

SEGS
Southeastern Geological Society
A member of the AAPG and GCAGS

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Fall 2012 Newsletter

The SEGS is a volunteer, not-for-profit organization. Our existence depends upon the efforts of our members. This month I'd like to acknowledge the outstanding efforts of Jon Courtney, John Herbert, and Clint Noble for organizing and leading a very successful field trip to Mosaic's South Fort Meade Mine. We also extend our thanks to Rich Mistretta and Joe Alex for helping Jon to guide the field trip. Jon Courtney, Tom Scott, Harley Means, Richard Fifer, and I prepared SEGS Guidebook 57.

--Marc

LAKELAND MEETING AND PHOSPHATE FIELD TRIP



About a third of the SEGS group squeezed into the air-conditioned cab with the dragline operator; but the overflow crowd had a better view.

Our 2012 Phosphate Field Trip began Friday evening with a meeting at the ever-popular Sonny's in Lakeland, jointly hosted by SEGS and the Florida Association of Professional Geologists (FAPG-AIPG). Thirty-two people showed up to do what off-duty geologists do best, drink beer and eat BBQ.

Sonny's is known for serving up some great ribs; but Dave DeWitt won the prize for the biggest bone, with the incredible collection of Bone Valley fossils he brought to show off. Dave, I didn't see any like those on Saturday!

FAPG-AIPG President Helen Hickman began the business meeting with an informative presentation on FAPG-AIPG's current programs and news. They're the group that protects the interests of Professional Geologists in Tallahassee. Educating the Legislature is no small task. If you are not already a member of FAPG, please join. Geology is a very small profession. We need all the help we can get.

Sam Upchurch's presentation on sinkhole development in the Polk Upland was received more enthusiastically than the BBQ. We couldn't set up a screen for the projector; but luckily no one can resist a good sinkhole diagram, even if it's projected directly on Sonny's wall art. Sam's always been good at entertaining geologists.

Attendance at our Saturday field trip to Mosaic's South Fort Meade Mine was only 2 short of the 40 person limit. Due to some last-minute cancellations, we didn't have to turn anyone away. It's nice when things work out.

It had rained the night before, a very significant factor in a mine where expandable clays are abundant. Fortunately Mosaic's miners can literally move mountains on a moment's notice. Following a brief safety checkout, we caravanned over freshly graded roads into the mine.



Fossil collecting at Mosaic's South Fort Meade Mine



This young geologist learned about fossils and expandable clays!

Our Mosaic guides, including field trip leader Jon Courtney, Rich Mistretta, and Joe Alex, directed us to a series of abandoned slurry pits where the rain had made lots of sticky mudholes and exposed lots of fossils, too. (It was a blessing and a curse.)



An assortment of shark teeth, whale vertebra, ray plates, an alligator claw, and one dugong rib (front center)

Everyone collected all the dugong ribs they wanted, and left some behind. Joe Alex refers to dugong ribs as the "chicken of the sea." Lots of shark teeth, ray plates, and whale vertebra were found. I picked up a horse tooth, too. A couple of small, but choice, finds are pictured below.



A couple of nice finds, including an unidentified tooth and a shark tooth



This is a Marion dragline with a 55 cubic yard bucket. Note the massive turntable, and the feet on either side used to "walk" the machine.

After a couple of hours our guides herded us back to the cars where we scraped off the mud we had accumulated and drove down to the current mining area for a ride on the dragline. No trip to a phosphate mine is complete without that. You just can't appreciate the size and power of a large dragline until you walk up to it and take it for a spin. I'm surprised Disney world hasn't added a dragline ride yet. It is awesome.

Weary from a long morning of slogging through the mud in the August humidity of Central Florida, but well satisfied with our bags of Bone Valley fossils, we returned to Mosaic's nice air-conditioned break room for a catered lunch. Jon Courtney entertained us with a well-honed slide presentation on phosphate geology and mining. I understand Jon gets lots of practice. Mosaic graciously hosts field trips for several university geology classes and approved local fossil clubs.

Lunch was followed by a gab session; and then we adjourned.



Yes, the dragline was cool enough for 2 photos. A wide-angle lens was required to get it all in one frame.

ANNUAL MEETING OF GULF COAST ASSOCIATION OF GEOLOGICAL SOCIETIES

The 62nd annual meeting of the Gulf Coast Association of Geological Societies (GCAGS), our parent organization, will be held October 21-24, 2012, in Austin, Texas. This year's theme is "Solving for E³-- where energy, environment, and economy intersect."



Please visit <http://www.gcags2012.com/> for registration information.

Harley Means has agreed to represent SEGS at the GCAGS Annual Meeting. We'll expect a full report when he returns!



