

TAR HEEL



ROCKHOUND

JUNE 2025

Catawba Valley Gem & Mineral Club, Inc.

2024 Officers and Committees

President:	Tracie Jeffries 828-430-1341	Education:	George Max 828-328-9107
Vice President:	Joan Glover 828-446-7633	Show Chairman:	Dean Russell 828-303-1448
Treasurer:	Terry Russell 828-303-1563	Scholarship:	George Max 828-328-9107
Secretary:	Dean Russell 828-303-1448	Field Trip:	Tina Lakhotia 727-688-1068
Editor:	Tracie Jeffries 828-430-1341		

Club Address: PO Box 2521, Hickory NC 28603-2521
Regular Meetings: Second Tuesday, 7:00 PM
St. Aloysius Catholic Church, 921 2nd St. NE Hickory, NC
Annual Dues: Family, \$25, Individual, \$18

The purpose of the Club is to increase the individual's knowledge of the earth sciences and to aid in the development of lapidary and related arts and skills; to promote fellowship and exchange of ideas; to hold exhibitions, contests, lectures, and demonstrations for educational purposes; to help interest more people in the gem and mineral hobby; and to capture and preserve the beauty of nature, the arts, and the works of man.

CATAWBA VALLEY GEM AND MINERAL CLUB, INC.

Web Master: Mike Streeter

<http://www.cvgmc.com>

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PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Hello Fellow Members,

In the May newsletter, I mentioned I would be doing a three-part series on how to improve and increase the value of your collection. However, I have been exceptionally busy this past month. Warren H. was kind enough to provide an article for this month's newsletter, and I will continue my series in the July newsletter.

I know that the spring is always busy with our annual show, but there are still many events to look forward to this year. Keep your eyes and ears open for information on:

- volunteer opportunities,
- club meetings and programs,
- monthly field trips through the DMC field trip sharing program,
- the annual Kentucky trip over Labor Day,
- a silent auction event, possibly in August,
- the club picnic in October,
- the annual Christmas party and auction,
- and information about our first scholarship opportunity at Wild Acres for next year.

I hope you are as excited as I am about these events and activities, and I look forward to seeing you at the next meeting!

Sincerely,

Tracie J.

CVGMC MINUTES FOR MAY 13, 2025

The May 13, 2025, meeting of the CVGMC was called to order by President Tracie J. at 7:00 PM.

Visitors: Clarke W., Lillian

Program: "Rockhounding in the Desert Backcountry" by Clarke Walker

Minutes: A motion was made by Harry and seconded by Becky to accept the April 8, 2025, minutes. The Club passed the motion.

Treasurer Report: Bank balance was reported. \$69,860.97

Education Committee:

1. CVGMC will do two programs for the Catawba County Library System on Friday, July 16, in Maiden (Volcanos) at

3:00 PM and Friday, July 17, in Conover (Gemstones) at 10:00 AM. Don't hesitate to get in touch with Tracie J. if you would like to help.

2. CVGMC did an informational Scout Day on May 3, 2026. It was well received.

Show Committee:

1. The next CVGMC Annual Show will be March 6-8, 2026. We will return to the Hickory Room, where the Oct. 2024 show was.

2. The Treasurer reported on the finances of the March 2025 Show.

3. The Club needs someone to take over the Facebook advertising for next year's show.

Field Trip Report: None

Old Business:

1. The Treasurer and Secretary will be unavailable for the June and July meetings. We need someone to volunteer to take minutes for the next two meetings.

New Business: None.

Announcements: June 6 and 7th is the North Carolina Gold Festival. Go to NCGOLD.org for information.

Closing of Business: The meeting was adjourned at 8:21 PM

Respectfully Submitted,

Dean Russell, Secretary

MAY PROGRAM

At the June meeting, our own club member, Jeff S.
will present a program on Tourmaline.

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CLUB OUTREACH AND VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

In July, the club will do two programs for the Catawba County Library System. On Thursday, July 17th, at 10:00 AM, the club will give a program about 'Gemstones' at the Conover Library. A second program, on volcanoes, will be held at the Maiden Library on Friday, July 16th, at 3:00 PM. If you would like to help with either program, please contact Tracie J.

"THERE'S GOLD IN THEM THAR HILLS"

By Warren H.

Do we have any gold in Catawba Valley? Well, we know that the "Cash for Gold" operations are mining the jewelry boxes and estates of citizens of our surrounding counties. So, do we have raw gold to be found in the local area? The answer is "yes." According to two geologists who are members of the Catawba Valley Gem and Mineral Club, placer gold may be found in the streams of most other counties in our area.

