

THE GOLD NUGGET

November 2014

The Prez Sez by Jim Long



It I missed the October meeting on my annual sojourn to the mountains in search of *Cervus canadensis* and *Odocoileus hemionus*. Many of you will be happy to know that I did not succeed in my quest this year but that is ok. My hunting trips for many years have not really been about killing, but more in the experience of the chase and adventure. It was truly relaxing and I feel a little more recharged now. I cannot remember how many times I have driven up Clear Creek Canyon but it has to number in the hundreds. So I thought I would share a little history with all of you that some of you may not have known or realized as you drive up or down the canyon. I found some interesting old photos at the

Denver Public library web site as well as some facts from the *Colorado Gambler*, the weekly newspaper published in Central City and Blackhawk.

From the stop light at Hwy 93 on the west edge of Golden, the canyon climbs 1000 feet in the 11 mile stretch up to the Hwy. 119 Junction. There were actually 6 original tunnels constructed but tunnel #4 is boarded up and no longer accessible due to road improvements. The entire 66 mile Clear Creek begins on the high slopes of the Continental Divide up by the famed 14ers known as Gray's Peak and Torreys's Peak (which I have climbed both of them in one day, but when I was younger of course), and travels down through Silver Plume, Georgetown, and Idaho Springs before it plummets down the canyon and through Golden as it empties into the South Platte River. In the 1820's, the waterway was known as Cannonball Creek due to the large round rocks found by French trappers. Then it became known as Vasquez Creek after French trapper Louis Vasquez who ran a trading post at the mouth of the canyon near where the stoplight at Hwy 93 is now. Finally, the overwhelming wave of gold seekers pouring into the area during the mid-1800's named it Clear Creek and the name stuck. In 1872, the Colorado Clear Creek Railroad Company completed its narrow gauge tracks to Blackhawk and six years later, it was finished into Central City. This railroad became the lifeline to the mountain towns as it carried supplies and people to the gold camps and returned with ore. In the Canyon at spots along the line, rest stations popped up and one of these was the Beaver Brook Station. Today, this station



site is a hidden jewel and is just far enough off the current highway to provide a relatively serene and majestic view of the canyon and nearby mountains with the gurgle of the creek as background. In 1891, a terrible train wreck near the Station killed 26 passengers and injured 5. Just a few bends further down the tracks was the Hanging Rock Formation, famous for its huge overhang and a favorite spot for travelers to take photographs. Sadly, Hanging Rock was destroyed to complete the Hwy 6 roadway. To see where it once was, go up the canyon 5.6 miles west of the light at Hwy 6 and Hwy 93, and as you round the corner, you will see the sheer cliff that is left after the demolition. The Beaver Brook Station was another ½ mile past Hanging Rock and park in front of Tunnel #2. Walk to the bridge and go under and along the south wall of the creek and go another ½ mile to where Beaver Creek joins Clear Creek. That is where the old station was located. The canyon today is filled with wildlife, wonderful

views, and the hustle and bustle of people. The creek is full of modern day small scale prospectors as the creek continues to be a great supplier of gold. There are fishermen, rafters, kayakers, mountain climbers, bicyclists and hikers galore. The highway remains today, as the old railroad was, a main travel route to the mountains and the modern day gold camps of Blackhawk, Central City and Nederland.

The creek was a source of gold in the gold rush of 1859-1860, and continues to produce a lot of gold today. Though we seldom find large nuggets (though there are occasional smaller nuggets found), the gold that we do get is fairly bright yellow in color and plentiful in the form of dust, or flour. A prospector working hard, can make a little profit if he is smart and knows how and where to look for those little elusive 'pockets' where the gold collects and are a little harder for the average person to get to. I can't give away all of the creek's secrets, but I can tell you, there is a reason you see so many prospectors working this creek from day to day. Enough said!!

