wood, but it was a close relative. We had found a spot where pieces of opalized "bog" (more on that later) were eroding out of the slope. We marked the location on our GPS unit, picked up a few pieces of the rock, and resumed the long trek back to the Jeep.

When I got home, I looked at the rock samples more carefully. They were quite interesting and somewhat colorful, so we hatched a plan to return to the site the following year for more serious sampling and collecting.

In May of 2011 we returned to the opalized bog site. This isn't your average collecting site by the side of the road! It requires a one-way hike of about 8/10 of a mile on steep, rocky slopes with no paths other than occasional game trails. And the site we were seeking was about 800 feet higher than the road where I parked the Jeep. Nevertheless, we reached our destination after about an hour of gasping for air and stumbling along game trails. The spot looked just like we had left it six months earlier, but a little greener in springtime. And the wildflowers were spectacular.



With a small shovel, rock hammer and pry bar, we began digging below some exposed basalt, where the petrified bog material appeared to originate. After removing about 12 inches of dirt mixed with roots, loose basalt and broken opal, we reached an intact exposure of opalized bog material. The stone was sandwiched by porous basalt above and below. With further prying and digging we extracted about 40 pounds of rock for our backpacks and the treacherous walk back to the Jeep. The largest pieces weighed a few pounds each.

So, what exactly is opalized "bog" material? This interesting stone is a variety of common (non-precious) opal, which is defined as "amorphous (noncrystallized) silica combined with 3 to 15

percent water." About fifteen million years ago, this stone was part of a shallow peat bog, full of all sorts of organic detritus. The peat bog was buried by red-hot basalt lava. Fortunately, a lack of oxygen and moisture in the swampy wetland prevented the organic material from burning away to ash. After much time passed, silica gradually replaced the carbon in the buried peat deposit, changing the organic peat material to stone by the same process that forms petrified wood. Still more time passed... The relatively flat lava beds were compressed and folded into high ridges, and then eroded by the ancestral Yakima River. That erosion continues to this day, gradually exposing petrified wood and petrified bog material in the Yakima Canyon area.

Because the silica in common opal is not crystallized and water is contained within the matrix of the stone, opal is relatively lightweight and is considerably softer than typical examples of cryptocrystalline silica, such as agate, flint and jasper. One really neat thing about opalized bog and opalized wood is that the silica often replaces the original carbon in exquisite detail, allowing for close-up examination of the structure of the petrified materials. In the case of the petrified bog material that we collected, the stone exposes roots, twigs, limbs, seeds and a variety of other organic mush. Some of the limbs or roots in the opalized bog are up to about 3 inches in diameter. Unlike petrified wood, where only isolated parts of trees are converted to stone, the entire mass of opalized bog is a fossil remnant of a wide range of previously living organisms. Examples of the petrified bog material that we collected are shown below. The larger inclusions in the stone are fossilized roots and twigs.



OK, this is interesting rock. But what can you do with it? As a flintknapper, I love working common opal because it is relatively easy to flake, is often colorful, and it has a natural satin finish on flake scars. I have made several arrowheads out of the bog material we collected, and each is unique. Examples are shown on the next page.



From a lapidary perspective, the softness of common opal makes it relatively easy to shape with diamond tools. Opal generally takes a very nice polish for cabs, slabs, carvings or spheres. However, common opal frequently contains fractures and cracks. Because of the water that is contained within the matrix of the stone, natural cracks occur in the opal from the combined climatic impacts of freezing, thawing, wetting and drying. If you are digging for common opal, the less fractured pieces will be deeper in the ground, where ground temperature and soil moisture content are more constant. Despite these difficulties, I was able to get a small sphere made out of a chunk of opalized bog (see below).

We weren't the first humans to investigate this spot. The rocks that I first spotted on the slope had been dug and discarded many years ago. It was unclear whether the initial digging of this site was by Native Americans looking for knappable stone or by more recent rockhounds. We found no artifacts or other evidence of prehistoric excavation. Similarly, we found no bottles or rusty cans to suggest investigation by modern collectors.



