



## THE VILLAGES GEM & MINERAL SOCIETY – Field Trip Information

# NORTH CAROLINA



### Emerald Village

331 McKinney Mine Rd, Little Switzerland, NC  
828 765 6463 [emeraldvillage.com](http://emeraldvillage.com)

Emerald Village is a group of gem, mining, and historical attractions nestled deep in the Blue Ridge Mountains of Western North Carolina, just off the Blue Ridge Parkway and within an hour's drive of Asheville, Boone, and Blowing Rock. Located in a spectacular mountain setting, Emerald Village is home to 12 historic REAL mines and has been featured on National Geographic TV, the Travel Channel, and many other TV programs and Magazines. Come see why we say "Real Mines! Real Fun!" We have a lot to see and do! Be sure to bring your camera and take pictures to share back home. People come from all over the world to visit Emerald Village! Here are the top activities and exhibits at Emerald Village.



#### [NC Mining Museum](#)

The North Carolina Mining Museum is a part of Emerald Village and thousands of visitors come every year to go underground into a real mine. The NC Mining Museum consists of two parts, the Visitor Center and the historic Bon Ami Mine. The Visitor Center design reflects the heritage of old mining structures and is a great place to start your tour of Emerald Village. As part of the Mining Museum tour spend a little time exploring the two upper floors of the Visitor Center, with displays on Bon Ami soap and our mountain tobacco heritage. Buy a can of Bon Ami scouring powder to take home. It's good stuff!



You'll see impressive displays of old mining lamps and mining equipment. The booklet guides you at your own pace with facts about the historic equipment and the mine. The Bon Ami Mine opened around 1924 to provide feldspar used in the production of Bon Ami scouring cleanser.

You'll see the splashing Bon Ami waterfall, the Blacksmith Shop, and the Hidden Mine. In the underground portion of the mine you'll see veins of smoky quartz overhead, lots of sparkly mica, and the railroad tracks and equipment used to get the ore out. Spend a few minutes in the Black Light tunnel and experience the vivid colors in this mine using special ultraviolet lamps. Look for fish in the cold deep mine waters and watch the swallows fly in and out of the mine in season.



## THE VILLAGES GEM & MINERAL SOCIETY – Field Trip Information NORTH CAROLINA



### Emerald Village (Continued)

#### The Gemstone Mine

One of the most exciting aspects about Emerald Village is the opportunity to prospect for gems and keep what you find. The special thing that sets Emerald Village apart from all the other “gem mines” is that we do it in real mines that have produced a variety of gems and minerals. These mines are closed now but provide a spectacular backdrop!



The Gemstone Mine is all about having fun in a comfortable, spectacular setting. We have two long covered flumes that run with cold mountain water. Mine for gems regardless of what the weather does. Our staff will explain the various gem buckets available and how to search for gems. We'll help you identify what you find.

All our buckets (except the Native Bucket) contain ore mined from local mines, along with rough gems added from other mines so we can guarantee “A Gem Find Every Time!” The mixed buckets contain up to 25 different mixed varieties of gems including Amazonite, Amethyst, Aventurine, Aquamarine, Carnelian Agate, Citrine, Emerald, Fluorite, Garnet, Kyanite, Moonstone, Opal, Red Jasper, Rose Quartz, Ruby, Sapphire, Smoky Quartz, Sodalite, Topaz, Tourmaline, Unakite, and others.

#### Gold Panning

Did you know that the first place gold was discovered in the United States was in North Carolina? Did you know that North Carolina was the leading producer of gold in the United States until the California Gold Rush? Did you know gold has been found in this area?

Now you can experience the thrill of finding a flash of gold in the bottom of your gold pan! Gold fever has struck, and gold panning North Carolina is now available at [Emerald Village](#). We use ore sand directly from a North Carolina gold mine that has produced gold for more than 100 years. The sand is dug from rich deposits in McDowell and Rutherford counties. There is always a chance that your pan will contain native gold! However, in order to guarantee gold in every bucket, we add genuine natural gold nuggets or flakes. We don't guarantee the amount of gold or that you will find it! But we guarantee there's gold in every bucket!



