

Hells Canyon Gem Club History

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The following Club History is taken in part from a booklet titled "Lewiston & Clarkston Valley Rockhounds and Their Activities" by Floyd Mossler.

Rockhounds first started in the Lewis-Clark Valley in 1937 when interested collectors started meeting in each others homes. On June 7, 1938 a club was formed with Mr. Bill Lundstrum the first President and his wife Secretary. The Club was called the Clearwater Rockhounds.

Some of the Charter members were: Fred Erskin, Mr. Chapman, C.C. Lame, Floyd Pond, Stanley Miller, Mr. & Mrs. Walter Sewell, Ben Johnson, Mr. & Mrs Adsitt, Mr. Warner, Boyd Olson and W. R. Engle, Mr. Sales, Frank Steinek, R. C. Clouse, Kenneth Parks, R.E. Underwood, Will Spedden, William Peschell, Bill & Dallie Curtis, Mr. & Mrs. Tom Duffey, Mr. & Mrs Melvin Stewart, Abe Fry, Gordon Scott, Horrance Jerold, Otis Blakes, Lyda Sloon, Mr. & Mrs Ed Patvin, Ruth Sapp, Viola Kimmige, Anna Carlson, Ruth McDonald, and Ruth Elliott.

The Club was active taking many field trips, and showing small exhibits of their collected material. Around March 15th of 1940 a Club show was advertised in the Tribune. The show was located at 903 D Street, Lewiston. There were 30 displays and 400 members of the public attended. This was the first rock show in Lewiston by the Clearwater Rockhounds.

In October 1940 the members were congratulated for their display wins at the Spokane/Northwest Federation of Mineralogical Society's Fourth Annual Convention. Almost half of the honors given went to Club members.

In 1942 the Club was getting smaller, and meetings were not regular. In the Fall of 1942 there was a notice printed in the Tribune that the Club was going to discontinue functions. It was not due to a lack of interest, but due to gas rationing and to conserve gas, oil and lights and other things to help the war effort. However,

small rockhound groups continued to meet informally.

On January 17, 1952 a meeting was held at the College Elementary School Auditorium. C. C. Lame conducted the meeting about starting a new Club. Mel Stewart was elected first President of the new Hells Canyon Gem Club. His wife Alta was elected Secretary-Treasurer. Thirty eight people attended the meeting. Many had been members of the original Club.

In May of 1952 a small gem show was held at the College Elementary School. There were no dealers only member displays. Admission for the two day show was 50 cents. Monthly meetings, resumed with 4 -5 field trips a years and a Club picnic.

The Club was Incorporated in 1956 outlining the way our Club is currently organized and to protect the Club from any lawsuits. That year a show was held in June at the Thometz Pavilion, Lewiston.

In December 1966 the Club was certified as a member of the Northwest Federation of Mineralogical Societies (NFMS) and the American Federation of Mineralogical Societies (AFMS).

In September 1973 the Club hosted the 33rd Annual Northwest Federation of Mineralogical Societies Show, at the Nez Perce County Fair Ground.

The Club was presented with the All American Federation Club Award by the AFMS in 1975.

In October 2008 the Club will hold its 42nd Annual Gem and Mineral Show. It will again be at the Nez Perce County Fair Ground. The Club continues to be active by having field trips, monthly meetings, programs including the annual picnic, instructional classes for Club members and activities that support the community.