

# Southwest Washington Gold Prospectors Newsletter

## Letter from the President

Thanks to members of SWWGPA we have had a great year so far. What always impresses me is the teamwork and dedication of the Board to make sure we are staying on course as we grow and learn. And some of you will be joining that team in 2016 and to those of you stepping up to help.

**I say Thank You!!!**

We are going to keep nominations open through November, including the December SWWGP Monthly Meeting so everyone has time to look over the Revised Bylaws. If you want to be part of a winning team, I encourage you to volunteer for an Officer or Board position at the December election.

We have taken the first steps to create a Gold and Treasure Show Committee. The SWWGPA, Brownsville, and Portland GPAA Chapter met to begin planning for 2016 GPAA Gold and Treasure Show which will be held April 9 - 10 at the Portland Expo Center. Teamwork and cooperation between the three Chapters will guarantee success. Together we can do amazing things.

Our rights to be a "gold prospecting team" has been, and is being, challenged in almost every state in the Union. Oregon has instituted a "five year moratorium" on dredging and we may soon be subject to equal or greater pressure from our opposition in Washington. I believe our efforts to educate the general public, particularly the school-aged children, are only part of our responsibilities. We should lead by example, always being part of the solution, and being a great "steward of our lands".

Randy Harper—President—SWWGP

## Winter Is on the Way

It is important SWWGP has your current e-mail, phone number and address, including zip code so in the event we need to cancel a meeting, i.e., due to bad weather, we need to contact you. We do not want to have our members traveling in unsafe weather conditions. Current, correct information is essential and it is your responsibility to keep SWWGP informed. Also let us know if you are a current GPAA or LDMA member by providing your membership number to the Secretary, Larry Hellie.

## Elections Delayed

The SWWGP annual election has been postponed until the December 2015 Monthly Meeting. This is necessary as the SWWGP Bylaws must be revised to conform with the GPAA Bylaws. Voting on the Bylaws Revision and for Officers and Directors will occur during the December Monthly Meeting.

The current nominees are:

President—Debbie Witcher Vice President—Steve Lewin

Secretary—Larry Hellie Treasurer—Ken Didier

Board Positions (9) — Matt Barnes, Bob Brown, Ann Erickson, Jim Erickson, Jeanne Geig, Daniel Keese, Dale Long, Richard Pluff Jr.,

SWWGP needs some additional nominees for the Board Positions. Remember you can nominate yourself or some one else at either the November or December Monthly meeting. SWWGP Officers and Board Members must be GPAA or LDMA members. GPAA Membership includes the member and all family members under 18 living at home. LDMA membership is limited to the member and spouse only.

## Gold and Treasure Show Committee Meeting

The Gold and Treasure Show in 2016 will be a joint venture involving the Portland, Brownsville and Southwest Washington GPAA Chapters. The three Chapters were well represented as we got started with the groundwork for the show. Brandon Johnson, President GPAA, joined us via a conference call.

The next Gold Show meeting will be Saturday, November 14; location to be determined. As the Planning Committee moves forward we are seeking volunteers to help with the show. Portland and SWWGP hosted the 2015 Show and we will be better recognized for a better show this year.

To volunteer or get additional information SWWGP members should contact Debbie Witcher (360-695-3215) or Larry Hellie (360-601-6388).

## Revision of SWWGP Bylaws—Election of Officers Rescheduled for December 13, 2015

Due to a need to revise the SWWGP Bylaws so they conform with the GPAA requirements, the SWWGP annual election is postponed until the December 13, 2015, General Meeting.

NOVEMBER 2015



## November Education

The November Education Program will be a presentation by William ("Bill") Adams concerning the legal issues surrounding "mining districts". This is a timely topic as "mining districts" may be members of the committees making decisions regarding mining and placer activities.

## Dinner December 13, 2015

The Holiday Potluck Dinner is fast approaching and we need everyone to sign up for attendance, food contribution and volunteering. The Club will provide the main meat dish, soft drinks, water, coffee, etc. We need to know the number planning to attend so enough meat can be prepared. This is a great opportunity for you to show off your special dish.

Some suggested food items include: green salads, vegetable dishes, desserts, rolls, butter, potatoes, gravy, sweet potatoes, yams, cranberry sauce, apple sauce, vegetable tray, fruit tray, cheese and cracker tray, dressing, ice cream, Cool Whip, whipped cream, chips and dip, nuts etc. If you don't know what to bring that's ok but please sign up so we know how many plan to attend. We can give you some suggested or needed items to choose from.