We provide the gold pans and water troughs, and our trained staff will show you how to get started. You'll have a lot of fun and will generally get enough sand to do several pans in each size level. You may find a few tiny gems too, perhaps a piece of fool's gold, and lots of sparkly mica. We'll show you how to retrieve your gold, and you will get a small vial to save it in.



## THE VILLAGES GEM & MINERAL SOCIETY – Field Trip Information NORTH CAROLINA



### Emerald Village (Continued)

#### Discovery Mill Building

One of the most picturesque aspects of Emerald Village is the Discovery Mill building, which climbs up the mountain overlooking The Gemstone Mine. This fanciful building was inspired by the historic mill building that stood right across the road in early days, of which there is now no trace.



Discovery Mill encompasses 10 different floor levels of shops and exhibits and covers a wide variety of themes and collections. All the displays are free to the public, so allow a little time (and energy) to explore all the different rooms. As you climb the stairs each level offers a different vantage point to enjoy the impressive view looking into the Big Deal Mine.

Some of the attractions in Discovery Mill include:

- Crabtree Junction Shop
- The Model Railroad Exhibit – 2 working model trains in a fantastic display
- The Black Light Mineral Display – incredible hidden colors come to life
- The Homestead Museum – a collection of antique tools and equipment
- The Worldwide Gem & Mineral Collection – some fantastic stuff
- The Native Wildlife Exhibits
- The Antique Music Museum – awesome collection of organs, music boxes & more
- The Museum Annex - more good old junk than you can imagine!

#### Mineral Collecting

Mineral Collecting at Emerald Village, for decades rock hounds from all over the world visited the McKinney Mines to collect many different types of rocks and minerals. However, for the last 30+ years the dumps have been closed to collecting. Recently, the dumps have been cleared and turned over, and rock hounds are invited to collect on these dumps. Unlike other area “mines” the dumps are authentic and we do not add ANYTHING to them. Whatever you find is truly native to these mines.



The McKinney Mines have produced over 100 different rocks, minerals, and gems. Gems are scarce but many rare minerals can be found. You will find nice Mica specimens as well as Smoky Quartz, Feldspar, and Garnets. Aquamarine & Green and Yellow Beryl have been found along with many rare and unusual rocks & minerals, including Columbite, Samarskite, Torbernite, Uranophane, Hyalite Opal, Malachite, Tourmaline, Thulite, Amazonite, Pyrite and Dendrites. What you find may or may not have great value, but you'll make memories that you'll treasure forever.



## THE VILLAGES GEM & MINERAL SOCIETY – Field Trip Information NORTH CAROLINA



### Emerald Village (Continued)

#### [Crabtree Emerald Mine](#)

Dig Your Own at the Crabtree Emerald Mine One of the unique experiences available to the visitor to Emerald Village is the opportunity to prospect and dig for emeralds in the dumps at the Crabtree Emerald Mine. This mine produced emeralds from 1895 (including for the Tiffany Company of New York) until the mine closed in the 1990s. The actual mine shaft went underground several hundred feet and lies flooded under a small pond.



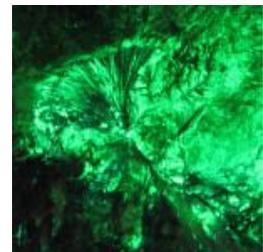
There are some extensive dumps around the mine, and it is clear the miners did not see or find everything! Recent digging through the dumps has produced a number of nice specimens. Of the minerals that have been found the most sought after is the Emerald, generally tightly locked into a matrix of quartz, mica, and feldspar. Also found in these dumps are black tourmaline, garnet, fluorite, aquamarine, and golden beryl.

