

2009 AFMS/NFMS FIELDTRIP SCHEDULE  
Billings, Montana By: Doug True

An important part of every show and convention are the fieldtrips that allow collectors from all over the country to collect different materials, to come together, enjoy and make new friendships. Montana is just the place for this to happen, wide open country and a large number of things to collect. All fieldtrip participants will be asked to sign a waiver releasing the AFMS/NFMS and the Billings Gem and Mineral Club from all liability, and that you will abide by all rules set down by fieldtrip leaders and by all state and Federal laws regarding collecting on public lands.

**August 3, 2009 Monday :** The first trip will leave from the Holiday Inn at 8:30 a.m. and travel 75 miles south to the western slope of the Pryor Mountains (1 ½ hrs) You should pack a lunch and bring plenty of water as it will be warm and there are no stores in the area. You will also need a rock pick, collecting bag and a good pair of boots. The material to be found at this location is the rare Bear Canyon Black & White Fortification Agate. This location is known mostly by locals and has not produced much material until last summer when a new area has been discovered. This trip should produce some great material. Besides fortification agate, one can find partially hollow nodules with quartz or calcite crystals. You might be lucky enough to find a section of crinoid stem, also found in association with the agate.

We are going to skip over Tuesday August 4. We will address these trips at a later date.

**August 5, 2009 Wednesday:** A few modifications have been made to this trip. The trip will be collecting Montana Agate, petrified wood, jaspers, agatized coral, etc on the Yellowstone River, just NE and downstream of Miles City, Montana. You will be taken to some exposed gravel bars on the river. High water is usually down by this time and collecting can be exciting. Everyone will meet at the Wal-Mart in Miles City and leave on trip at 1 p.m. It will take about 30 minutes travel time to this collecting area. To get to Miles City from Billings take I-94 east travel to Exit 138, turn left on Haynes Ave, travel north approx. ½ mile and Wal-Mart will be on your right. (1 p.m. time was established for those leaving from Billings in the morning) Motel 6 (406) 232-7040, if you don't mind train sounds the Red Rock Hotel (406) 234-5382 Great prices, Meadows R.V. Park (406) 234-3013 It should be warm, so bring plenty to drink, Rock bag and a screwdriver are great for collecting (leave your rock hammer in your car, many great agates have been ruined by a hammer)

**For those** who are going on to Glendive for the Thursday fieldtrips, you can spend the night in Terry, Montana, about 40 miles from Glendive. Terry Oasis RV, (406) 635-5520 About \$17.00 per night,. Diamond Motel (406) 635-5407, \$38-40.  
**Or** if you drive to Glendive for the evening. Green Valley Campground (406) 377-4156,



[grnvally@midrivers.com](mailto:grnvally@midrivers.com) El Centro Motel, downtown, (406) 377-5211 Best rates in town and clean rooms.

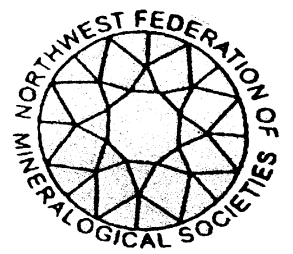
Two trips are planned for Thursday August 6.

**August 6, 2009 Thursday:** Two trips are scheduled: One will be hunting the Yellowstone River Gravel bars for Agates, Petrified wood, jaspers etc, and traveling SE of Glendive to the Hell Creek Formation, Cretaceous Period, looking for Petrified wood, Fig leaves, pine cones (NOTE THIS FORMATION ALSO HAS FOSSIL BONE AND CANNOT BE COLLECTED ON PUBLIC LANDS). Parts of this area are private land also and you may collect bone. Again this time of year can be warm, so bring lots of water, a hat, and be ready to hike. Both trips will leave at 9 a.m. from the K-Mart Parking lot just across from the intersection of Highway 16 & West Bell St. (Bus I- 94) For those that would like to do both areas, a switch will be made at 2p.m. those in the fossil area will be taken to River and the Agate collectors can go to collect fossils. NOW are you confused? I am

**August 7, 2009 Friday:** This trip will leave from K-Mart at 9 a.m., we will go south east to the Pierre Shale Formation, Cretaceous Period, to collect ammonites, scaphites, nataloids, various bivalves and snails. The best tools for this trip are a heavy hammer, eye protection, small bags and wrapping material for your specimens. We will be breaking up mudstone concretions. Note: If this area is wet from a thunderstorm, the fossil trips will be modified.

For those that would rather look at or hunt agate you might like to take a drive north on 16 to Savage, Montana and visit Tom Harmon at Harmon's Rock Shop. You will see some of the finest Montana anywhere and you might even get him to point you toward a gravel bar to hunt more rock!!

You might note that on all of the fieldtrips you may come upon a Rattlesnake or a Tick, so keep your eyes open. Be safe and have fun.



## Fieldtrips in Montana, be prepared, safe and have fun. By: Doug True and Larry Field

Plan on comfort and self preservation as you should on any field trip by coming prepared for:

1. Weather extremes ranging from thunderstorms to extreme sun (hat, fluids, sunscreen, jacket etc.)
2. Troublesome plants and animals such as ticks, snakes, cactus, etc.(insect repellent, protective footwear, long sleeves. etc.)
3. Heat and it's effects, including protection from giardia (safe fluids, ice, clean water etc.)
4. Remote locations, exertion (folding chair, reliable vehicle, food and emergency equipment.)
5. A selection of collecting equipment (rock hammer, pick, gloves, safety glasses, collecting bags, spritz bottle, storage container and packing material, individual sandwich bags for small or fragmented specimens and swapping material)

We ask that if you pack it in, **YOU** pack it out. Help us keep our collecting locations open.

Now! Are you are ready for some Montana hospitality? After the Bear Canyon Agate and the Hysham fossil Hunt you are invited to a Potluck and swap, we will furnish Hamburgers and Hot Dogs cooked on the spot. Bring chips, watermelon, canned items, cookies etc. Bring eating utensils, chairs, and bring some trade items, things that if you didn't have, you would want, quality gets quality. Join us for a fun and relaxing time to share and build new friendships.

Until next month

