



DMC Field Trip Sharing Program

The Southeast Federation of Mineralogical Societies, Inc



The Friendly Federation - Founded in 1976 to serve

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**An Official Field Trip of the Henderson County Gem & Mineral Society
(Hendersonville, NC) HOST**
An Official Field Trip of the Alabama Mineral and Lapidary Society

Sunday, August 4, 2024
9 a.m. until 5 p.m. EASTERN
The Lucky Strike Gold & Gem Mine
251 Lucky Strike Dr., NC-221
Marion, NC 28752

Limit 40 Adults, children permitted
Registration Required (Link is below)
Fees: See Below

TRIP: “All That Glitters” Rutherford County played an integral role in the NC Gold Rush and was a hot spot for mining activity during the early 1800s. Rutherfordton was home to Christopher Bechtler, who minted the first one-dollar gold coin in 1832, approximately 17 years before the U.S. Mint made one of their own!

At the trip site, you will learn to pan for pure NC gold and watch the operation of various kinds of equipment that assist the search. The McCormick family owns and operates this historic site, which also offers short trails to abandoned mines, an interpretive display and patient guidance from people with more than 30 years of experience! We know you will find something nice!

COLLECTING: The HCGMS will donate the cost to operate a small, “high banker” near the pond to generate a good amount of material for more careful treatment in a gold pan. We will distribute this among participants. You are also welcome to purchase enhanced bags for gold seeking, or gem buckets for the younger rockhounds for starting, or adding to, their collection in the sluice area. We can go into the river to hand-collect material for panning. Basic equipment can be borrowed for the day with the \$5.00 charge for river access.

BRING:

- Gold pan(s), sifter, sturdy scoop, container for riverbed soil
- Small glass/plastic bottles for holding gold
- Appropriate clothes, footwear/waders for shallow river wading
- Snuffer bottle for pulling gold flakes, pieces from the pan
- Hat, sunscreen/sunglasses

- A 5-gallon bucket – good river seat and to haul things out later.
- If you have power equipment, you may bring up to a 5-in. dredge; see Fee section.
- Bring your lunch OR order freshly cooked on-site.

REQUIREMENTS:

Stay in the river/pond areas of the site for collecting and stop access by the large wooden bridge. Ask at the office, or one of our Club Hosts, if you have any questions on river access points.

Lucky Strike is a family-owned place that enjoys peaceful gatherings, civil language and considerate behavior. Stay on designated trails, do not try and enter or dig/collect around the old mine areas. This is a historic site being further developed to display and preserve the gold mining heritage.

TERRAIN/SPECIAL CONDITIONS: It's easy to lose balance even in this shallow river. Move carefully. Some prefer to use gloves in the water. A towel and change of socks/clothes. Heat, sun/water reflection – stay hydrated and take precautions like hat and sunscreen. Be aware of Ticks.

The site also features two hiking trails to the old mines (no access). The longer trail has some ups & downs and possibly muddy areas. Trekking poles or hiking staff and good footwear will help. The shorter trail is easy to walk. Hikers on the longer trail are encouraged to sign in at the office and after you return so everybody is accounted for.

There are several river access points in the camping area, so do respect the situation.

Schedule:

Meet-ups from 8:15 to 8:35 (two locations, directions and details in the registration confirmation email), then continue to site. The address is provided at the top in case you are arriving later in the day.

Registration table by the covered panning area, if not completed at meet-up.

We will display gold samples found here and go over equipment typically used. The Club trip high banker (small size) will be operated at the pond. Come see how it works, and get a bag of filtrate for panning. Participants are also welcome to “chip in” among themselves to purchase different options of gold bags/buckets, see Fee section.

At 12:30 we'll wash up, order lunch and at 1 p.m. we take a break in a shaded grove for lunch. Ms. Liz McCormick, founder of the Vein Mtn. Recreational Miner's Club, will give a talk about this unique area and the site in particular. Prospecting resumes afterward, stay as long as you like.

Optional, short side trip: About 3 p.m., a Club member will drive/lead others to the nearby Bechtler Mint Site Historic Park on 342 Gilboa Church Road (a loop road that borders Rt. 221). It features a Bechtler mine shaft (no access) and some interpretive displays. We should be back to the field trip site within an hour.

CAMPING AND OTHER FEES:

Camping – call for availability or longer stay. Primitive is \$25, Regular site with water and electric is \$30, Full hook-up \$40, Pull-through \$50 per night. Cabin or Rental Camper is 2-night min. at \$95 per night.

\$5.00 for river access, all day - gold pan, screen, can be borrowed if needed.

Dredging in River, daily rate using your dredge:

\$10 for the day for a 2-inch dredge, increasing by \$5 for 3, 4 or 5-inches.

Gold Ore

Large Bucket \$15, Gold nugget ore bags: \$25 / \$50 / \$100 / \$200 / \$500

Picker Bags: \$30 / \$60

Large bucket of gemstone ore: \$20 / Specialty Gemstone Ore Buckets: \$25 / \$50 / \$100 / \$200

Hi-Banker Rental is \$60 for the day/load of dirt \$40 [Club will provide one]

Rent a sluice box \$10 for the day.

REGISTRATION: Email or call the contact to register. 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).

CHILDREN/PETS: While children are certainly welcome, we request that pets be left comfortably at home. Keep an eye on the little ones near the river and pond.

FACILITIES: Large restrooms in between pond and sluice canopy.

The Miners Diner serves breakfast, lunch, beverages, ice cream and snacks. Very reasonable prices for good, fresh cooked food. The HCGMS will provide cold water/drinks near the high banker area and during the lunch talk.

PLACES TO STAY: *These are just highlights. Go online to the visitor information sites for: Spruce Pine; Rutherford County; McDowell County.*

Spruce Pine – Pine Valley Motel, Hwy 226 (continue south to get on NC 221 S)
Super 8 Motel (Black Mtn.) and Hampton Inn in Marion area.

Skyline Village Inn, 12255 NC-226, Spruce Pine, NC on the Blue Ridge Parkway. www.skylinevillageinn.com; 828-765-9394.

Lake James State Park is closer to Marion/Rt. 40, and Lake Lure area is closer to Rutherfordton, many lodging options.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION: We scheduled this trip to coincide with the final day of the 65th NC Mineral and Gem Festival, Aug. 1-4, Spruce Pine. New, large facility at Commons Shopping Center, 12183 NC 226 Hwy S. This highway, heading south, will merge with Rt. 221 S.

You'll be in a prime gem and mineral area – we encourage you to come up and stay a day or so. Very worthwhile attractions in this region include: Emerald Village/NC Mining Museum (fee) is a huge complex worth a trip! It features authentic “spoils piles/dig sites” to look for quartz, beryl, garnets, ETC. More easily accessed from Milepost 334 (follow signs) of the Blue Ridge Parkway (BRP), at the Little Switzerland exit.

Nearby, but totally different, the Museum of NC Minerals (free) is near the BRP entrance at Hwy 226 S. A list of area gem mines can be obtained there; website is: www.threepeaksnc.com. They have several huge and amazing specimens outside, a very well-presented interactive museum, free coffee and friendly staff. Near this BRP entrance/exit on the northbound side of Rt. 226 there is a small Mica museum on the right.

DIRECTIONS AND WHERE TO MEET: Registered participants will be sent a confirmation email with directions and meeting place details.

CARPPOOLING: 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.

CONTACTS: Kathryn Hackett Fields, before and on trip day: 828-731-7371, before trip email: khackettfields@gmail.com.
Tim Barton (before the trip), mobile 828-577-4505; landline 828-885-8248

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. **Please do not post DMC field trip information where the general public can access it.**