

## SVGMS Field Trip News

### Field Trips - 2017

#### September 23, 2017

Willis Mountain Kyanite Mine. - This field trip is a combined Mineral collecting field trip. Willis Mountain is the world's largest industrial producer of Kyanite.

If you have never been there it is an experience you may not want to miss. Even if you have been there several times, the mine changes, and new areas are opened up, so you never know what you may discover.

Unfortunately, this field trip is on the same day as the clubs rock show. If you have a previous obligation with the show please fulfill that obligation.

**I will be going to the Willis Mountain Field Trip, so if you want to go, please notify me at; [livingearthtreasures@gmail.com](mailto:livingearthtreasures@gmail.com) NO later than 9-18-2017.**

You must be at the mine no later than 8:30 am to sign in and for the safety briefing. The details of the Field Trip are below. Please read them thoroughly.

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#### OFFICIAL COMBINED MINERAL COLLECTING FIELD TRIP

THE GEM AND MINERAL SOCIETY OF LYNCHBURG, VA INC. (HOST)

**AND**

THE ROANOKE VALLEY MINERAL AND GEM SOCIETY INC. (HOST)

An official Field trip of the *Sherandoah Valley Gem and Mineral Society*

#### KYANITE MINING CORP. DILLWYN, VA. ----- ANNUAL FIELD TRIP

WILLIS MOUNTAIN KYANITE MINE

If the mine is working, we may have to limit our collecting areas

September 23, 2017

9:00AM to 1 PM

Sign-up is required, call me, email me or sign-up at the meeting. If you cancel, notify me to be taken off the list as space may be limited due to the expanded list of clubs now participating in this annual event.

All club field trip leaders send me a list of your total collectors so that I can compile a list and forward to the mine management by 9-19-17. There is a limit of 150 collectors from all clubs for this event so there will be room for everyone.

**SAFETY:** Everyone must arrive at the office parking lot no later than 8:30AM to sign the release form and hear the required safety briefing. Each Club field trip leader, or their appointed replacement, will act as safety observer while in the mine and will be expected to be on the lookout for and correct all safety infractions from any collector from any club. Keep in mind that this site is one of the very few that are still open for collecting. Not obeying all the safety rules will cause this site to be closed to all future collecting.

DRIVING FROM THE ROANOKE AND LYNCHBURG AREA: From Roanoke, follow US 460 East to Lynchburg, to the Sheets Station on US 460 and Rt. 811 in New London. Continue on the US 460 East by-pass around Lynchburg thru Appomattox and take Rt. 24 North to its end at US 60, Mt. Rush. Continue on US 60 East to Sprouses Corner. Turn right on US 15 South and drive 4 miles to Willis Mt. Plant Road. Turn left and stop at the stone mine office. Park out of the way as not to block traffic. Do not park along Rt. 15. Allow 1 1/4 minimum hour driving time from New London west of Lynchburg to the mine office.

GENERAL LOCATION and ASSEMBLY TIME: Everyone will meet at the mine office for sign-in and safety instruction so be there no later than 8:30am. The mine is located north of Farmville, Va. on Rt. 15 North, James Madison Highway. Proceed from US 460 North on Rt. 15 for a little over 12 miles to Willis Mt. Plant Rd. The stone mine office is on the right. If you approach from Rt. 60 at Sprouses Corner, then go south on Rt. 15 for 4 miles to Willis Mt. Plant Rd. and the office will be on your left. Wait in the parking lot and do not block traffic. Many trucks may be using the road. While you're waiting, be sure to enjoy the beautiful blue kyanite bolder in the front yard from the old closed Baker Mountain.

COLLECTING: Willis Mountain is what's known as a monadnock. The kyanite exposure resisted weathering and, as the surrounding area was eroded and weathered away, the mountain outcrop was left standing. This is very much like the famous Graves Mountain kyanite mine in Georgia. The center of the mountain has been mostly mined away. We should be able to find plenty of white kyanite blades in the massive kyanite quartzite; pyrite; quartz; hematite with some iridescence, red mica, green mica, apatite and possibly some blue kyanite and pale green trolleite. Some of the white kyanite and quartz here have a beautiful light blue fluorescence and the apatite is yellow so bring your short wave lamp and blackout cloth.