The Crabtree Emerald Mine is owned by Mineral City Mining Company, and leased to the MAGMA rock club (Mountain Area Gem & Mineral Association). [Emerald Village](#) is the local representative. Digging through the dumps is available by permit only. Only hand tools are allowed and you can keep anything you find. No reservation is necessary and you can come by Emerald Village any time it is open to buy a digging permit.

Bring your own tools, or rent a set from Emerald Village. Remember that the mine is remote and primitive and that there are no facilities of any kind. Digging rocks and breaking boulders is required, and both are very hard work! You will probably not find emeralds by strolling around, you will have to engage in some serious digging and breaking rocks.

#### [Black Light Mine Tour](#)

Looking for an experience that's "out of this world"? Emerald Village offers nighttime underground mine tours that unlock vibrant hidden colors available only under ultraviolet light, commonly called black light. The brilliant coatings in the Bon Ami Mine are largely deposits of Hyalite Opal, a true form of opal found in this area. Under shortwave ultraviolet light, these coatings fluoresce or glow a vivid lime green. The effect, underground at night, is stunning!



There are other fluorescent minerals here, too, including Feldspar that glows pink to red, Manganapatite (?) that glows cream to orange, and a rare phosphorescent blue mineral which, so far, has not been identified. Here are some of the world's largest deposits of Hyalite Opal, and the only known underground Hyalite Opal deposits open to the public.

The black light tours are only offered on 10 special nights. The tour is a guided tour, led by our professional staff. We provide the high-power ultraviolet lamps. You provide comfortable walking shoes and a curiosity for unique experiences!



# THE VILLAGES GEM & MINERAL SOCIETY – Field Trip Information

## NORTH CAROLINA



### Gem Mining

Franklin, NC

[discoverfranklinnc.com/gem-mining-in-franklin-north-carolina](http://discoverfranklinnc.com/gem-mining-in-franklin-north-carolina)

Franklin, North Carolina is renowned as the “Gem Capital of the World” for good reason. Spanish Conquistador Hernando de Soto ventured through the area in the 16th century, searching for gold and other treasures. That exploration established a tradition in Franklin, which morphed into gem mining in the late 19th century. During that time several companies constructed mines to discover and capitalize on the source of Franklin’s ruby and sapphire explosion in the 1870s. Ever since, folks have traveled to Franklin in search of precious gems, and quite possibly, a chance at finding the next big one. Franklin and the surrounding area have various gem mines for families and individuals to choose from. You can continue the gem mining tradition in a beautiful part of Southern Appalachia.

Below is a list of mines in the Franklin area. Contact them for operating hours and rates. Good luck and enjoy!

- **Cherokee Ruby & Sapphire Mine** - Located in the Cowee Valley at 41 Cherokee Mine Road off Ruby Mine Road (828-349-2941)
- **Rocky Face Mine** - Located three miles North of Franklin at 268 Sanderstown Rd (828-524-3148)
- **Rose Creek Mine** - Located five miles North of Franklin on Highway 28 at 115 Terrace Ridge Drive (828-349-3774)
- **Gold City Gem Mine** - Located about seven miles North of Franklin off Highway 441 at 9410 Sylva Rd (828-369-3905)
- **Cowee Mountain Ruby Mine** - About five miles from Franklin, at the foot of Cowee Mountain at 6771 Sylva Rd (828-369-5271)
- **Jackson Hole Gem Mine** - Located near Cullasaja Falls between Highlands & Franklin on Hwy 28 and US 64 (828-524-5850)
- **Sheffield Mine** - Located at 385 Sheffield Farms Road (828-369-8383)
- **Mason’s Ruby & Sapphire Mine** - Located in Burningtown off Route 28 North (828-369-9742)
- **Old Cardinal Gem Mine** - Located at 72 Rockhaven Drive (828-369-6673)
- **Mason Mountain Mine & Cowee Gift Shop** - Located at 5313 Bryson City Road (828-524-4570)



## THE VILLAGES GEM & MINERAL SOCIETY – Field Trip Information NORTH CAROLINA



### Gem Mining Franklin (Continued)

Another option is go out on your own. The following information was printed of the internet.

