

Alabama Gold Camp

Cragford, Alabama

We first made note of the Alabama Gold Camp (AGC) as a new entry in the 2007 GPAA Pick & Shovel Gazette. We then made plans to stop in on our way north or south as we travel between Minnesota and Florida.... Treasure Hunters disguised as "Snow Birds". An article in the GPAA magazine "Gold Prospectors" was confirmation that we needed to make the effort.

We arrived at the Gold Camp late on a Wednesday afternoon in early May 2008. Our late arrival only gave us time to take a quick look around before getting set up and dinner ready. What we found was that the grounds are clean and well kept. The prospecting area is many miles along a stretch of Crooked Creek. Access is ultra easy as you can drive right up to the creek edge in most places with a two wheeled drive car with no fear of getting stuck.

The camp was started around 2004 by Jeff Langford and it is in the process of learning, growing, and listening to the needs and desires of their customers. Some businesses are stops along the way but Jeff is trying to build a destination.

The AGC offers memberships or you can sign in as a guest. GPAA members receive a discount on prospecting fees. Admission beyond the well stocked Camp Store requires a liability waiver, a membership card and an Activity Card. Once the "paperwork" has been

completed you are free to roam and find your "Hot Spot".

Jeff, Mike and the boys bring up creek bottoms and pile it up in many areas making it easy to get material for your favorite prospecting equipment. We found that it was super easy to dig a bucket and haul it a few feet to the creek to sluice and pan, it just doesn't get any easier than this.

The fees to use the facilities of the Alabama Gold Camp are based on how you plan to prospect. 2008 rates: Panning, Sluicing and Metal Detecting is \$5/day per person; Dredging fees are based on the size of the dredge, 2" is \$15/day with 5" at \$25/day and sizes in between at a \$5 spread; High Banking is \$15/\$20 small and large. The above is based on one person per unit additional guests are charged \$5/day using the same equipment.

All types of equipment can be rented at fair prices. (Please contact AGC for current pricing and to make equipment reservations.) This type of rental arrangement has always made sense to me as it affords you the opportunity to gain experience with a piece of equipment before you buy, which avoids making a costly mistake. Some of the items for rent include, but not limited to: panning equipment; sluice boxes, high bankers, dredges and more. Just ask.

In addition, the "General Store" is pretty well stocked, as you

might guess, with prospecting supplies. Everything from "snuffer" bottles, vials, pans (of all types), sluice boxes, dredges, high bankers and an assortment of hand tools as well. It's so well stocked that you could just bring your clothes and toothbrush and buy new!

The store also has a decent offering of food items, mostly canned so that even the worst of cooks should not go hungry, simply open the can, heat and eat. To round out the offerings Jeff has added hats, shirts and coffee mugs with AGC printing.

The camping area is still a little rough, remember this is not an RV Resort, it's a Gold Camp with camping facilities. There are many sites with full hookups and fairly level. If you do not need full hookups, the camping is a reasonable \$5/person. The campground has CLEAN bathrooms and showers. A laundry is also on site for those of you that want to go home with clean clothes.

The closest shopping area is Linesville about 11 miles away and offers the basics with a couple of grocery stores, restaurants include a "Jacks Family Restaurant", Mexican, Partner's BBQ's, Subway, a burger stand and pizza at Moore's gas station. We did not see any liquor stores or reference to beer anywhere so this may be a "dry" area and you should plan accordingly if consumption is of importance to you. There is a restriction

Alabama Gold Camp Cragford, Alabama

pertaining to the consumption alcoholic beverages at the AGC but it does not specify where on the property in the AGC Rules. Please check with management and adhere to the policy.

Now for the GOLD ! That's what this is really about. Right ?

On our first day, we found some gold in the first pan, not much, but color. We were running a Keene short sluice and two GPAA pans between the two of us. We are not professional, we are recreational and still learning prospectors. While it would be great to find a couple of ounces.... we were perfectly happy with just the hunt and some color! At the end of about four hours we had amassed about 70 colors between us. Some were fairly good flakes and others were but dots, but as the saying goes.... The next pan may have the "big one" and I guess that's the fun in it.

By the end of our stay we had spent about 12 hours of actual mining. We came up with around 150 colors and flakes with more lurking in the concentrates I'm sure.

We talked to a few folks who indicated that they have found a good quantity by highbanking and dredging. There was an 8" dredge near where we were and they were down about 26 feet and pulling some real good sized flakes from the deep.

We watched a man and his son and daughter 13 & 15 years old

clean up two rental Proline Highbankers. Those kids were having the time of their lives as they looked for and found color in the tread. It's hard to say how much they wound up with as they only snuffed up some and brought the concentrates home but I'll bet they paid for their gas !

If you get to go to the Alabama Gold Camp you will have to follow the directions on their Website carefully as the roads are not all that well marked. If you are like us with a 31 ft motorhome and a car in tow you don't want to go past the road too many times.

As we were leaving, Jeff & the boys were building some cabins that could be rented instead of sleeping in a tent. They also may be setting up some sort Fast Food. I'm sure you'll find information on their Website in the near future.

You'll find plenty of info at www.alabamagoldcamp.com If you're in the area, stop in and get your share of the yella stuff.

Go get your feet wet !

John & Deb Leahy
Zephyrhills, FL/Caledonia, MN

You can contact us at:
zhills43-mngp@yahoo.com



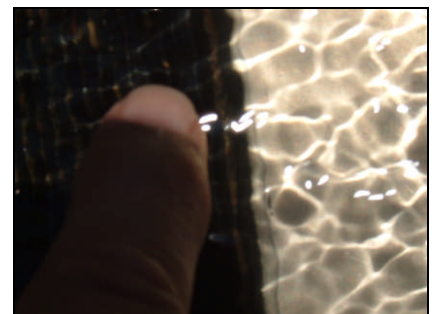
Deb.... Checking for color



John saving concentrates.



The little sluice that could.



The finger points to GOLD !