And that is the view from here and I wish you all Good Luck in your search! And until we meet again, keep your sunny sides up and may the bottoms of your pans turn bright with that treasured 'Yaller Gold'!

You may contact me at 303-452-6087 or at jnslong945@msn.com.

Happy and safe prospecting to all!!!



Gold Prospectors of the Rockies Page 2

The V.P. Corner by “Klondike” Mike Arapahoe 17 Mile House Farm Park



This was our second year at Arapahoe House and it was great. There were not only more vendors but many more guests.

Some history on the 17 Mile House. At one time there were six Mile Houses, 4,7,9,12, 17 and 20 which were located on the Cherokee Trail. The only ones still remaining are 4 and 17 Mile Houses. The Cherokee Trail can be followed in modern times taking Speer Blvd to Leetsdale Dr. to Parker Rd. to the 4 and 17 Mile Houses. The original trail started at Colfax and Broadway leading southeast.

I would like to thank the following people for helping at this wonderful event. Jack Meineke, Tina and Tim Fleming, George and Pam Schmitt, Bobby Manning, and Dave Redman for ALL your help!

Any questions please contact me: Klondike Mike, 720-443-9545.



From the Treasurer/Secretary Ledger by Linda Luchtenburg

The November Meeting will feature **10.4 grams of gold nuggets** for the give away with the largest nugget being **2.6 grams**. There are also additional prizes to include gold, silver, and various mineral to give away. We have acquired another ‘Special Nugget’ for the next special drawing to begin. Special thanks go to **Pres. Long and to the GPR Board** for contributing items for the ‘Members Only’ drawings held at the October Meeting.



This Month GPR Meeting Program:

Nov 19: The November meeting will feature a **DVD titled ‘Bedrock Bustin’** produced by the GPAA and will feature techniques of finding gold in the cracks and crevices of bedrock, both in and out of water. Lots of folks overlook this simple and effective way of finding gold and its use could give you more ways of looking at the ‘gold getting’ issue. Winners of the **Monthly Finds** need to remember to bring their winners back at this meeting to compete for the **Find of the Year** Contest.

Dec 17: The December meeting will feature the **Members only Christmas Potluck Dinner**. There will be no formal meeting and the Program will consist of a few Awards of Recognition for services provided to the Club during the previous year. Of course, your immediate family members are more than welcome to attend as well. There will be a ‘Gold Elephant’ gift exchange for those who wish to voluntarily participate. Perhaps Linda Luchtenburg will play Christmas music on the piano before we sit to eat.

Where is ‘Prospector Pete’, the GPR Gold Miner?



We offered up this golden ‘Gold Miner’ statue that was donated to the Club for auction and started the bidding in September. In October, Linda Luchtenburg bought the statue for the Club. We now intend to offer our Gold Miner, called ‘Prospector Pete’, to a lucky recipient by drawing each month. The idea is to take ‘Prospector Pete’ along with you during your travels and take a photograph of you and he doing something related to mining. Take a photograph at the location and bring ‘Pete’ back to the next meeting for the next person to win. Send your photograph of yourself and ‘Pete’ to President Long at jnslong945@msn.com and we will publish it in the Newsletter each month. It should be fun to see where our Gold Miner winds up throughout the coming year. There are no limits, just take care of ‘Pete’ and treat him gently and show him the big world out there.



Gold Prospectors of the Rockies Page 3

ELECTION TIME for 2015 Board by Joe Shubert

Hello GPR Club Members

It is election time again. I will have ballots at the November Meeting for board member elections and the Ken Barker award. I will have signs with the picture and a short BIO of each Ken Barker nominee. The Ken Barker award is an award given to someone that has been working to promote, improve and/or helping with club projects. Please pick up a ballot, vote, and place the ballot in the container I will provide. The ballots will be counted and the winner announce at the December Meeting.