#### Franklin, NC - Gem Mining Jul 27, 2007, 9:42 PM

We're going to Franklin soon. We want to visit gem mines but not sure which ones since there are so many! No kids-- Just me and my husband! Which mines are the best for gem mining? Which places offer the best advice, tell you what to look for, etc?

#### Jim's Response Jul 29, 2007, 2:26 AM

As to which is "best", well that is one's own interpretation. But there are several places in the area. Do a search for "gem mine franklin nc" and click on the first one, which is the franklin CoC. On there you will see "gem mines" click there and then on MAP. You will see all in the area. If you notice the "Rose creek mine and Mason mine" these are two that you will GET some gems in your buckets. Try one or both or even several. There are "rock shops" that will even evaluate and cut your stones that you find and will send them back to you after cutting. I have done this and was satisfied with the results. I have no preference as to which is "best" but I would say try the rose creek first and then maybe mason mine. The one on cowee valley rd has "natural (ruby) stones" but a lot LESS of the other gems. Most all of the mines will have bags or buckets with "enhanced" gems from all over. If you buy buckets with only natural stones then you will find FAR less in then compared to enhanced buckets.

There are other places in NC that have gems like CANTON having natural ruby's, Spruce pines which have emeralds and other gems. Also Hiddenite which has quite a few different gems, but you have to dig there for your riches.

ps Take along some OLD clothes that you don't mind getting real dirty.

#### Deltasunshine Responded

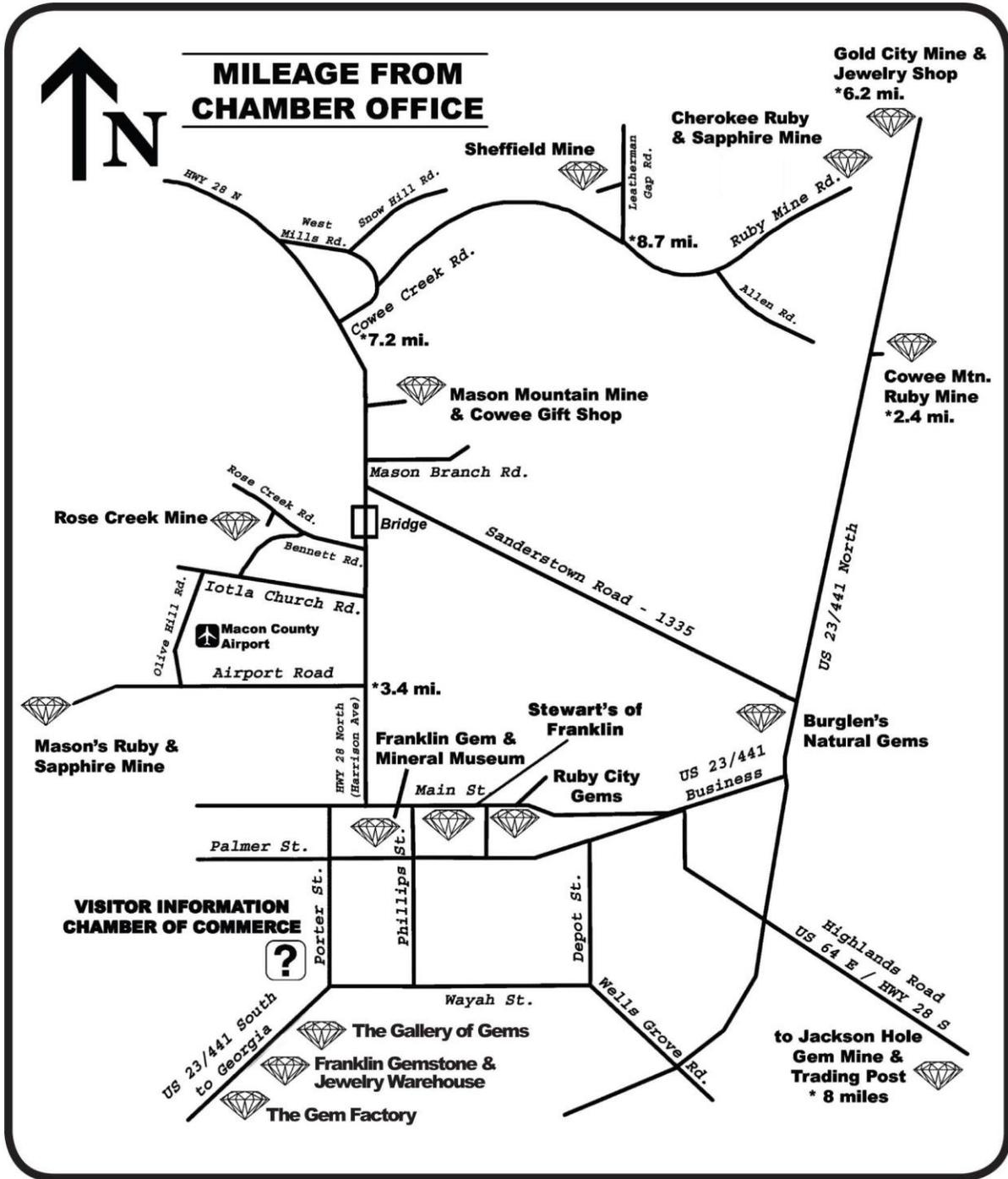
If you're looking for a non-commercial adventure in mining, try driving out Hwy 64 towards Murphy from Franklin to the Nantahala Forest. Turn left onto Deep Gap Rd (brown forestry sign) and drive down to the first campsite on the right. Armed with nothing more than a kitchen strainer & garden trowel, you can sift the garnets out of the sand in the creek & tell them all how you did it for free.

