

Prospecting Thoughts

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For the past three days we have been at a "Gold Mine" camp in Southern North Carolina. After the days work with a sluice and a pan on the Broad River my wife and I contemplate our next "prospecting" trip. It has occurred to us that there are many variations to "Gold Prospecting". Even within the variations there are differences that can make the experience enjoyable for you or not so much so.

While we are not world travelers we have prospected for gold in Minnesota, Wisconsin, Indiana, Vermont, New Hampshire, Alabama, Georgia and now North Carolina. We have also hunted geodes in Illinois and diamonds in Arkansas. We have found gold in each of these states almost every time that we prospected. We dug for and found geodes, but no diamonds..... yet !

Our favorite kind of prospecting is when we see a creek, brook or river on a map or in person and then set out to find the yellow stuff. For us it's the research of and the "reading" of the stream that gives us the enjoyment and perhaps the reward of finding some gold. It **IS** the **HUNT** and not so much the find that makes our day, but finding some yellow stuff puts a nice glow on the outing.

Another type of prospecting is with a group such as a local club like **Minnesota Gold Prospectors** or **Tomah (WI) GPAA**, I belong to both. Typically you will have meetings where ideas, prospecting areas and tall tales are swapped..... all need to be researched before use for sure. Belonging to a group has many advantages particularly for a beginner as there is much to learn and life is way too short for you to repeat the mistakes of those that came before you. The clubs usually have several outings and/or events each year giving you the opportunity to have hands on experience with equipment that you have read about and wondered how it really performed. It would also be great if you would contribute to the clubs effectiveness by offering to help any way that you can.

The last prospecting method that comes to mind is where we are tonight, at a commercial (tourist trap) mining camp. OK, maybe that's a little strong, but that's what it seems like. I'm not a big fan of pay to

dig or gold by mail for any more than gaining experience in learning the properties of gold itself. Just ask yourself. Self ??? Why would someone put more gold in this bag, bucket or loader bucket than you're paying for? The answer is simply that over long term, they don't! Seriously, why would an operator of a tourist attraction let you find in their sand piles a ¼ ounce of gold when you only paid \$5 to pan? Be very wary when they deliver to you a bag, bucket or loader full of "prime" stuff. Where did it come from? How do they know its "Prime" stuff unless they "salted" the load? In short if the material was that good why are they selling it less than its street value instead of selling to a gold market?

The commercial operation is not all bad as it is useful in learning to pan or operate various pieces of equipment with some material that has known content.

So, if you have a need to visit a commercial operation then I suggest that you try one that offers the choice of digging wherever you want to or at the most you see where they are hauling the material from, such as a creekbed. At least you will be closer to real "prospecting" and less of a mine worker.

Where to go prospecting on your own?

Stay tuned!

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