

FALL 2021

THE PATH AHEAD

Official Newsletter of the VMP



Spring 2022 Publication Plans: The time has come!

NORTHERN VIRGINIA TRAPROCK QUARRIES

The VMP has officially partnered with Diamond Dan Publications in Rochester, NY to develop the first test chapter for the Virginia Minerals publication. This 15-20pg booklet will focus on the Northern Virginia Traprock quarries and provide interdisciplinary content which emphasizes the role of aggregate producers in local economics and infrastructure and development. The team hopes to attract support of local industry and teacher organizations to distribute and make this document useful for education and public consumption. Our goal is to release this chapter to the mineral community for feedback and to rally support for a larger publication around the top mineral localities in the state. Through this multi-step process, the VMP can accomplish its tasks while slowly putting together a larger final volume which honors the work of R.V. Dietrich and his Minerals of Virginia Publications. Please reach out for more information! Below are two NOVA quarry specimens from Alex Venzke.



Hydroxyapophyllite-(K) and prehnite
Fairfax quarry, Centreville, Virginia, 7 cm
Ex. Rock Currier Matt McGill photos

Stellerite - Vulcan Quarry, Virginia, USA. 2.6
cm. Matt McGill photo.

State of the Project...

The Virginia Mineral Project has been working over the last several months behind the scenes to strengthen the mineral community in Virginia. Since the onset of COVID-19, the VMP has gathered over 10.5K fellow Virginian's to engage on the [Virginia Rockhounding Facebook Group](#). This page has enabled the community to share and communicate during the pandemic.

Many of the traditional mineral societies across the Commonwealth have remained virtual or offline, with only a few just starting to renew operations. Both the Lynchburg and Shenandoah Clubs have been strong leaders in bringing their societies back online in this new era.

VMP communications have remained limited, but this has been due to the new emphasis on communication and outreach through social media and FMVA outreach. VMP sits under the Friends of Mineralogy Virginia Chapter and anyone interested in following its updates should pay attention to FMVA news (see page 2). The VMP recently finished its first "Rockhounding 101" class for those on social media (see page 3).

The announcement of the Diamond Dan partnership puts the VMP in the planning and implementation phase of its research. With a renewed year in 2022, our hope is to share this first chapter publication with Virginia communities and start our journey on the larger book!

VMP COMMITTEE IS UNDER FM-VIRGINIA

The VMP has integrated itself as part of the new Friends of Mineralogy Virginia nonprofit organization. This new chapter, of the national Friends of Mineralogy Inc., is dedicated to educating the citizens of Virginia about mineralogy and geology. Over the last two years, the organization has grown with new affiliates and partners across the academic, industry, and educational communities. FMVA has partnered with the Virginia Transportation and Construction Alliance, the Virginia Association of Science Teachers, and the Virginia Earth Science Teachers Association. FMVA is different from local societies as it provides a platform for state-wide engagement with members from local clubs. Several clubs in and out of Virginia have affiliated with FMVA and continue to engage in stakeholder discussions about best practices and information sharing. Our team encourages all clubs and related organizations to reach out!



FMVA has also recently updated its [website](#), so check it out to see all of the ongoing initiatives, projects, and community plans. If you would like to stay in touch with FMVA, then consider following our social media channels and checking out our monthly speaker series!

FMVA produces weekly briefings for those interested to stay updated with all the happenings of the organization. With multiple projects and community discussions, this is the best way to stay informed. The briefings are developed as bulleted lists that can be digested in two minutes or less.

Sign-Up for FMVA General Mailing List (MailChimp): [REGISTER HERE](#)

Follow FMVA on Social Media:



In Loving Memory of Betsy Martin (1943-2021)

With the passing of Betsy Martin, the micromineral world has lost a giant, and many of us have lost a great friend and mentor. As we mourn her death, it is fitting that we also celebrate her life, her many achievements, and her legacy. A teacher by profession, Betsy Martin was a renowned micromounter and mineral researcher for over 30 years. During this time, she contributed award-winning articles to many publications with both hobby and professional status.

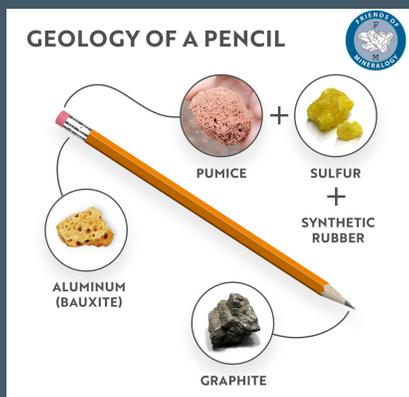
Perhaps her most passionate work, occupying more than 25 years, was her research into the mineralogy and development of the famous Morefield Pegmatite in Amelia County, Virginia. She published detailed descriptions of the mine and its minerals, spent many hours in sample preparation and documentation for testing, and carried out the photomicrography and digitizing work required in maintaining the historical record. Her efforts earned her co-authorship in publications in a number of professional journals.

-Thomas Hale (Excerpt from Memorial Article)



FM National Social Media Revamped!

If you are looking for engaging content on mineralogy and geology, then you need to check out the new social media effort by FM National! The new outreach committee at FM has been producing engaging content on Facebook and Instagram for all audiences. This content is useful for teachers, professionals, and collectors alike! The recent, "Geology of a Pencil" post garnered over 300,000 views and 1.3K shares!! This is content you do not want to miss out on! The team at FMVA and VMP have been working closely with the outreach committee and providing local education groups with the content. **Click on each to learn more!**



Rockhound 101 Class

The first Rockhound 101 class was a massive success. Fifteen participants with little knowledge about geology, mineralogy, and collecting participated in a four-part lecture series and open discussion on several core components to the hobby. This covered basic geology and mineralogy information, digital programs and databases used by collectors, and techniques on cleaning, labeling, displaying, and maintaining a collection. The course provided participants with a key terms document with over 500 terms used in the hobby as a helpful guide for participants. In addition to lectures, participants were provided detailed syllabi before each class with videos, links, and papers to help provide context and encourage discussion. FM-Virginia and the VMP plan to continue this course next Spring and open it up to two new cohorts!

There has also been community interest for more advanced courses and continued education with the first Rockhound 101 class!



Some of the Rockhound 101 participants were able to join the Gem and Mineral Society of Lynchburg on its annual September trip to Willis Mountain. The team will also have a private collecting and geology field trip to a local quarry in Southwest Virginia thanks to our partnership with the Virginia Transportation and Construction Alliance and partners at Salem Stone Corporation!

FMVA is looking for additional instructors, guest lecturers, and support staff for 2022 courses. Please reach out to our team if you are interested. Sessions are held virtually, so travel is not necessary.

[ROCKHOUND 101 CLASS OVERVIEW](#)