#### Response to deltashine above: Aug 05, 2007, 10:33 PM

Where exactly is Deep Gap Road? Is it in Hayesville or Murphy? I have a couple places in Murphy and am headed up there at the end of the week and want to check out the creek area you described, but can't picture where Deep Gap is? Can you give me a landmark besides the forestry sign? Hopefully you will read this and let me know before I leave. micb63: We have gone gem mining at the Sapphire mine in Franklin (gave advice, showed us what to look for, etc.), they had regular buckets and fortified buckets. It is a blast, I also brought rubber gloves, flip flops, brought towels, bottled water to rinse off feet and wet ones to clean off before getting back in the car, it is very dirty, and fun for all ages, have a great time wherever you go!

# NORTH CAROLINA

## FRANKLIN - GEM MAP





## THE VILLAGES GEM & MINERAL SOCIETY – Field Trip Information

# NORTH CAROLINA



### MINERAL and LAPIDARY MUSEUM OF HENDERSON COUNTY

400 N. Main St, Hendersonville, NC  
828 698 1977 mineralmuseum.org

The Mineral and Lapidary Museum of Henderson County was founded with the goal of providing a place where people could discover and learn about the beauty and diversity of the world beneath our feet.

The museum's goal is to be a primary resource for education and information to the community on the earth sciences related to geology and paleontology.

The museum currently features a mix of exhibits that range from specimens of raw minerals in their natural state to polished gemstones and other finished material. The museum also hosts special exhibits of collections on loan.

Among the popular highlights of the exhibits are the displays of minerals found in Henderson County and in the state of North Carolina — which has one of the nation's most diverse mineral deposits, the exhibit on the Hendersonville meteorite, and the fluorescent mineral display. Also popular, especially with youngsters, are the museum's displays of fossils which are highlighted by a casting of a tyrannosaurus rex skull, a mastodon tusk and teeth, and a woolly mammoth leg bone.

Visitors to the museum will quickly discover that there is more under our feet than dirt and that there is much more to rocks than most suspect.