General Meeting Minutes From Oct 2014

	James Long		Joe Shubert	X	Joe Fortunato	X	Roger Biri
X	Mike Hurtado		Joe Johnston		Terry Weatherly	X	Brandon Luchtenburg
X	Linda Luchtenburg	X	Pam Schmitt	X	Andy Doll		

Quorum present? Yes

Call to Order: By Mike at 6:10 pm Reading and Approval of Minutes: Yes Corrections: none. Approved as read/corrected: Yes.

Treasurer's Report: Questions: None. Approved: yes.

Correspondence: 2 phone calls, 9 e-mails, 5 mailings

Webmaster: Total Hits N/A Hits for last month N/A.

Committee Reports: Tom Hill has volunteered to do the LLC application as he knows how to do it.

Unfinished business: Christmas gold is in along with the special nugget which will go on sale tonight.

New Business:

- Elections are coming up. Roger will be stepping down. Need nominations.
- Have 2 nominations for Barker Award, Kris Kafka was also nominated along with Pam Schmitt.

Planned Outings for 2014: Refer to Outings Calendar/Schedule in Newsletter for details of existing schedule.

- Oct. 15 Wed Pumpkin Carving Contest during mtg.
- Oct 18 Sat Panning Demo, 17 Mile House, Arap Co Festival.
- Nov 8 Sat Metal Detecting Hunt, Majestic View Park, Arvada, 10a – 1p. Prizes to be awarded.

From the Board: Discussion on upcoming elections and Barker Award nominations. Need to have material ready and to Joe S. for November Meeting.

Announcements: Next Board Meeting Nov. 19, 2014 at 6:00pm. Next General Meeting Nov. 19, 2014 at 7:00pm

Tonight's general meeting program: A Used equipment Swap/sell/trade program. Members will not be assessed a vendor fee tonight.

Adjournment: Meeting stands adjourned at 6:45 pm.

QUESTION OF THE MONTH
 Before the European discovery of America, what region supplied the bulk of the known world's gold?

- 2014 GPR Board of Directors Members**
- President**
James Long
- Vice President**
Mike Hurtado
- Secretary/Treasurer**
Linda Luchtenburg
- 2 Year Board Members**
Joe Johnston (2013)
Joe Shubert (2011)
- 1 Year Board Members**
Joe Fortunato
Terry Weatherly
Andy Doll
Brandon Luchtenburg
Roger Biri
Pam Schmitt

Board Meeting Minutes From Oct 2014

1. Meeting was opened at 7:04 pm by **V. Pres. Mike** with the Pledge of Allegiance.
2. **V. Pres. Mike** then announced the evening program which will be an extended break for the purpose of a Used/new Equipment Sale/trade/swap. Any members selling will have the vendor fee waived for the evening.
3. **V. Pres. Mike** gave the Metals Report with gold at \$1245.50 an ounce, silver at \$17.57, platinum at \$1258.10 and palladium at \$763.10.
4. Web hits for last month were not available.