Yakima Canyon is a fascinating place to visit for hiking, geologic exploration, rockhounding, wildlife viewing, fishing, and wildflower photography. There are numerous hiking trails and three public campgrounds available in the canyon. A suspension bridge crosses the river and provides hiking access to Umtanum Canyon, portions of which are shown below in the springtime. If you need a dose of sunshine and rocky vistas, Yakima Canyon is well worth the visit.



Jim Miller

Jim Miller is a long-time member of Maplewood Rock & Gem Club. He is a retired geologist and holds a Bachelor of Science degree in geological engineering, as well as a Master of Science degree in environmental geology. Jim has loved rocks, fossils, crystals and the natural world since grade school. He enjoys rock tumbling and is an accomplished flintknapper. In 2006 Jim wrote and published a CD book on the types of stone used for knapping arrowheads and stone knives. He enjoys technical writing and has had several of his articles published in Rock & Gem magazine.

DeYoung Red Diamond

The DeYoung Red Diamond is one of the largest natural red diamonds. It weighs 5.03 carats and was graded as a Natural Fancy Dark Reddish-Brown by the Gemological Institute of America. Its clarity grade is VS-2 (very slightly included) and its impurity rating is Type IIa indicating it contains no chemical impurities.

Of all the colors of fancy diamonds (red, yellow, green, blue, and black) red is the rarest. Other fancy colors are derived from inclusions of minerals in the stone, but red diamonds do not get their color from impurities.



Scientists are not certain but theorize that the red stems from a deformed crystal lattice that reflects red light. The lattice alteration is believed to happen in rare cases while the diamond was being formed.

The DeYoung Red resides at the [Smithsonian National Museum of Natural History](#). Sydney DeYoung bequeathed the gem to the Smithsonian. He had purchased the diamond, which was mounted on a hat pin, at a flea market and thought it was a garnet. Later, he realized it was a diamond.

Who doesn't like *free*?

In 2026 Washington public lands agencies have chosen the following days when you don't need a Discover Pass to park at

- state parks
- Washington State Department of Natural Resources land
- Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife land

A Discover Pass costs \$45 for a year of parking on state land listed above. The pass covers two vehicles.

The Discover Pass funds significantly help the state agencies provide

- recreation opportunities
- conservation of forests and seashores
- clean bathrooms
- trail maintenance



The free days in 2026 are

Wednesday, April 22 – Earth Day

Saturday – Sunday, June 6-7 – Free Fishing Weekend

Friday, June 19 – Juneteenth

Sunday, Aug. 9 – Smokey Bear's Birthday

Saturday, Sept. 26 – National Public Lands Day

Saturday, Oct. 10 – World Mental Health Day

Wednesday, Nov. 11 – Veterans Day

Happy Birthday

To everyone born in April!

Your birthstone is diamond!

"Better a diamond with a
flaw than a pebble
without."

~ **Confucius**

"Rough diamonds may
sometimes be mistaken for
worthless pebbles."

~ **Thomas Browne**

"It's hard to be a
diamond in a
rhinestone world."

~ **Dolly Parton**

"A diamond is just a
lump of coal that
stuck to its job."

~ **Leonardo da Vinci**



Everyone wants to shine
bright like a diamond,
but no one wants to get
cut.

~ **Eric Thomas**

Life is like a diamond:
rare, precious, and
meant to be cherished.

~ **Unknown**

Rock lovers everywhere

Before you go rockhounding

Rockhounding is fun to do with a group. Join one of the trips listed below and meet other local rockhounders. If you plan to go, please contact the host a week or so ahead to let them know you are coming and to find out if anything has changed.