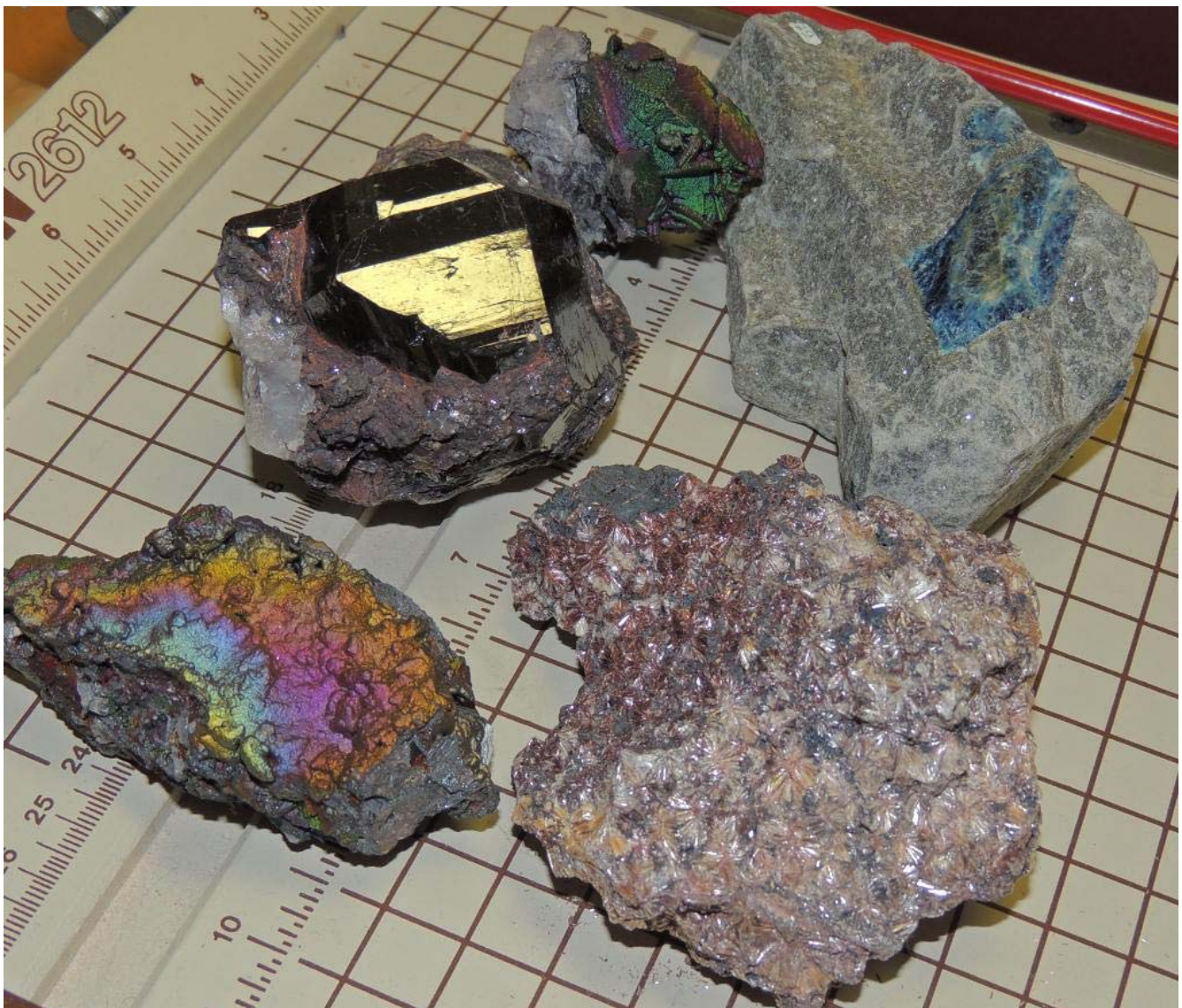
**FALL FIELD TRIP
BACK BY POPULAR DEMAND
GRAVES MOUNTAIN, LINCOLN COUNTY, GEORGIA**

Come with SEGS on a fall outing to east-central Georgia. See the colorful fall foliage and collect exotic minerals at Graves Mountain on October 20, 2012. Since SEGS's first visit in 1999, we have received numerous requests to repeat this popular field trip. If you missed it in 1999, this is your big chance!

The field trip will be based in Thomson, Georgia (McDuffie County), about 20 miles south of Graves Mountain. The Best Western White Columns Inn (706-595-8000) is currently reserving rooms for about \$80/night.

Wink Winkler recommends camping at nearby Mistletoe State Park, located on beautiful Clarks Hill Lake. Visit www.gastateparks.org/Mistletoe for camping information and reservations. A waterfront campsite costs about \$25/night.

It's a long drive from Florida to Graves Mountain, about 8 hours from Central Florida (Tampa) or 5 hours from Northern Florida (Tallahassee or Jacksonville). So plan to take Friday off and enjoy a leisurely, interesting, and beautiful drive to an unparalleled geological destination. We are planning a Friday evening social at a restaurant in Thompson. Bring your family or carpool with your friends and join us for a fall field trip at Graves Mountain.



Rutile, quartz coated with iridescent limonite, lazulite, iridescent limonite, and pyrophyllite are examples of minerals collected at Graves Mountain.

INCORPORATION

George and Lee Edwards have continued their efforts to establish our status as a tax-exempt corporation. Currently, our 501(c)(3) letter of exemption is pending. They sent the application to the IRS in July. IRS responded with a letter acknowledging receipt of the application. George says, "With a little bit of luck we should have the letter by the end of the year." Thanks again George and Lee. We appreciate your efforts.

WEBSITE

Anna Janosik has continued her work on our website. Many of our publications are available in electronic format. You can download them from our website for free. We continue to post photos of SEGS events; but we need your help finding representative photos of past field trips. Most of us have fond memories of SEGS events that we've attended. As you stumble upon good photos of SEGS outings that you enjoyed, please scan and send them to us; and be sure to visit www.segs.org from time to time to see how the website is coming along.

FUTURE FIELD TRIPS AND PARTING COMMENTS

We are working on several ideas for future field trips. As always, we need your help organizing and coordinating meetings and field trips. If you have an idea or a request, or if you would like to get involved with SEGS, in any capacity, please contact us. We'll be glad to put your picture in the newsletter, too



Pictured from left to right are field trip organizers John Herbert and Clint Noble, guidebook editor Marc Hurst, and field trip leader Jon Courtney.

The Southeastern Geological Society (SEGS) is a non-profit group of avocational and professional geologists dedicated to advancement of the geological sciences.