Gold Prospectors of the Rockies Page 4

5. **Treasurer Linda Luchtenburg** reported that the Club remains very comfortable in the black. Report is available for review for anyone who wishes to see it. Also, we have obtained a 15.1 gram nugget for the new 'Special Nugget' drawing and it is now on sale. This is an Arizona nugget that was a metal detector find.
6. **John Johnson** reported from the Membership Table that we had approx. 54 members in attendance. There were also 3 new members and 1 guests present. The meeting attendance was 58. This was the lowest attendance of the year.
7. **Sue Clover** read the 'Question of the Month', which was 'What three pieces of information can be found marked on a gold bar'?
8. **V. Pres. Mike** advised that there was time to enter items at the break for the 'Finds of the Month' table and everyone was encouraged to check them out and vote accordingly during the break. Remember, only one entry per person per category.
9. **John Johnson** announced the new Cache Clue #2.
10. **Pam and George Schmitt** informed the group to be sure to check the new items in the Club Store and to support your Club by buying Club products with the Club Logo on them. We introduced 10 more bags of sand containing gold for sale, so be sure and check out some of the bargains at the Store.
11. **V. Pres. Mike** informed the membership that the 'Pumpkin Carving Contest' entries were in the back and to be sure and vote for your favorites. Mike also noted that the Panning Demo at the 11 mile House in Arapahoe County would be on Saturday, Oct. 18. There will be a Metal Detecting Hunt on November 8 at Majestic Park in Arvada. The hunt will start at 10am and run until 1pm. The Idaho Springs Panning Demo was very successful. The final event for the year will be the Christmas Dinner which is limited to members and their families only and will be a Pot Luck affair. Set up at 6p, eat at 6:30, and a small program at 7:15. Be sure and check the Outing Schedule listed in the Newsletter for those events. V. Pres. Mike announced that he is now the President of the Foothills Chapter of the GPAA and that they have had 2 Outings to date. The Chapter is getting back on its feet. Everyone was encouraged to check out the informational material at the Front Table during the Break. There was nothing further discussed from the Floor. V. Pres. Mike announced that there would be elections in November as well as nominations for the Ken Barker Award for voting as well. There is currently going to be at least one Board opening open but anyone wanting to run is encouraged to do so.
12. **V. Pres. Mike** announced the break at 7:31pm. Meeting was called back to order at 8:05pm.
13. **V. Pres. Mike** announced that there were only 6 winners of the 'Question of the Month'. The answer was 'registration/serial #, the purity level, and the name of the Assayer/Refiner'. The extra drawing tickets were passed out to the lucky winners.
14. **V. Pres. Mike** announced that there were no submitted entries for the 'Finds of the Month'. Each previous monthly winner will need to save his/her finds for the November Meeting to be entered into the Finds of the Year competition. The winners of the Pumpkin Carving Contest were determined and announced. **Adam Wagner** took first with a beautiful carving of a mine, miner, and tracks. **Linda Luchtenburg** took second place with a carving of a pumpkin geode. **Tina Fleming** took third place with a carving of a miner panning for gold.
15. **V. Pres. Mike** concluded the evening with drawings for the numerous door prizes donated by the **GPR and Pres. Long**, followed by drawings for the 9 gold nuggets. A reminder that holders of drawing tickets for the regular gold drawings who did not win and want to redeem those tickets may present them at the end of the Meeting and they will be reimbursed at .01 cents on the dollar, or they can choose to donate the tickets back to the Club. Those assisting V. Pres. Mike in the drawings were **Chuck Cown** and **Linda Luchtenburg**.
16. **V. Pres. Mike** reminds the members that sometimes during the meetings, The Officers time is overwhelmingly taken up by the many who wish to speak to him and he apologizes if anyone ever feels like he is unavailable. It is not his intent to be inaccessible and he encourages anyone with questions to contact him by e-mail or phone at any time. His e-mail and phone number are on the web site.
17. **V. Pres. Mike** thanked **Kris and Joe Kafka** and all those who contributed to the Refreshment Table. Any member is encouraged to chip in and add to the spread each month. With the number of attendees skyrocketing recently, this really helps the folks who run the table and those who volunteer up front each month. The Club appreciates the efforts that each and every one of you to make the refreshment table enjoyable.



Gold Prospectors of the Rockies Page 5

18. The scheduled **Program for October** will be a DVD from the GPAA titled “**Bedrock Bustin**”. This video will give members a new look at ways to find that glimmering gold that we all pursue.
19. Until next time, remember to prospect safely, live long and be grateful for that golden bounty from the stars, that gleaming magical miracle, called ‘gold’!
20. The Meeting was adjourned at 8:35pm.

Schedule of 2014 Planned Outings:

Oct 15 Wed Pumpkin Carving Contest, regular meeting night, compete for prizes.

Oct 18 Sat Panning Demo for Arapahoe County Fall Festival, 8181 S. Parker Rd, 10a-4p.