As you get ready for the trip, we recommend that you go through this checklist:

- Contact the host a week before the trip.
- Plan your driving time so you arrive 30 minutes before the meeting time.
- If needed for parking, get a Discover Pass or America the Beautiful pass, as required.
- Collect your tools and containers for the rocks:
<https://mineralcouncil.wordpress.com/photos-of-collecting-tools/>
- Prepare a first aid kit.
- Plan appropriate clothes, boots, gloves, snacks, and water.
- Gas up your vehicle.
- Review the Rockhound Code of Ethics. It's important to follow these so that the lands remain open for rockhounding.
<https://mineralcouncil.wordpress.com/rockhound-code-of-ethics/>



Rockhounding Hosts

Here is the contact information for hosts of the rockhounding trips:

Maplewood Club	Don Wilcox	wilcox.don@comcast.net
Marysville Club	Nique Wicks	nwhoppyfrog41@gmail.com (509) 670-0630
Pow-Wow	Larry Vess	vessel3755@gmail.com (253) 473-3908
Puyallup Club	Paul Haak	pvhaak@gmail.com (253) 312-1743
Washington State Mineral Council	Ed Lehman	wsmced2@outlook.com (425) 334-6282
	Nique Wicks (contact information is above)	
NW Federation of Mineralogical Societies	Doug True	dtruefossils12@yahoo.com (406) 670-0506

Trips and shows

Date	Host and Location	Details
April 18 – 19	Pow-Wow Saddle Mountain	Search for petrified wood. Bring a shovel, small pick, hammer (surface collection).
May 9	Marysville Finney Creek	Search for listwanite. Bring digging tools, hard rock chisel, pry bar, sledgehammer.
May 21 – 25	NW Federation Blue Forest, Wyoming	To be announced

Date	Host and Location	Details
May 23 – 24	Marysville Kettle Falls, Wild Turkey Mine	Search for fossils and noble serpentine. Bring a rock hammer and tools for hard rock or surface collection. Fee.
June 13	Marysville Saddle Mountain, Diatom Pit	Search for petrified wood and common opal. Bring a shovel, small pick, rock hammer, buckets with lids (dust).
June 25 – 28	NW Federation Tee Pee Canyon Agate, South Dakota	To be announced
July 18 – 19	Marysville Lake Wenatchee	Search for garnet and talc. Bring a shovel screen, container for garnets, hand saw.
Aug. 8 - 9	Maplewood Summer Show	
Aug. 15 – 16	Puyallip Greenwater	Search for agate, jasper, opal Bring digging tools, chisel, small pry bar, rock hammer.
Sept. 12 – 13	Pow-Wow Red Top	Search for agate, jasper, geodes. Bring digging tools, chisel, small pry bar, rock hammer.
Sept. 19	Puyallip Little Naches	Search for lily pad jasper, fossils, thunder eggs. Bring digging tools, hard rock chisels, pry bar, 3# hammer, rock hammer.

Date	Host and Location	Details
Oct. 11	Marysville Walt Bailey	Search for rainbow chert. Bring hard rock chisels, rock hammers, pry bars.
Nov. 7	Marysville Blanchard Hill	Search for Stilpnomelane (dalmation stone). Bring hard rock flat chisels, hammers, pry bars.
Dec. 5 – 6th	Maplewood Rock and Gem Club	Holiday Show

Grit and oil for sale

The Shop Stewards have grit. When the shop is open you can buy grit or oil. Please email them a day ahead of when you will stop by: shop@maplewoodrockclub.com

Each grit package is \$4, and this is what they sell:

1 lb of 60/90
1 lb of 120/220

$\frac{3}{4}$ lb of pre-polish
 $\frac{1}{2}$ lb of polish

Gallon of oil for \$20 (Bring your own container.)



Rock Candy

This photo is a specimen of afghanite.

Washington State Mineral Council

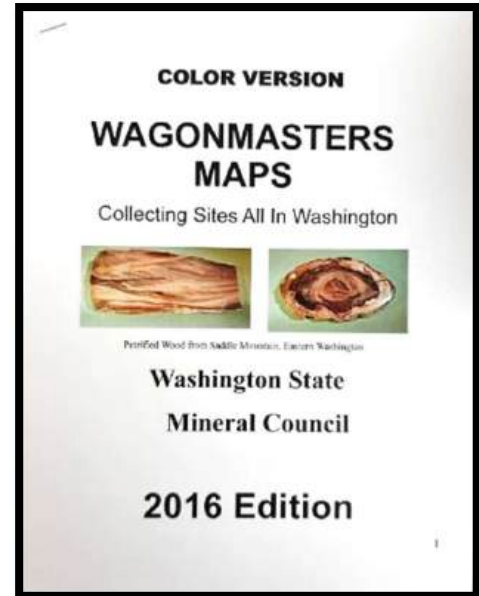
Our club, along with many other rock and gem clubs in the state, is a member of the Washington State Mineral Council. This organization helps us by