Toni Fest will be coordinating the set-up, clean-up and volunteers staff. Contact Maurine 360-254-9309 or Debbie Witcher at 360-695-3215

## Southwest Washington Gold Prospectors Board of Directors

President	Randy Harper	503-849-5109	rh82065@hotmail.com
Vice President	Steve Lewin	971-211-5996	goldpan123@yahoo.com
Treasurer	Ken Didier	360-604-2701	ky02kid@peoplepc.com
Secretary	Larry Hellie	360-601-6388	hhrc2@comcast.net
Claims Chair	Steve Lewin	971-211-5996	goldpan123@yahoo.com
Education Chair	Steve Lewin	971-211-5996	goldpan123@yahoo.com
Equipment Mgr	Randy Harper	503-849-5109	rh82065@hotmail.com
Hospitality	The Fests	360-465-2393	famfest@wwest.net
Safety Officer	Ron Koppi	360-254-9309	koppi@comcast.net
Outings	Scott Long	503-754-0612	mthoodfire74@hotmail.com
Sunshine	Debbie Witcher	360-635-3215	ddwitcher@yahoo.com
Website	Dan Shelton	360-442-9577	driv101@comcast.net
Director	David Conti	360-256-0892	user764554@aol.com
Director	Tom Fest	360-465-2393	famfest@wwest.net
Director	David Fritz	503-990-7064	dfritz@unfritz.com
Director	Dale Long	503-665-4717	dalelongsmail@gmail.com
Director	Scott Long	503-754-0612	mthoodfire74@hotmail.com
Director	Richard Pluff, Jr.	503-957-6884	magicdragon1956@hotmail.com
Director	Waylon St. Clair	360-921-6918	waylonst3@gmail.com
Director	Debbie Witcher	360-695-3215	ddwitcher@yahoo.com

### Treasurer's Report for October

Beginning balance for the month was \$.6831.92 Income for October was \$979.37 Our expenses were \$704.27 which leaves a balance of \$7107.02 as of October 31, 2015.

### SWWGP MONTHLY MEETING

The Southwest Washington Gold Prospectors' meetings are the second Sunday of every month beginning at **2:00 pm** at:

Minnehaha Grange Hall #164  
4905 Northeast St Johns Road  
Vancouver, Washington

All interested parties are invited to attend the monthly meetings. There will be opportunities to learn about prospecting laws, methods and equipment as well as hands-on demonstrations and practice. There are also outings to enjoy the pleasures of gold prospecting and the great outdoors.

Become a member of the Southwest Washington Chapter of the Gold Prospectors' Association of America. GPAA membership is not required to be a member and SWWGP membership is FREE! For information contact: Randy Harper – Chapter President, [rh82065@hotmail.com](mailto:rh82065@hotmail.com) or 503-849-5109 or visit [www.swwgoldprospectors.org](http://www.swwgoldprospectors.org)

### November Gold Nugget Drawings

Steve Lewin, SWWGP Vice President and GPAA Oregon & Washington State Director will give everyone attending the November SWWGP Monthly Meeting a raffle ticket for a "gold nugget" drawing. Present your SWWGP Membership card and receive a raffle ticket for another "gold nugget" drawing. Show Steve your GPAA or LDMA Membership Card and receive another raffle ticket for another "gold nugget" drawing. That's right three different drawings for "gold nuggets". And as an additional incentive buy a GPAA Membership Kit from SWWGP during November and December and receive a "gold nugget"!!!! and an additional "gold pan". Remember this great offer would make a wonderful Christmas present for a "gold bug" but it ends on December 31, 2015

### Hospitality Donations

As many of you are aware the kitchen has a \$50 per month budget for refreshments.. There is always a donation can available for those who would like to contribute to defray the cost of the "goodies". If you would like to bring something for the SWWGP Members to enjoy that would be great. Just call Toni Fest at 360-465-2393 and let her know. Anything contributed by SWWGP Members for hospitality is considered a "donation" and will not be reimbursed.

The picnic, holiday potluck, special events and outings have a separate budget and are not part of the hospitality budget.

Also Toni is looking for some assistants. This is very important especially in the event Toni cannot be there,

**Tip #4:** Don't be afraid to contact private land-owners for permission to prospect. A smile and a handshake can go a long way, and might get you access to some great locations that most other people pass by. Being respectful and courteous may get you through the gate and into an unexplored stream.

