

Virginia Mineral Project

2021 Summer Update

State of the Project...

It has been a while since there was an official update newsletter from the VMP. As things return to normal, so do VMP operations and outreach. Clubs are beginning to open up and return to meetings, which will allow for interviews and discussions about the future. Things have changed since 2020, including the incredible growth of our social media accounts. As of the time of writing this newsletter, VA Rockhounding has grown from 500 to over 8,000 members in one year. The Virginia Minerals page has also reached 1,400 members since its creation last year. This growth has only come from continued engagement and support by the VMP during COVID when many traditional events and organizations were shut down. As things open up, I hope the social media platforms will expand our outreach as a mineral community in Virginia.

There has also been some unfortunate news. Betsy Martin, one of the most influential historians of Virginia mineral history and long-time Morefield and micromineral expert, has passed away. This is a tremendous loss to our community, but I had the honor to sit and talk to her before COVID-19. She provided me with over 500GB of material that is now preserved in the VMP. Her lasting legacy in a male-dominated hobby will not be forgotten.

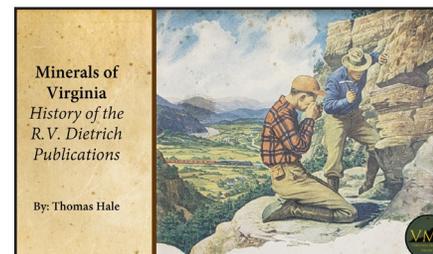
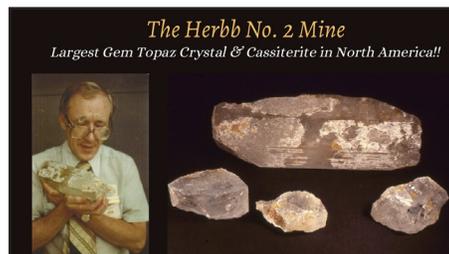
Moving into July, the VMP will resume to a bi-monthly virtual schedule of Virginia mineral lectures. We recognize Zoom fatigue and the desire to get back out in person. Bi-monthly should accommodate our audience and keep high attendance. All videos will be uploaded on YouTube for later viewing if you cannot attend the live session.

I have shared an [update video](#) on YouTube that will explore the future of the VMP and some of our successes over the last year. Please take a moment to watch this and reach out if you have any further questions: virginiamineralproject@gmail.com

VMP Presentations Going Forward

The VMP created over 30 different presentations during COVID-19. These ranged from locality overviews, maintaining mineral collections, and classic smaller localities. One of my favorite presentations was on "Virginia Minerals," which gave an overview of some of the most important texts in our state's history. While the community enjoys locality videos, I would like to mix it up and also start working on article breakdowns. This would include taking old publications from the DMME, adding new photos, and giving a breakdown of some of the most important and useful data in the book. This reimagining of these classic articles may breathe new life and encourage others to read more about Virginia mineral deposits. The next presentation will be held at the end of July (date pending) and will focus on the famous (1932) Pegmatite Deposits of Virginia by Arthur Pegau.

Watch our recent videos on YouTube!



Rockhounding 101 Course

There has been an increased interest from our social media pages to develop a course that provides basic rockhounding and geology knowledge to those interested in getting more involved in the hobby. I will be working on developing a two-part virtual course and field trip for a group of 15-20 "new" rockhounds on the Virginia Rockhounding page. The goal is to have face-to-face interactions that will encourage people to join our community and get more involved behind the scenes.



Crystalline Turquoise

Check out this latest acquisition to the Alex Venzke Collection. The specimen was included in the 2003 Mineralogical Record on the Bishop Mine by Dr. Henry Barwood.

Bishop Mine, Lynch Station, VA
Matt McGill Photograph
2.3cm
Ex Wendell Wilson, Jim Houran,
Kyle Kevorkian
Collection of Alex Venzke