Nov 9 Sat Metal Detecting Outing, Majestic View Park, Arvada, 10a-1p. Prizes to be won.

Dec-18 Wed Annual Christmas Pot Luck Dinner, members only, no regular meeting, arrive at 6pm, eat at 6:30.

Finds of the Month for Sept

Be sure and bring your treasures and finds in to share with the rest of the Club. Winners each month will have their name published each month in the Newsletter. There are six (6) categories to choose from when entering. The winner in October was:

Best Bottle: Winner is **B. Manning** with a bottle he found while prospecting.

Congratulations to our monthly winners. There were many more submissions from other members that were extremely interesting and we encourage everyone to bring in and share their finds each month.

Monthly winners will need to save your find and present it at the November meeting for the Find of the Year competition and for the chance to be recognized as Best Find of the Year.

NO FINDS OF THE MONTH IN DECEMBER



Birthstone The World of Birthstones

In the ancient world, precious gems were prized just as highly as they are today. Gemstones continue to shatter record prices at auction houses around the world. For 2014, rather than just the monthly birthstones, we will offer a little more of the ageless secrets of birthstones by tying them to the lunar calendar. We will give you a little extra, courtesy of the National Jewelers Society. This means that the birthstones you would normally associate with your birth month are actually tied a little closer to your Zodiac Calendar. So, let’s see what the Zodiac says you are for this month:

Lunar Month: Oct. 22 to Nov. 21

Planet: Pluto

Zodiac Sign: Scorpio

House: 8 th

Birthstones:

NJA1911

Topaz

Affinitus

Peridot

Exodus 39

Agate

Revelation 21

Beryl



(Taken from the National Jewelers Association and the AmericanGemSociety.Org web sites)



Gold Prospectors of the Rockies Page 6

Prospecting/Mining Notes (mostly from the Denver Post, Internet and other wire services)

10-3-14 Drop Reported in Chronic Mine Safety Violators: The number of chronic safety violators among mine operators has fallen sharply in recent years, according to government figures released this week. In its 2010 screenings, 51 chronic violators were identified for further review. But for this year's screening, that number had dropped to just 12. The biggest reduction came in coal mines which dropped from 42 in 2010 to just 6 this year.

10-8-14 It's One Toothsome Deal: Your dental visit may soon have a lot more bling in it. Denver based Sapphire Technology LLC on Tuesday was awarded \$200,000 from the Colorado Institute for Drug, Device and Diagnostic Development, or CID4, for continued development of its dental instruments made with sapphires. Sapphire, which is a gemstone variety of corundum, ranks at the top of the Mohs scale of mineral hardness, which is the universal standard to measure the hardness of gemstones and minerals. Current dental instruments use metal tips, which can stick ever so slightly to dental composite materials. Sapphires hardness and polish makes it less apt to stick which allows for more accurate placement on the tooth.

10-20-14 Abandoned Mine Plug Helps Stop Pollution: Colorado State and local officials are marking a milestone for Summit County's mine cleanup efforts by plugging the Pennsylvania Mine. The abandoned mine east of Keystone is one of Summit County's biggest environmental problems. The mine sends toxic heavy metal concentrates and acidifies water flowing into Peru Creek, which feeds into Dillon Reservoir. A plug of concrete and steel will help prevent water from flowing through the mine. The water will then back u inside and reduce the concentration of metals and sulfides. The cleanup project will cost more than \$3 million.

10-29-14 Water Surrounds Mine Workers: Surging water trapped at least 18 mine workers in a Turkey coal mine, an event sure to raise more questions about the nation's poor workplace safety record. Initial reports say that a cave-in caused the flooding but other reports talk of a broken pipe as the cause. Either way, Turkey has a long standing record of poor safety enforcement and almost non-existent inspections, resulting in a high incidence of deaths and injuries.