### A Recent Visit to Liberty, Washington— ([www.goldrushnuggets.com/goinwa](http://www.goldrushnuggets.com/goinwa))

Back in December, I took a trip to visit Liberty, Washington. This was the first time I had ever actually been to this small mining town, and I had a fun time exploring the area.

For a gold miner like myself, I have always been fascinated with the Liberty mining district. The most exciting thing about this area was the size of some of the gold nuggets that have been found here. Some of the nuggets found here were HUGE. During the early days, it was not uncommon for miners to unearth nuggets weighing many pounds each. The largest ever found was 70 troy ounces!

Liberty is also known for some really neat crystalline gold specimen. I have had the chance to handle quite a few of these specimens over the years, and they are really neat. They are generally very thin crystals, wires, and clusters... anywhere in size from just a few grains up to several ounces. They are really cool, and gold collectors really like them.

As much as I was interested in the area for its crystalline specimens and large gold nuggets, there is something else that has always fascinated me about the Liberty area, and that is the relative small size of the mining district.

I have prospected quite a bit in northern California, Oregon, Idaho, and Montana. In most of these states, there are extensive gold districts that are quite expansive. Most gold-bearing areas will have many rivers and creeks that have good gold. And there are usually clusters of mining areas not too far away... either over the next ridge or a few miles away. Once you are in gold country, the areas that you can find gold are fairly expansive.

Not so with gold mining in Liberty, Washington. Nearly all of the gold here was mined from the placer deposits on Swauk Creek and Williams Creek, as well as a few smaller tributaries as well as some elevated river channels and bench deposits. Yes, there are (continued on page 6)

## Scott's Bar Prospecting Trip Norm and Betty Erickson

Betty and I pulled into Scott's Bar early Tuesday afternoon September 16th. After checking in with the caretaker it took only a few minutes to set up camp.

For those who may not know, Scott's Bar is an LDMA (Lost Dutchman Mining Association) claim on the Scott River about 30 miles west of Yreka in northern California. Twice a year they have "outings" where participants pay to work the claim for either three or five days. Participants are split into two four hour shifts, and usually you can choose whether you work either morning or afternoon shift.

Material was dug from bedrock using a backhoe, run through a large vibrating grizzly, and brought to where participants ran it through three high bankers and two Gold Hogs. The Gold Hogs were new this time and the recovery rate was good. Betty found them difficult to feed. She is a little on the short side and hoppers were set up too high for her.

When not on shift you are on your own to shop at one of the vendors, prospect on your own, or just be lazy like me. Any gold found on your own is yours to keep.

Highlights included a hay ride and spaghetti feed Friday evening, a horseshoe tournament, metal detecting clinic put on by Kevin Hoagland, followed by a treasure hunt, potluck Saturday evening and an auction Sunday morning.

Betty got carried away and we the proud owners of two weeks at Cripple River next summer. (This was Number One on Norm's Bucket List). All the gold at the common dig was split up equally and divided among the participants. Before the gold split group photos were taken of participants and crew, then the hard part began. Saying goodbye to friends, old and new, packing up and heading home.

Betty and I had a great time and will definitely be back.

Norm and Betty Erickson -

## More Restrictive Laws in California

"California recently passed a new water bill (SB 637) which goes into affect this coming January. It says there will be no use of motors to excavate or process material for minerals within 100 yards of any active waterway. If allowed to stand, this reduces us down to hand sluices, gold pans, underwater crevicing (with or without hookah systems) and perhaps gravity water systems where possible.

Along with our attorney, we will be working out a strategy to challenge the new law. Since we have not been getting any meaningful relief in State court, I'll likely be pushing for a federal challenge this time.

More about this, along with an update on all of the other legal challenges we are working on, can be found on the following page:

<http://www.goldgold.com/legal-update-mid-october.html>

Here is a reminder that all these matters are costing money. We are looking towards you guys to support our ongoing legal fund-raiser. The Legal Fund will be giving away 2 ounces of gold nuggets and plenty of other goodies in less than two weeks.

You can find out more right here:

<http://www.goldgold.com/legal-fund-raiser-august-2015.html>

Thanks for anything you guys can do to help!