#### GEODES

The museum holds a large collection of geodes in its exhibition materials, including a beautiful amethyst specimen that stands several feet high.

Geodes are one of nature's great surprises. The museum maintains a supply of uncracked geodes that visitors can purchase and have cracked on site. Museum volunteers will crack the geode and give the buyer an information sheet that details the mineral content of the specimen.

The cracking of a geode almost always brings surprises.





## THE VILLAGES GEM & MINERAL SOCIETY – Field Trip Information NORTH CAROLINA



### MINERAL and LAPIDARY MUSEUM OF HENDERSON COUNTY (Continued)

#### FOSSILS

One of the most popular exhibits in the museum is the Fossil Corner.

Dominated by a life-sized casting of a T-rex head, the fossil corner also displays a mastodon thigh bone, tusk and tooth, a skeleton of a hoplophoneus (one of the first sabertooth cat), and a smilodon (the last sabertooth cat). These replicas were cast from actual specimens from other museum collections.

The newest addition to the collection is the actual leg bone of woolly mammoth. The specimen stands 6 feet, 7 inches tall.

The fossilized dinosaur egg nest is a hands on exhibit.



#### HENDERSONVILLE METEORITE

The Hendersonville Meteorite exhibit is one of the most popular in the museum.

The Hendersonville Meteorite was found by William Corn in 1901 on the property of the county home for the aged and infirm about three miles northwest of the center of Hendersonville. It is now known as the Stony Mountain Activity Center. He took it to Captain Charles French Toms, who “secured” it from Mr. Corn. It was displayed for two years at a retail store that Captain Toms owned.

In 1903, Dr. W. H. Jarman, of Nashville, Tennessee, “secured” it from Captain Toms. He donated it to Vanderbilt University as part of the Jarman Geology Collection. Prof. L. C. Glenn of Vanderbilt University gave the first report on the Hendersonville Meteorite. He described it in 1904 as a chondrite (i.e. stony) meteorite weighing 11-lb. 6 oz. The size was 6-1/8” high by 5-7/8” wide by 5-1/2” thick.



In 1906, Vanderbilt University removed and retained a piece weighing about 1-1/2 pounds. The remainder of the specimen was exchanged with the National Museum of Natural History (Smithsonian Institution). In the “Catalogue of Meteorites” all known meteorites and the location of all their pieces are listed. Those listed for the Hendersonville Meteorite are the Smithsonian, who has the main mass, and a polished slab, the Arizona State University, the American Museum of Natural History, and the British Museum. The piece retained by Vanderbilt is not listed and is known as the “lost piece.”



## THE VILLAGES GEM & MINERAL SOCIETY – Field Trip Information NORTH CAROLINA



### MINERAL and LAPIDARY MUSEUM OF HENDERSON COUNTY (Continued)

In 1991, The Henderson County Gem & Mineral Society contacted the Smithsonian and received on loan the Hendersonville Meteorite to display at the club's 11th Annual Gem & Mineral Spectacular. When the Mineral & Lapidary Museum of Henderson County, Inc., opened its doors on November 6, 1997, the Smithsonian was approached about letting the Museum have the piece on loan. Instead the Smithsonian lent the Museum a polished slab of the meteorite for a 10-month period. As the Museum approached its 10th anniversary, the Smithsonian agreed to again lend the polished slab, but this time for a three-year period. The loan of the Vanderbilt piece, never listed in the "Catalogue," is open-ended.

When did it fall? According to Captain Toms something fell in 1876. But, in a private letter in 1991, Dr. Roy S. Clarke, Jr., Curator, Division of Meteorites at the Smithsonian, stated that he felt the weathering indicated it had been on the ground much longer. So the answer is, "We just do not know."

All meteorites, except those found in Antarctica, are named after the geographical location near the place of finding. Those from Antarctica have a numbering system. More meteorites have been found there in the last 100 years than all other places in the world put together in all recorded time!