A Miner's Laugh

Reaching the end of a job interview, the old Mine Owner asks a young engineer fresh out of the Colorado School of Mines, "And what starting salary are you looking for?" The engineer replies, "In the region of \$125,000 a year, depending on the benefits package." The Mine Owner inquires, "Well, what would you say to a package of five weeks vacation, 14 paid holidays, full medical and dental, company matching retirement fund to 50% of salary, and a company car leased every two years, say, a red Corvette?" The engineer sits up straight and says, "Wow! Are you kidding?" The interviewer replies, "Yeah, but you started it."

(Taken from the internet and revised just for all us 'old miners.) 11/14



Western Museum of Mining and Industry Upcoming Events: (225 Northgate Blvd, Colo. Springs)

- Nov. 29, Sat. 10a-1p The Gold Assay Process: Magic or Chemistry? Gold doesn't come out of the ground ready to wear. A hands on class for everyone to crush and classify ore as they learn the basics of gold assaying. Reservations required. Call 719-488-0880 or e-mail rsvp@wwmi.org to reserve your spot now.
- Jan. 3, 2015, Sat. 10a-3p Family Exploration Day: Geology! Learn about Colorado's mineral and mining history. Identify common or your own minerals in hand specimens and understand processes important to the formation of mineral deposits. All included with paid museum admission.

School of Mines Book Sale/Garage Sale:

November 22+23: The Colorado School of Mines (CSM) Geology Museum is having a combined used book sale/garage sale. The hours are 9-4 on Saturday and 9-4 on Sunday. Most prices will decrease throughout the event.

The sale will be in the Museum building in the room across the hall from our entrance.

Staff and volunteers have sorted through at least one thousand books, rocks, maps, and U.S.G.S. folios. In short, there's a wide range of publications and specimens for rock hobbyists at many levels.



Gold Prospectors of the Rockies Page 7

The Museum address is 1310 Maple Street in Golden and our phone number is 303-273-3815. We accept cash, checks, and credit cards. Members of the "Friends of the CSM Geology Museum" receive a 20% discount on all their purchases. Parking on campus lots and streets on weekends is totally free.

October Pumpkin Carving Contest Winners:

Congratulations to our October Pumpkin carving winners. First place went to Adam Wilson who submitted a well done pumpkin with a mine shaft and tracks. Second place went to Linda Luchtenburg with a pumpkin 'geode'. Third place went to Tina Fleming with a pumpkin 'miner panning'. Well done to all who entered submissions. Prizes were awarded to the top three submissions.



Monster Nugget Found in California

In July of 2014, a huge gold nugget was found in Butte County, Northern California, in the Mother Lode. It was a metal detector find and is actually a placer nugget. This is proof that you can still get rich today if you put in the time and know where to go and where to look. The nugget weighs 5.18 standard pounds which converts to 6 ¼ troy pounds, or 75 troy ounces and is currently valued at between \$250,000 to 400,000 dollars. The finder is anonymous and has permitted Bob "Digger Bob" Van Camp of Paradise, California, a Whites dealer who operates Comstock Metal Detectors, to make the public releases. I have checked Bob's web site at www.diggerbob.com but he hasn't posted any still photos of it yet. You can access the story on u-tube. If you like to metal detect, you need to check out the video and the story. It will get you blood going.....Pres. Long



Gold fever? How to find your own

[MSN.com Money Report](#) 5/23/2011 4:33 PM ET | By [Christopher Solomon](#)

You won't get rich, experts say, but amateurs can start prospecting once they know what equipment they need, where to search and the best methods to go for the gold.

These days, with gold trading at nearly \$1,500 an ounce, people are getting their feet wet -- literally. Urged on by gold-prospecting shows on TV's Outdoor Channel, these "new 49ers" are standing in streams all over the country and panning for the glittery stuff, just like prospectors did in California a century and a half ago. Should you join them? How do you start prospecting for gold? And what are your chances of striking the mother lode? We talked to some old hands to get some basic questions answered.

Can you look for gold where you live?