- advocating for access to public lands
- advocating for beneficial land use policies
- compiling and sharing maps and other information
- publicizing shows and field trips so members learn about and can participate in events at other clubs

Read their latest [Newsletter](#).

Maps for Rockhounds

The Washington State Mineral Council has put together a 62-page booklet with maps for finding rock hounding sites. You can buy a copy for only \$20 at the meeting.



Seattle Regional Gem and Mineral Shows Committee

Our club is a member of a Seattle area organization of rock clubs. Together we share wooden display cases that we use at our shows. These cases are stored in the new shed behind our building. The other member clubs are the [North Seattle Lapidary Gem and Mineral Club](#) and the [West Seattle Rock Club](#).

Northwest Federation of Mineralogical Societies

Our club is a member of the Northwest Federation of Mineralogical Societies: <http://Northwestfederation.org>. We email their newsletter to our members each month.

About Us

Lapidary Shop

Our lapidary shop is reserved for members who have paid their dues. Inside are five slab saws, three CabKing™ machines for polishing cabochons, and two trim saws.

Sign up for shop time

All shop users must sign up for a time slot at least a day before the session. On their first visit, new shop users will be trained on shop procedures and safety before being able to use any equipment.

You can [sign up for shop time online](#). The system will send you a confirmation email which you should save until after your session. You will need the email if you need to cancel your reservation. Each Thursday and the 1st and 3rd Wednesdays we have two shop sessions available:

- Session 1: from 3:00 to 5:30 pm
- Session 2: from 5:30 to 8:00 pm

How to cancel

If you sign up for shop time online and later realize you won't be able to make it, you need to cancel your reservation no later than two days before the session. So, if you are cancelling a Thursday time, you need to cancel by Tuesday at midnight. This enables someone else to sign up. *If you do not cancel, you will be charged for the session.* To cancel, click the link in the confirmation email you received.

What to bring

You need to bring \$10 (cash or check) to pay for the session. Additionally, please bring these:

- Eye protection
- Hearing protectors

Before you leave the shop

The shop stewards are volunteers who generously give 6 hours a week to enable us to use the tools. Before you leave a tool station, please wipe it down and leave it in the same condition as you found it. If you discover a problem with a saw or tool, please let the Shop Steward know.

Shop Stewards

Rich Osborne
Bruce Samuels
Nathan O'Brien
Dirk Sierag
Scott Higson

Shop@maplewoodrockclub.com



Connect with us

Website: <http://www.maplewoodrockclub.com/>

Facebook page: Maplewood Rock & Gem Club

Facebook group for members: MRGC Sales and Trades

Email us: info@maplewoodrockclub.com

Address: 8802 196th St SW, Edmonds, Washington 98026



Our Board



Our club is run entirely by volunteers; and we are grateful for the time, energy, and expertise they give to our community.

President: Angela Vitense

Vice President: open

Treasurer: Lisa Rammell

Secretary: open

Past President: Angela Vitense

Members at large: Paul Newby, Mark Tomas, Nathan O'Brien, and Craig Kosovich.

Image licenses

We use abbreviations in the license attributions. Here are the definitions.

CC: Creative Commons license

BY: attribute the author, link to the license, and indicate if changes were made.

SA: share alike - If you publish the image, you must use the same license.

ND: no derivatives - You may not alter the image.

NC: non-commercial use - You may not use the image for commercial use.

3.0 or other number: version of the license

News to share?

Did you go rockhounding? Have you acquired a beautiful new specimen? Contact Nancy

Samuels, the Editor at

MRGC@nancysamuels.com.

This issue

Maplewood Rock and Gem Club News

Volume 04

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