The New 49er's, 27 Davis Road, Happy Camp, California 96039, USA"

**Tip #5:** Almost without exception, placer gold can be found in the gulches, creeks, and rivers below lode mines. Look for hand stacked rocks, exposed bedrock, historic rubbish, and other signs that would indicate that placer gold has been found there before.



Above: Vice President Steve Lewin presented Debbie Witcher, Marsy Hellie, Toni Fest, Jeanne Gieg and Bill Adams with "gold dust" from Copper Creek for their help with the meals at the August GPAA "Gold Trails" outing.

Below: Raffle winners from the October SWWGP Meeting



## LETTERS (OR E-MAILS) TO THE EDITOR

It is nice to have a few "members' article" one in the last issue by Matt Barner and Norm and Betty Ericksons' "Scott's Bar Prospecting Trip" in this month's Newsletter. I still need your input for articles, topics, needs and wants. If you have an article or want a topic researched send me a note "[hrc2@comcast.net](mailto:hrc2@comcast.net)" or call me (1-360-601-6388.)

Larry Hellie—Newsletter Editor

## SWWGP OCTOBER GENERAL MEETING MINUTES

The SWWGP October General Meeting was called to order by Randy Harper at 2:15 p.m. Sunday, October 11, 2015. The membership recited the Pledge of Allegiance. Randy Harper welcomed guests and they introduced themselves: Dave Chiara, President of Portland GPAA Chapter, Jerry Johns, Vice President of the Portland GPAA Chapter, Carol Johns, Mike Larsh, Robert Russell, Kelly Campbell, Brian Stanley and Gary Graves.

The Secretary's Report was read as printed in the October Newsletter. The minutes were approved as read. The Treasurer's Report was read as printed in the October Newsletter and approved as read. Ken requested anyone who attended the Cape Disappointment outing to confirm they signed the activity roster. Ken is applying for a grant to purchase an automated defibrillator for the SWWGP Safety Kit and attendance at outings contributes significantly in supporting the request for the device.

Nominations for President, Secretary and Board of Director Positions

Nominations for President: Debbie Witcher

Nominations for Secretary: Larry Hellie

Nominations for nine Board Positions: Matt Barnes, Bob Brown, Ann Erickson, Jim Erickson, Jeanne Geig, Daniel Keesee, Dale Long, Richard Pluff Jr.,

Randy introduced Steve Lewin as the GPAA State Director for Oregon and Washington. This is a new organizational model for GPAA as previously each state had a director. Now Steve is "shouldering the load" for both states. Congratulations and best wishes for a successful tenure.

Education Program: Dave Chiara, President of the Portland GPAA Chapter, demonstrated "The Thumper" which he manufactures and distributes. The Thumper is a scaled-down version of the "green shaker tables" seen on the television gold shows. The process uses vibration of the sand which classifies the material down to 1/8". Concentrates then go into the "Gold Lab" (also manufactured and distributed by Dave) and are screened to 100 mesh. The Thumper is a processing step used to reduce the amount of materials going into the "Gold Lab" which speeds up the gold recovery process. Dave stated; "The two pieces of equipment need to be set up specifically to process the materials being worked to achieve a good recovery rate."

Steve Lewin presented "gold nuggets" to Matt Barner for his article in the October Newsletter, and to Bill "Lost" Adams, Toni Fest, Jeanne Geig, Marsy Hellie, Debbie and Dennis Witcher for their assistance with the GPAA "Gold Trails" filming at Copper Creek.

The SWWGP Bylaws have been reviewed and several issues were raised which require clarification and/or approval from GPAA. Therefore it will be necessary to postpone the November elections until the December meeting.

Following a refreshment break the monthly raffle was held and the meeting was adjourned.



## October Bingo Bus Trip

A good time was had by all!! We had our second bus trip to Chinook Winds on October 17th. It was a nice bus trip. Everyone said they had a good time and I understand they would like to do it again next year. Maybe after the GPAA Gold and Treasure Show. We had lots of raffle prizes, thirty-five (35), a little something for everyone. The club made almost \$600.

I want to say thank you to everyone who helped with the trip: Annie Palmer and Kim West for helping with ticket sales before we boarded the bus; Scott and Dale Long, and Betty Erickson for selling tickets before the bus arrived. No small task on a moving bus with lots of curves and turns. Thanks again to Betty for checking bingo cards and delivering prizes to the winners. Tom and Toni Fest helped with keeping track of the winners' names. Without all of you this would be a impossible task. To everyone who attended this function a great big "thank you." Because of all of you this was a great success. My apologies to anyone who helped and was left out. See ya on the free space, Debbie Witcher

### Thank You Debbie

And the Board of Directors wants to express our appreciation for all the effort Debbie has put into the Bingo Bus, picnics and outings during this year. Thank you for a job well done and for supporting SWWGP well "above and beyond" the "call of duty".