EQUIPMENT: The standard quarry safety gear required is a hard hats with a mfg. date of 5 years or less everyone must have an approved hard hat...no bicycle helmets. Small heads can wear a ball cap under the hard hat. safety glasses, respiratory protection from rock dust you may encounter, a pair of wheel chocks either purchased, home made or even a rock is acceptable. Every time you leave the car, turn off the engine, put in park and apply the hand brake and wheel chocks. ONLY STEEL OR MSHA (Federal Mine Safety and Health Act) APPROVED REINFORCED FIBERGLASS TOED BOOTS WILL BE ALLOWED. THERE WILL BE NO EXCEPTIONS!!! No low quarters or sneakers even if they have steel or composite toes. If you do not have all the required safety equipment, you will not be allowed to enter the quarry. Also required are long pants, gloves, hammer and chisels, wrapping paper, buckets, water as it is very important to stay hydrated as it may be very hot. if you have any medical condition that would put you in any danger, do not attempt this trip. For your own safety, let your field trip leader or collecting buddy know if you have any medical condition that could be a problem for you. Be prepared for windy, hot or wet weather. We will be on the mountain top and it's always windy. We can drive to the designated collecting area, so hand trucks should not be needed. Bring a camera, as the view is awesome.

AFTER THE DIG SOCIAL: This year, the pavilion beside the office will be available immediately after the dig ends at 1PM to relax, cool off eat your lunch. This will also be a social get together so that we can have a chance to become better acquainted with the members of our rock club neighbors and to provide some time to relax before their long ride home. You might want to bring your own lawn chair. There may also be other groups there as invited guests of Kyanite Mining.

AGE LIMIT: There is no age limit, but no toddlers please. All children must be signed for, closely supervised by an adult and never left unattended. They must also have all the required safety equipment. No Exceptions!!! If parents have any questions about what is acceptable for your child, please call me and we will discuss it.

WEATHER: The trip will be canceled due to safety concerns in case of hard rain or a thunderstorm. Call to confirm if there is any question.

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## Burnsville, VA Field Trip Report.

On July 15, SVGMS hosted a special "backyard" Field Trip to Burnsville, VA. This was an unusual opportunity for rock hounds and lapidary enthusiasts to find and purchase mineral specimens and cabbing rough from all over the world. The owner/importer did not disappoint; there were more minerals, specimens, crystals, lapidary rough than was originally listed in the Field Trip description. The prices were also dropped again, then again were many people cashed out.

From the comments, I received everyone seemed very pleased. Many people came and stayed the whole day. It took on average six hours to sift through all the material. This may have been the encore to the Kentucky trip in April.

There were approx. 30-40 associated club members from MD, KY, VA, TN, WV, and PA.

It took some dedication to make the long trip to get there, but those that did were rewarded. It was a GOOD day if you were a rock hound. ☺ The weather also cooperated wonderfully. Sunny, slightly cool in the mountains, light breeze.

Below are some pictures



Many many minerals to choose from



If you wanted quantity it was there

Some of my favorites below.



Pistachio Opal



Pietersite



Vogesite

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**October – Vesuvius Unakite Field Trip.** (all ages)

I am working on a new location for the next Field Trip. Hopefully to be scheduled in October. Thanks to SVGMS members; Heather Austin and Ilana, who discovered and graciously gave me the contact of the owner of a private farm in the Vesuvius, VA area which has some of the finest samples of the Vesuvius variety of Unakite. What is the difference? Vesuvius Unakite has a more reddish-orange variation of feldspar with the green epidote. It makes stunning mineral samples and even better lapidary cabochons.

Stay tuned in for more details.

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If you know of a potential collecting site, please let me know and I will contact the owners of the land or claim in behalf of SVGMS. Your HELP really makes a difference to find new sites.  
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**Other Potential SVGMS Field Trips for 2017-2018;**

Fossil Collecting Field Trip – Western VA (all ages)

U.S. Silica Mine, Montpellier, VA (age restriction, safety gear required)

Rose River, Syria VA – Fall, Early Spring (all ages)

Virginia Department of Minerals, Mining and Energy, Charlottesville, VA (all ages)

Wayne Peterson

Field Trip Coordinator

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**Field Trip Cancellations;** *Weather and Collecting Environment conditions play an important factor in all field trips. If poor collecting conditions creates an increase of safety hazards of any field trip, the trip will be canceled or postponed due to safety concerns.*  
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**The Earth is like a big box of rocks. . . . . you just never know what you're going to find.**