

# Gem Mining

Gem Mining has been one of the most popular activities to do in the Franklin area since mining was introduced in 1870. Tiffany & Company (the world famous jeweler) was interested in purchasing land here in the 1890's but gave way to two other predominant companies, American Prospecting & Mining Co. and US Ruby Mining Co. These two companies were very interested in finding the "source" for Rubies in our area. However, both companies gave up around the early 20th century and the mines were left to the local communities and rock hounds alike. The "Source" is still out there, somewhere....

Our recommended checklist for Gem Mining:

- old clothes
- old shoes
- change of clothes/shoes
- Plastic storage bags/plastic container (no glass)
- Towels
- Cushion for seat
- picnic lunch
- camera
- Rubber gloves
- sunblock/hat
- Cash Money (some mines only accept cash)

A few things to keep in mind before you go...

- Does the mine offer "Native Dirt"? Usually labeled as "Dig your own bucket."

- Is the mine a "Salted" mine? "Salted" mines plant either native gems (ones found in the area) or non-native gems (usually gems from other countries around the world). Some mines plant or "salt" their buckets with already polished and cut gems, usually just one per large (more expensive) bucket.

- Make sure you purchase the enriched or "salted" buckets for the younger crowd. They will have a blast at what they find when the water rushes through the dirt in their sifter box. When mining with enriched dirt, the gems are much easier to find due to the fact that the gem was more than likely clean when placed in the dirt, making it somewhat of a "guaranteed" activity.

- If you are determined to be a tried and true rock hound, then make sure you are at a mine that offers "native dirt" or "dig your own bucket". Mining in native dirt takes more patience and requires some assistance from the local staff. Gems found in native dirt are going to be much dirtier than ones found in an enriched bucket. The dirt or "matrix" found on these native stones have been there since they were formed and can have a crusty, grayish protective barrier.

Be sure to contact the mine of choice before arrival and ask the following questions:

- \* Hours of Operation?
- \* Are drinks or Snacks on site for purchase?
- \* Payment Method?
- \* Is your mine "salted"?
- \* Do you offer "native-dirt"?