**Tip #6:** Don't worry if you don't have a lot of expensive prospecting equipment. You can find plenty of gold using simple tools like a shovel, pick, gold pan, crevicing tool and maybe a small sluice box. These can easily be acquired for less than \$100. All the equipment in the world won't find you gold if you are not in a good location. Locate a gold rich area, dig down and clean out the cracks in the bedrock. If you are in a gold bearing area and you are persistent you WILL FIND GOLD!!!

### Gold — Just the Facts

Atomic Number (number of protons): 79

Atomic Symbol (Periodic Table of Elements): Au

Atomic Weight (average mass of the atom):  
196.9665

Density: 19.3 grams per cubic centimeter

Phase at Room Temperature: Solid

Melting Point: 1,947.7 degrees Fahrenheit  
(1,064.18 degrees C)

Boiling Point: 5,162 degrees F (2,850 degrees C)

Number of isotopes (atoms of the same element with a different number of neutrons): Between 18 and 59, depending on where the line for an isotope is drawn. Many artificially created gold isotopes are stable for microseconds or milliseconds before decaying into other elements. One stable isotope. And most common isotopes: Au-197, which makes up 100 percent of naturally occurring gold.

## Gold and Fish Rules and Regulations for Mineral Prospecting and Placer Mining in Washington State

### Definitions of Terms (Continued from October Newsletter)

**Mineral prospecting equipment** - Any natural or manufactured device, implement, or animal other than the human body used in any aspect of prospecting for or recovering minerals. Classifications of mineral prospecting equipment are as follows:

Class 0 - non-motorized pans.

Class I.

#### Pans.

Nonmotorized **sluice boxes**, **concentrators** and **mini-rocker boxes** with a **riffle** area not exceeding 10 square feet, and not exceeding 50 percent of the width of the **wetted perimeter** of the stream.

Class II.

**Suction dredges** with a maximum nozzle size of 4 inches inside diameter.

**Highbankers** or suction dredge/highbanker combinations with a maximum water intake size of 2.5 inches inside diameter, when operated wholly below the **ordinary high water line**.

Class III.

**Highbankers** supplied with water from a pump with a maximum water intake size of 2.5 inches inside diameter, when used to process **aggregate** at locations 200 feet or greater landward of the **ordinary high water line**.

Suction dredge/highbanker combinations supplied with water from a pump with a maximum water intake size of 2.5 inches inside diameter, when used to process aggregate at locations 200 feet or greater landward of the ordinary high water line.

Other concentrators supplied with water from a pump with a maximum water intake size of 2.5 inches inside diameter, when used to process aggregate at locations 200 feet or greater landward of the ordinary high water line.

**Mini-rocker box** - A non-motorized **concentrator** operated with a wholly or partially rocking motion and consisting of a hopper attached to a cradle and a **sluice** with a **riffle** area not exceeding 10 square feet. The mini-rocker box shall only be supplied with water by hand and be capable of being carried by one individual. A mini-rocker box shall not be considered a **highbanker**.

**Natural conditions** - Those conditions which arise in or are found in nature. This is not meant to include artificial or manufactured conditions.

**Ordinary high water line** - The mark on the shores of all waters that will be found by examining the **bed** and **banks** and ascertaining where the presence and action of waters are so common and usual and so long continued in ordinary years, as to mark upon the soil or vegetation a character distinct from that of the abutting upland: *Provided*, that in any area where the ordinary high water line cannot be found the ordinary high water line adjoining **saltwater** shall be the line of **mean higher high water** and the **ordinary high water line** adjoining **freshwater** shall be the elevation of the mean annual flood.

**Pan** - The following equipment used to separate gold or other metal from **aggregate** by washing:

- An open, metal or plastic pan operated by hand; or,
- A motorized rotating open, metal or plastic dish without pumped or gravity-fed water supplies.

**Panning** - The use of a **pan** to wash **aggregate**.

**Person** - An individual or a public or private entity or organization. The term "person" includes local, state, and federal government agencies, and all business organizations.

