

Summer Newsletter

State of the Project

Over the last three months, the VMP has continued to develop monthly virtual events for the community. Currently, there are no updates on when clubs will be resuming in person meetings and the COVID-19 environment continues to promote virtual platforms for the foreseeable future.

During July, a virtual assistance document was developed to help users get on Zoom and get clubs back in communication with their members. The VMP is committed to increasing accessibility and understanding of these virtual platforms to stay connected during these difficult times. This document has been shared across the state and has even been picked up by gem and mineral societies across the east coast.

Many individuals remain cautious of these platforms and we understand that this may not work for everyone. To accommodate that, we are now hosting all VMP meetings via livestream on YouTube. Anyone can open YouTube without an account and watch our meetings live. Live streams will then be saved as videos on our YouTube channel for later viewings.

Data collection has remained difficult since the pandemic started. Many individuals are still cautious about resuming interviews and specimen photography during COVID and we are working to find ways to collect data during these difficult times. Our virtual programs have been organized in a way to help collect data in a more informal setting which has become very useful. Stay tuned for more information this fall!

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Muscovite & Feldspar Crystals, Locality: Champion Mine, Amelia Co., Virginia, FOV 85mm, August Dietz Collection

VMP Program Review

Since the onset of COVID-19, the VMP has held over 12 community virtual programs on Zoom. Meetings continue to have successful attendance averaging around 30 people with peak numbers exceeding 45-50 depending on the weekly topic.

We are continuing to update and find ways to make meetings more accessible, including the development of the zoom assistance document and now bringing all meetings live on YouTube!

Our goal is to continue to host meetings once to twice a month as the fall comes and focus on two specific series: (1) Virginia Classics and (2) Specimen and Collection Maintenance.



*Calcite Crystals Lining Fossil Clam Shell, Locality: Virginia Beach, Virginia,
Dimensions: 4.2in x 3.4in x 2.7in, August Dietz Collection*

Virginia Classics: Part one was a big success with over 45 people attending. Our goal is to highlight localities that are historically significant but may not have enough information to warrant an entire hour presentation. These meetings are open and allow for people to share their stories, specimens, photos, etc. Our first event had five localities but for future series we will be limiting to three localities.

Specimen & Collection Maintenance: Our latest event was more practical in nature for most collectors and focused on labeling your mineral specimens. The VMP promotes the preservation of mineral and mining history, which can only be done with proper documentation. Participants were highly engaged and happy to share their techniques and best practices. People learned a lot and voted on specimen cleaning and preparation for the next event in the series.



VMP Survey Results

We conducted a survey over August to understand the community impact and overall feelings on response of the mineral community to COVID-19. While our data set was not as high as we wanted, the responses were very insightful and will help guide us forward into the fall and 2021.

A few key takeaways could be concluded from the results:

- Respondents gave an average response rating (0-100 scale) of 48% to mineral clubs and regional federations during COVID-19, citing lack of virtual programs and communication of yearly plans. Only 25% stated their clubs were hosting virtual meetings. Some respondents were okay with no meetings and were willing to wait until COVID was over, citing a lack of interest in virtual communications.



Stellerite & Chabazite, Locality: Vulcan Manassas Quarry, Prince William Co., Virginia, USA, Dimensions: 4.9cm x 3.5cm x 2.4cm, Collection of August Dietz

VMP Survey Results Cont.

- 90% of respondents were in agreement of the VMP producing smaller publications (similar to DMME Virginia Minerals) and video locality reviews during COVID-19.
- There seems to be a clear division in the community on whether or not virtual programming should be the future and how it will be instituted during/post COVID. Several respondents would not attend any virtual events, no matter if it was on another digital platform besides Zoom.
- Poor internet and scheduling difficulties are the leading cause of people not attending Zoom sessions that are wanting to or have a desire to attend. The VMP will be working on ways to improve access, such as YouTube Live that does not require the high bandwidth like Zoom.



Friends of Mineralogy Virginia vs. The Virginia Mineral Project



The VMP survey also asked if community members were clearly aware of the difference between the VMP and FMVA as both are fairly new organizations in Virginia. The majority of respondents who actively participate and join VMP events were, but some organizations and community members are still unclear how these organizations differ and how they work together.

The Virginia Mineral Project is an initiative to update old publications and preserve and promote Virginia mineral and mineral history. During COVID-19, the VMP has been hosting community events, providing digital video locality reports. VMP will continue to interview collectors, assist with collections, photograph specimens, post monthly YouTube videos and work on publishing new articles in the future.

After much discussion across the community, people wanted to have a state-wide organization where ideas, initiatives, and assistance could be provided to our community and local clubs. It was decided to develop a Friends of Mineralogy Inc. in Virginia to do just that.

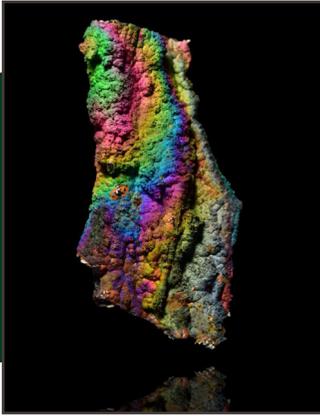
The purpose of FMVA is to promote, support, and expand the study of mineralogy and the hobby of mineral collecting across the world by highlighting the scientific, economic, and aesthetic value of minerals. FMVA is a 501c3 nonprofit and is comprised of a leadership team across the state. While FMVA is in Virginia, events and speakers are not all about Virginia. FMVA will work with the VMP to promote our states mineralogy but this does not make the mission of FMVA focused on Virginia mining and minerals.

FMVA is open to all who are interested in minerals and the educational aspects of the hobby. Meetings will occur once a month on the last Friday and joining FMVA includes national membership in FM.

For more information check out the [website](#) or email: friendsofmineralogy.virginia@gmail.com

UPCOMING EVENTS

WEDNESDAYS @ 7:00PM ET



September 16th: Virginia Mineral Classics (Part 2)

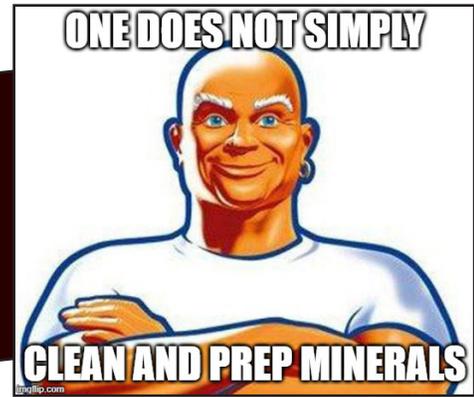
Virginia is home to many classic mineral locations and unique discoveries. Join us for part two in an open discussion to highlight the top locations and discoveries in Virginia. Bring your specimens and stories to share with the community! Locations are provided in the RSVP link.

[Click to Register](#)

September 30th: Mineral Preparation & Cleaning

Part two of this series will focus on mineral preparation and cleaning your specimens. We will cover the best practices for getting your specimens to their final display state. Share your techniques and prepare to learn a lot during this live interactive discussion!

[Click to Register](#)



Check out our growing list of videos on YouTube!



Labeling Your Mineral Specimens

- Scufflin' Acres Amethyst Locality
- Chestnut Ridge Quartz Crystals
- Rutherford No.2 Pegmatite
- Allah Cooper Mine
- Networking Analysis of Virginia's Mineralogical Systems
- Richmond Vivianite Discovery
- Geology 365 Program
- Saltville Quartz Crystals

Much more to come!!!

We share our YouTube Channel with Friends of Mineralogy Virginia!