"There's gold that can be found in every state, including Hawaii, though some states are better than others," says J.J. Long, the president of [Gold Prospectors of the Rockies](#), a Colorado club with about 120 members. One of the hottest states for amateur prospecting is California, Long says, and other big states include Alaska, Arizona, Georgia, Nevada and Oregon.

What's it cost to get into prospecting?



Gold Prospectors of the Rockies Page 8

You'll need only \$50 to \$150 to get started, but the costs can escalate if you catch gold fever

"A big gold pan is \$10 to \$15," and you need at least one or two sieves to go along with it -- imagine kitchen colanders that don't let the bigger pebbles pass -- "and they're 22, 23 bucks apiece," says Michael Dunn, the owner of [Gold Pan California](#), a supply store in Concord, Calif. You'll also need a shovel, high rubber boots and perhaps rubber gloves for working in cold streams. As you get the hang of it, you'll probably want to buy a \$135 river sluice box, Dunn says. It's a tilted, rectangular box; you pour gravel in front of the box, the gravel and water run over the box's corrugated riffles and the heavier gold gets caught in the riffles while other material washes out. You can do 10 times the work with a sluice box as with a pan, Dunn says. Dedicated prospectors work their way up to mechanized equipment -- power sluices, dredgers and "high-bankers" -- the latter of which is a sort of dredge that sits on dry land. Those can cost \$3,200.

You've got the gear -- now what?

So you're ready to find some gold. Where do you point your pick and shovel? "You have to go somewhere where there's public access. It's that simple," Long says. Yet it's not so simple either. "There's not that much (public access) left today," he notes. When you do find a place with public access, check with the local governing body to find out if there are any rules governing mining. (For instance, mining is usually banned in federally designated wilderness areas.) Permits generally are required only if a miner wants to use mechanized gear, Long says. "I could go into anywhere with public access with gold pans and a sluice box," he says.

But heading out to a local river on your own is likely to be fruitless. "You can spend a lifetime with a pan and a pick and a shovel and find zero gold," says Ron Orbas, 69, the vice president of the Comstock Gold Prospectors club of Reno, Nev., which has about 300 members. So what to do? "I recommend if a person is going to get serious, the first step is to join a prospecting group/club," says Chris Demarinis, the author of the e-book "[How to Make Money Prospecting for Gold](#)." "They provide educational materials, an Internet forum, along with actual outings where people can go and learn from others how to prospect and extract the gold." Clubs usually have claims that have yielded gold in the past. For instance, Orbas' Comstock club has 10 claims along several rivers.

You can learn techniques faster in a group outing, too, Orbas says. "You could spend days trying to teach yourself how to pan. The old-timers will teach you in a few minutes." There are many kinds of clubs, some of them moneymaking companies, with different kinds of access and amenities such as campgrounds. The [New 49'ers club](#) charges a lifetime fee starting at \$2,625 for access to 60 miles of river in Northern California. The [Gold Prospectors Association of America](#) has access to about 450 spots around North America. Memberships are \$67.50 a month.

How do you stake a claim?

A claim gives you sole mining access to a piece of river or land. While that's most people's view of mining, few hobbyists today actually stake claims, Orbas says. "So much of the land that has gold on it is already claimed up," making it difficult to find promising unclaimed land, he says.

If you do find a spot you want to claim, you've got to first make sure it's not already taken. Depending on the jurisdiction, that could mean checking special U.S. Geological Survey maps, for instance, or a Bureau of Land Management database [here](#). (Go [here](#) for more information on claims, including the maximum size of a claim.) Then you must file a plan of operation with authorities who oversee the land or water, stating in detail what you hope to do, what gear you plan to use, how much damage you think you'd create and how you'd fix that damage. Filing a claim costs perhaps \$100, Long says. If you're plucking gold from someone else's claim -- say, panning in a section of a stream that the person has already marked and claimed -- that's illegal. Prospectors will sometimes approach private landowners about prospecting on their property and strike a deal to split any profits, Orbas says.