**Placer** - A glacial or alluvial deposit of gravel or sand containing eroded particles or minerals.

**Pool** - A portion of the **stream** with reduced current velocity, often with water deeper than the surrounding area.

**Protection of fish life** - Prevention of loss or injury to **fish** or **shellfish**, and protection of the habitat that supports fish and shellfish populations.

**Provisions** - The conditions in a written **Hydraulic Project Approval** which dictates how the **hydraulic project** shall be conducted in order to protect **fish life**.

**Riffle** - (a) The bottom of a **concentrator** containing a series of interstices or grooves to catch and retain minerals such as gold; or, (b) A shallow rapids in a **stream** where the water flows swiftly over completely or partially submerged obstructions to produce surface agitation, but standing waves are absent.

**River** - See **Watercourse**

**Saltwater area** - Those **state waters** and associated **beds** below the **ordinary high water line** and downstream of **river** mouths.

**Shellfish** - Those species of saltwater and freshwater invertebrates that shall not be taken except as authorized by rule of the Director of the Department of Fish and Wildlife. The term "shellfish" includes all stages of development and the bodily parts of shellfish species.

**Sluice box** - A trough equipped with **riffles** across its bottom, used to recover gold and other minerals with the use of water.

**Sluicing** - The use of **sluice box** for recovery of gold and the other minerals.

**Small scale mineral prospecting equipment** - Encompasses the equipment included in **mineral prospecting equipment, Class I**.

**State waters** - See **Waters of the state**.

**Stream** - See **Watercourse**.

**Suction dredge** - A machine equipped with an internal combustion engine or electric motor powering a water pump which is used to move submerged **bed materials** by means of hydraulic suction. These bed materials are processed through an attached **sluice box** for the recovery of gold and other minerals.

**Suction dredging** - The use of a **suction dredge** for the recovery of gold and other materials.

**Supplemental Approval** - A written addendum issued by the department to a pamphlet **Hydraulic Project Approval** for approved exceptions to conditions of that pamphlet HPA or for any additional authorization by the department when required by a pamphlet HPA. See **Hydraulic Project Approval**.

**Tail** - A transition between **stream** habitat types. It is the downstream section of a **pool**, usually shallow and with increasing velocity, and without a broken surface.

**Tailings** - Waste material remaining after processing **aggregate** for minerals.

**Take** - To harass, harm, pursue, hunt, shoot, wound, kill, trap, capture, or collect any species listed under the Endangered Species Act, or to attempt to engage in any such conduct.

**Toe of the bank** - The distinct break in slope between the stream **bank** or shoreline and the stream bottom or marine beach or **bed**, excluding areas of sloughing. For steep banks that extend into the water, the toe, may be submerged below the **ordinary high water line**. For artificial structures, such as jetties or bulkheads, the toe refers to the base of the structure, where it meets the stream bed or marine beach or bed.

(continued on page 7)

## A Recent Visit to Liberty, Washington

For a gold miner like myself, I have always been fascinated with the Liberty mining district. The most exciting thing about this area was the size of some of the gold nuggets that have been found here. Some of the nuggets found here were HUGE. During the early days, it was not uncommon for miners to unearth nuggets weighing many pounds each. The largest ever found was 70 troy ounces!

Liberty is also known for some really neat crystalline gold specimen. I have had the chance to handle quite a few of these specimens over the years, and they are really neat. They are generally very thin crystals, wires, and clusters... anywhere in size from just a few grains up to several ounces. They are really cool, and gold collectors really like them.

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I have prospected quite a bit in northern California, Oregon, Idaho, and Montana. In most of these states, there are extensive gold districts that are quite expansive. Most gold-bearing areas will have many rivers and creeks that have good gold. And there are usually clusters of mining areas not too far away... either over the next ridge or a few miles away. Once you are in gold country, the areas that you can find gold are fairly expansive.

Not so with gold mining in Liberty, Washington. Nearly all of the gold here was mined from the placer deposits on Swauk Creek and Williams Creek, as well as a few smaller tributaries as well as some elevated river channels and bench deposits. Yes, there are certainly a few places in the surrounding area where gold can be found, but the extremely rich area that produced the large gold nuggets was really limited to just a few square miles.

Liberty is still a neat little community with evidence of its historic past.

As you drive into town, there is a sign welcoming you to Liberty, stating that it is the oldest mining town in the state of Washington with a bit of history about the first gold rush that occurred there.

