



THE VILLAGES GEM & MINERAL SOCIETY – Field Trip Information

ARKANSAS



Crater of Diamonds State Park

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CRATER OF DIAMONDS STATE PARK exists to responsibly manage and interpret this unique site and to provide a meaningful diamond mining experience for all guests and future generations. Among the tall pines of Southwest Arkansas, visitors from around the world search for diamonds in a 37-acre field. Here, a massive volcano brought diamonds to the earth's surface. This famous site is the only diamond-producing area in the world open to the public. Over 75,000 diamonds have been found at "The Crater."



Although genuine diamonds are the chief attraction to the Crater, other semi-precious stones can also be found. Amethyst, agate, jasper, quartz, calcite, and barite are but a few of the gems and minerals that make this Arkansas State Park a rock hound's delight.

How Do I Search for Diamonds?

How you search for diamonds usually depends on how much time you have to search or weather conditions at the park.

There are three methods of diamond searching. Surface searching consists of walking up and down the rows of dirt looking for diamonds lying on top of the ground. This is the most productive method following a hard rain. Rain washes the soil away, leaving diamonds and other rocks and minerals exposed on the surface.



Most visitors like to dig in the soil and screen for diamonds. This usually involves searching through the first six inches to one foot of soil. Visitors can turn the soil over with a small hand tool while looking in the loose soil. Some visitors like to use a screen to sift the soil.



The third method of diamond hunting requires a lot of hard work, and previous experience is helpful. This method is usually preferred by the repeat or regular visitor, and involves digging deep holes, removing the right type soil, washing the soil in a series of screens and patiently hand sorting the concentrated gravels from the screens. Some searchers look for low areas in the field where diamonds may have settled out over the years, or for tailings from the earlier commercial mining plants of the 20's and 30's.



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Tailings are the waste gravel that went out of the plant. Over the years, these tailing piles were covered by topsoil. The experienced regular hunters look for the tiny gravel, dig it up and wash it again by hand, looking for the small diamonds.

What Should I Bring?

Where can diamonds be found within the park? Visitors have found plenty of gems both on top of and in the soil. Tools are not necessary for diamond seeking, and a good way to search is to walk up and down the rows looking for diamonds lying on top of the ground. However, most diamond hunters like to dig in the soil. Therefore, you have the options of bringing your own tools from home, or you may purchase or rent tools here at the park.

You may use anything that is not battery or motor operated for transporting equipment in and out of the search area. Park visitors bring anything from small flowerbed trowels to full size shovels for digging. Some choose to make their own sifting screens and bring them.



If you choose to get tools at the park, you may purchase small flowerbed trowels and cultivators at the park. If you prefer renting tools, the park offers several different size shovels and screens from which to choose. The most commonly rented items are listed below. Along with the rental fee, a deposit is charged on each item. This deposit is refunded when the equipment is returned in good condition.

Rental equipment is available at the Diamond Discovery Center and includes the items listed below. Rental prices are per day and tax is not included.

What Do Diamonds Look Like?

Shape:

Diamonds found at the Crater are typically smooth and well rounded. Their shape resembles a polished stone with smooth sides and rounded edges.

Size:

The average size of a diamond is about the size of a paper match head, approximately 20-25 points weight. Points are a measurement of diamond weight. There are 100 points in a carat. Look for something small. A 1-carat diamond is about the size of a green pea, based on its crystal shape.





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Appearance:

Diamonds feel like they have an oily film on them. This characteristic prevents diamonds from being dirty. Diamonds have a metallic luster like new steel or lead. They will not be clear like glass. They do not have a solid dull look like the jasper. Diamonds are translucent. You can typically see into them but not through them.

Color:

The colors of diamonds found here are white, brown, and yellow, in that order.

The park offers free rock and mineral identification at the Diamond Discovery Center. Diamonds are weighed and certified free of charge for the finder

DIAMOND-HUNTING TIPS

- ◆ Look for a small, well-rounded crystal. The average diamond is about the size of a kitchen match head. A diamond weighing several carats may be smaller than a marble.
- ◆ Diamonds have a slick outer surface that dirt or mud will not stick to, so look for clean crystals.
- ◆ If you think you have a diamond, hold it carefully or place it in a small paper sack, available at the Diamond Discovery Center.
- ◆ Diamonds may be any of several colors. The most common found at the Crater are clear white, yellow, and brown.
- ◆ Bring any stones you find to the Diamond Discovery Center for free identification and diamond certification



Where can I wet sift for diamonds?

The park has two large, covered pavilions in the diamond search area, featuring water troughs and tables for visitors who choose to wet sift. Open sluice boxes with hand-operated water pumps are also located at the north and south ends of the diamond search area.

Where can I have my rocks and minerals identified?

Park staff at the Diamond Discovery Center identifies rocks and minerals and certify diamonds for park visitors. Informational panels located at the washing pavilions in the diamond search area also help identify many rocks and minerals found at the park.



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Can I take dirt home from the diamond search area?

Unsifted dirt may not be removed from the diamond search area. However, up to five gallons of sifted gravel may be taken home from the diamond search area per person, per day. Many diamonds registered at Crater of Diamonds State Park have been found by visitors who take their sifted gravel home.

Where's the best place to search for diamonds?

Most diamonds at Crater of Diamonds State Park are either found on top of the ground, by surface searching, or by digging in ravines between the plowed rows of the diamond search area, where water washes and concentrates heavy rocks and minerals. Diamonds are a bit heavy for their size, so they are often found near other heavy rocks and minerals.