

RMFMS Selenite Crystal Collecting Field Trip April 26, 2010

Where: Great Salt Plains, Oklahoma (Near Cherokee, OK)
For: Selenite Crystals
When: Monday, April 26, 2010 (the Monday after the RMFMS Show)
Leader: Gene Maggard ((316) 742-3746, gandpmaggard@wildblue.net)

RMFMS and Wichita Gem and Mineral Society (WGMS) are leading a field trip to collect selenite crystals at the Great Salt Plains, Oklahoma, dig area, in conjunction with the RMFMS convention and Wichita Gem and Mineral Show. The trip is scheduled for Monday, April 26, the day after the convention/show ends. The dig area is open to the public and anyone can dig for these crystals. What RMFMS and WGMS leaders will do is meet the field trip group at the dig site and provide advise and assistance for successful digging. This group is limited to attendees of the convention and show.

Detailed information about the trip will be provided at the show to those who sign up for the field trip. Critical information that attendees need to know in advance are: The dig site is about a 2.5 hour trip from the south side of Wichita (about 135 miles). There is a small town located nearby, Cherokee, Ok, which has any facilities needed for food, lodging, fuel, etc. To dig these crystals your equipment needs include sun protection, round nosed shovel, water for both washing crystals and drinking, lunch, containers for your finds, and a change of clothes.

Diggers will be coated with salt, sand and clay when they are done, and will want a change of clothes so that at least their clothes are clean for the trip away from the dig. Some extra water for washing up would also be good. A garden sprayer works really well for washing the crystals loose from the sandy matrix. Sometimes the dig hole will develop water in the bottom, and some people use a small can to splash the crystals loose. Some people like to use flats for storing their crystals. Others just use a bucket. Either works fine.

The most desired crystal is clear with a distinct reddish “hourglass” form in the middle of the crystal. The hourglass is formed from sand and clay inclusions. These are the well known “hourglass selenite crystals” for which the dig area is famous. The individual selenite blades can be up to 8 inches long, but most are shorter. Occasional clusters are found, and rarely, spectacular larger clusters.

This should be a fun trip (weather permitting) and will provide an opportunity to find a somewhat different mineral than can normally be found in most areas. The crystals are abundant and everyone should be able to find plenty. The only problem could be weather, it being well into the thunderstorm/tornado season for Kansas and Oklahoma. This could be your chance to see one or our Great Plains twisters. Let’s hope not.