Across the road is an old arrastra, a replica of one that was once used at a nearby mine to grind ore. There are also a few ore carts on display. Driving through town, there are some great old homesteads that appear to be original structures. Look close and you will see lots of old mining relics hidden in the weeds.

There is also a great informational sign that talks about the gold nuggets that Liberty was famous for. There was nowhere else in Washington that even came close to producing nuggets of this size.

There is still some active mining taking place here, and certainly evidence of past mining activity can still be seen along Swauk and Williams Creeks. Bucketline dredges were used along some parts of the creek, and extensive ground sluicing from years past can still be seen today.

While certainly most of the gold here was found long ago, there are still some good discoveries being made. I recall just a few seasons ago some prospectors found a couple nuggets weighing over 10 ounces each. So they are still out there!



## Washington Gold Production Summary—USGS 1968

Washington has not been a major gold-producing State; nevertheless, its annual output of gold has been steady, and contrary to the present nationwide trend of the industry, its production in recent years has increased. This paradox is exemplified by the Knob Hill mine in the Republic district, which ranks third among the leading lode-gold-producing mines in the United States, and the Gold King mine in the Wenatchee district, which ranks tenth (U.S. Bureau of Mines, 1960, v. 1, p. 509). Gold was first discovered in the State in 1853 in the Yakima River valley by a party under the command of Capt. George McClelland exploring for a possible railroad route (Hunting, 1955, p. 28). By 1855, prospectors were active in the Colville district although the first discoveries were not made until 1883. In 1855, small placers were found along the Columbia and Pend Oreille Rivers. From the 1850's through the 1880's, placers were worked along streams in Okanogan, Whatcom, Chelan, and Kittitas Counties and along the major streams of the State - the Columbia and Snake Rivers. By 1900, however, most of the placer deposits were exhausted. Important lode discoveries were made in the early 1870's, and as the placers were mined out, the lode mines became the chief producers. The Republic district in Ferry County is the major lode gold district in the State. Other important lode districts are the Wenatchee, Blewett, Mount Baker, Monte Cristo, Slate Creek, and Oroville-Nighthawk. A significant contributor to the gold output in recent years was the Holden mine in the Chelan Lake district, Chelan County, where gold was produced as a byproduct from copper ores. This mine, however, was closed, probably permanently, in 1957 (A. E. Weissenborn, written commun., 1962). Total gold production for the State from 1860 through 1956 was 2,844,331 ounces (U.S. Bureau of Mines, 1956, p. 1204). Production figures for the period 1957-65 include some production from Pennsylvania and therefore are too high by an uncertain amount, probably a few thousand ounces. In the data presented in the succeeding pages, a total gold production of only about 2,300,000 ounces is indicated. The reason for the discrepancy is in the different estimates by various authors for unrecorded production before 1900, especially for the period 1860-66, during which the State produced \$9 million in gold (Hunting, 1955, p. 33). Most of the gold produced before 1900 was from placers, but only 2 percent of the total from 1900 to 1952 was from them (Hunting, 1955, p. 32).

### (Gold and Fish Pamphlet Definitions—continued from page 5)

**Watercourse** - Any portion of a channel, **bed, bank**, or bottom waterward of the **ordinary high water line** of waters of the state including areas in which **fish** may spawn, reside, or through which they may pass, and tributary waters with defined bed or banks, which influence the quality of fish habitat downstream. This includes watercourses which flow on an intermittent basis or which fluctuate in level during the year and applies to the entire bed of such watercourse whether or not the water is at peak level. This definition does not include irrigation ditches, canals, storm water run-off devices, or other **entirely artificial watercourses**, except where they exist in a natural watercourse which has been altered by humans.

**Water right** - A certificate of water right, a vested water right or a claim to a valid vested water right, or a water permit, pursuant to Title 90 RCW.

**Waters of the state** - All **salt waters** and **fresh waters** waterward of **ordinary high water lines** and within the territorial boundaries of the state.