Is it OK to dig up a river?

Amateur gold prospecting isn't without some controversy, especially in places such as Oregon's Rogue River Valley. Some environmentalists contend that more-aggressive operations such as mechanized dredging can hurt fish habitats, stir up mercury left over from previous mining operations and cause a great deal of noise. Last year, California instituted a one-year moratorium on dredging in all of the state's rivers and creeks while it studied whether the practice hurts fish. The state may extend the moratorium for five more years.

How much money could you make?

Ah, the million-dollar question. Opinions vary on how much you can make. "You never get rich," Long says flatly. . . . "All the easy gold has already been found. So don't have any unreasonable expectations about getting rich. It just isn't going to happen." Orbas agrees. "On any one of our claims . . . I would say if you make \$10 or \$20 a day, you're doing pretty well." Where Orbas prospects, the old-timers got most of the gold a century ago, he says. "So basically the only gold that guys like me find is called flood gold -- it rains and snows in the mountains, and when it does, it washes a small amount of gold down. And that's what we find."

But then there are stories from people like Dunn. Using one of those \$3,200 "high-banker" dredges, Dunn hauls up, on average, "right about an ounce a day" -- and he prospects perhaps 100 days a year, he says. That's roughly \$150,000 a year. "But I'm probably the exception and not the rule," he concedes. "People could probably do 25% of that," he adds. "I work hard." And, he notes, he's got 37 years of experience.

"There are plenty of people making a living at this," says Dominic Ricci, the director of operations for the Gold Prospectors Association of America. But, he tells people, "if you want to find guaranteed gold, go to a jewelry store."



Gold Prospectors of the Rockies Page 9

Is prospecting worth your time?

"Absolutely not," Orbas says with a laugh. "You're out of your mind to do this. You've got to have a screw loose. It costs me \$100 to \$200 to do this every time I go out, in gas and groceries and wear and tear on my car, and I'm tickled pink if I find \$10 or \$15 worth of gold. "And I'm going to do this till I drop."

Where else, Long says, can you go out and play in the dirt all day -- just like your mother told you not to? Something else keeps people coming back: that feeling the next shovelful could cause them to finally yell "eureka!"

But most of all, they return for simple pleasures. "You've never had a cold beer taste so good," Orbas says, "as when the sun's going down and you've had a good day on the river and you're all worn out."

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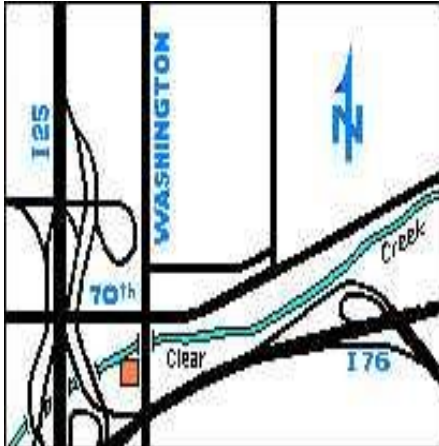
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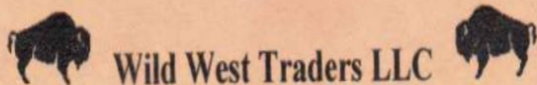
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Contact the GPR President

(Layout Design Subject To Additional Cost)



Coming Announcements and Special Events for Dec 2014

(WMMI - Western Museum of Mining & Industry, 225 North Gate Blvd. Colorado Springs, CO 80921 (www.wmmi.org))

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
	1	2	3	4	5 Newsletter Advert/Article Copy Deadline	6
7 Pearl Harbor Day	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16 Battle of the Bulge	17 GPR Club Meeting	18	19	20
21 Winter Begins	22	23	24	25 Christmas Day	26 WMMI Winter Break with the Burros	27 Washington's Birthday
28	29	30	31 End of WWII			