**WDFW** - Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife

**Wetted perimeter** - The areas of a **watercourse** covered with water, flowing or non-flowing.



## Gold Mines in the Oregon Mountains

Most people think of the Gold Rush in terms of California, but it spread farther north up the coast as well. Oregon's mountains contain quite a bit of geologic treasure, most dredged up during the state's long-ago gold rush, but some still being discovered by lucky modern-day gold hunters. Most of Oregon's gold is in the form of "placer" deposits in the state's waterways: nugget gold, tucked into deposits of sand or gravel in the beds of rivers, creeks and lakes. However, ground-borne lode deposits also pepper the mountain ranges, waiting like geologic Easter eggs for lucky claim-holders -- and providing the backdrop for some of the state's most dramatic history.

### A Golden History

Oregon's gold rush started in 1851, when rich veins were first discovered along the creekbeds of southwest Oregon. It wasn't long before deposits were discovered in the rivers that fed them -- and at the aptly named Gold Beach on the coast. In a matter of weeks, a throng of prospectors descended on the state from California, looking for better luck. Newbies from the east and interested locals joined them. The rush petered out, but modern gold-seekers still report eyebrow-raising findings in Oregon, as significant tracts of public land offer ample opportunity for keen treasure-hunters looking to put in for a claim.

### Historic Mines

Oregon's historic "gold belt" covers an area about 100 miles long and 50 miles wide in the northeastern part of the state. There, the scars of fervent prospecting are still evident. The area is littered with decrepit mines, hydraulic placer ruins and river valleys disfigured by the bucket-line dredging of the past. Eastern Oregon, in fact, lists 18 mining "ghost towns" -- complete with the requisite saloons, stables, wood-fronted hotels and brothels -- that accompanied the region's old mines. While the mines themselves are closed to visitors in the interest of safety, well-preserved mountain mining towns remain at Cornucopia, Bourne and Sumpter.

### Where to Look

While many mines and panning areas are exhausted, modern prospectors can still find several spots to set up a claim in Oregon's mountains. For example, the Siskiyou Mountains in the south, near the California border, contain active deposits of both the lode and placer types. To the east, along the border with Idaho, mining districts scatter along the Snake River banks from Farewell Bend State Park to the base of the Wallowa mountain range. To the west, careful eyes can still find the nuggets discarded by poorly designed 1860s-era filters in the Blue Mountains. There, especially around the Sumpter Valley, specimens are still being discovered in old tailing piles.

### Locating and Recording a Mining Claim

If you're interested in trying your hand at mining or gold panning in Oregon's mountain ranges, you won't be able to do so as a simple tourist. Instead, you'll need to follow several steps to record a claim before panning, even if your interest is purely recreational. The state does not involve itself in rivalries over duplicate claims, so specificity is key: Use the Public Land Survey to pinpoint the exact location of the area you're interested in mining. Then file a Location Notice in the county in which the claim is located within 60 days. Bring friends, too -- as well as making the process more fun and social, the claiming system favors gold seekers who share the pursuit with friends and family. Larger parcels are made available to larger groups of filers. One or two "co-locators" may only claim one 40-square-acre parcel, but a group of eight may claim four -- and enjoy a fun mountain camping trip, besides.

References -- "Oregon's Gold Placers"; Oregon Dept. of Geology and Mineral Industries; "Gold Panners Guide to Western Oregon"; Tom Bohmker, Tom Kitchar

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**SWWGP CALENDAR**

**November 2015**

8 — SWWGP Monthly Meeting

26 — Thanksgiving

**December 2015**

13 — SWWGP Monthly Meeting

25 — Christmas

31 — New Year's Eve

**January 2016**

1 — New Year's Day

10 — SWWGP Monthly Meeting

18 — Martin Luther King Day

**February 2016**

14 — SWWGP Monthly Meeting

15 — President's Day

**March 2016**

13 — SWWGP Monthly Meeting

13 — Daylight Savings Time Begins

**April 2016**

9-10 — GPAA Gold and Treasure Show EXPO Center

10 — SWWGP Monthly Meeting

**May 2016**

8 — SWWGP Monthly Meeting

8 — Mother's Day

30 — Memorial Day

**June 2016**

12 — SWWGP Monthly Meeting

14 — Flag Day

19 — Father's Day

**July 2016**

4 — Independence Day

10 — SWWGP Monthly Meeting

**August 2016**

14 — SWWGP Monthly Meeting

**September 2016**

5 — Labor Day

11 — SWWGP Monthly Meeting

**October 2016**

9 — SWWGP Monthly Meeting

**November 2016**

10 — Marine Corp Birthday—(Sempre Fi)

11 — Veterans Day

13 — SWWGP Monthly Meeting

24 — Thanksgiving Day

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