One could question if the quantity of gold in our area is worth the collecting effort. Gold reached an all-time high of 3,500 per troy ounce in April of 2025. According to gold market observers, in the last 20 years, gold has yielded an average annual return of approximately 9.47%. This translates to a total gain of roughly 560% on an initial investment. For example, if you had invested \$10,000 in gold 20 years ago, it would have grown to approximately \$65,967.

Gold has been an important part of North Carolina's history since 1799, the date of the first authenticated discovery of gold in the United States. North Carolina was the nation's only gold-producing state from 1803 until 1828, and continued as a leading producer until 1848, when gold was discovered in California. The Reed Gold Mine is the site of the first documented gold find in the United States. From this discovery, gold mining spread gradually to nearby counties and eventually into other southern states. During its peak years, gold mining was second only to farming in the number of North Carolinians it employed. The estimated value of gold recovered reached over one million dollars a year. North Carolina led the nation in gold production until 1848, when it was eclipsed by the great rush to California.

The first major gold find was in the year 1799 by Conrad Reed, a boy of about twelve years old, the son of John Reed. The boy, in the company of his brother and sister, went to a small stream, called Meadow Creek, fishing, and saw a yellow substance shining in the water. He went in and picked it up, and found it to be some kind of metal, and carried it home. Mr. Reed examined the 17-pound rock, but it was unknown in this part of the country at the time. Mr. Reed

kept the piece for three years on his house floor as a door stop. In 1802, he went to the market and showed it to a jeweler, who immediately told him that it was gold. He asked Mr. Reed to leave it with him and that he would flux it. When Mr. Reed returned, he was presented with a large bar of gold about six or eight inches long. The jeweler asked Mr. Reed what he would take for the bar. Not knowing the value, he asked \$3.50. The jeweler paid his price. After returning home, Mr. Reed examined and found more gold along the creek, including a piece of gold that weighed twenty-eight pounds. The whole surface along the creek for nearly a mile was very rich in gold. The veins of this mine were discovered in the year 1831. They yielded a large quantity of gold. Hearing of Reed's good fortune, other farmers began exploring their creeks and finding gold. The North Carolina gold rush was on, with men and women from many areas of the United States and other countries joining in the quest. The sudden influx of miners, accompanied by swarms of speculators, gamblers, swindlers, and camp followers, had a devastating effect on the quiet, easy-going lifestyle of the North Carolina natives.

From 1831 through 1840, more than \$2.2 million was minted into coins, and another \$1.7 million was cast into ingots or worked into jewelry. In terms of today's dollars, that nearly \$4 million in gold would equal more than 2 billion dollars. The nearby gold mining hot spots included Southern McDowell and Northern Rutherford Counties. Over 5,000 people scoured the creeks and the area around Vein Mountain. The Marion Bullion Company and Bechtler

Mint began operations in the area. The Bechtler Mint coined the first gold dollars in North Carolina. Many of these coins are worth tens of thousands of dollars today. Charlotte was also a major gold mining area with over 100 mines in Mecklenburg County. Catawba County had the Shuford Gold Mine. In the mid-1800's Caldwell County was also a heavily prospected area.

The Shuford Gold Mine was situated four miles south of the town of Catawba. Gold was discovered in 1840. John Shuford was the first to work the mine. The mine used water from a large man-made pond. The water was used with a boiler and steam and water cylinders to wash gold-rich soil through sluice boxes, where the gold collected in crevices. The mine was owned by a number of individuals over the years. Production dwindled in the first decade of the twentieth century. Today, the mine is on private property and is not open to the public.

So, should you get a pan and shovel and head out to the creeks in local counties? Here are some factors to consider. Only 10 percent of the world's gold has been found. Gold is always going to be there. "There's no way they can get it all." Gold prospecting is hot, dirty work with marginal results for most searchers. According to a worker at a gold prospector equipment

supplier in a nearby county, one man found enough gold in the area to send his daughter to Duke University.

So, how do you identify gold? First, if you aren't sure it's gold, it probably isn't! Pyrite and yellow-colored mica are frequently mistaken for gold, but can easily be distinguished. Gold is very soft (2.5-3 on Mohs scale of hardness) and can be hammered into thin sheets without shattering. It is heavy (specific gravity of 19.3 when pure) and is insoluble in all acids except aqua regia (a mixture of hydrochloric and nitric acids).

Where do you go to find gold? Amateur prospectors are looking for the coarser gold found in streams and quartz veins. Streams flowing through former gold-producing districts offer the best opportunities for panning. Although these streams were prospected many times, much of the fine gold was lost during earlier activities. Because stream action and erosion redistributed the gold, it is still possible to find small amounts of gold in the stream sediments (placers). It is also possible to find gold in quartz veins exposed at the surface of the ground. Although there are many quartz veins, it is rare to find one that contains gold. The best place to find gold in streams is where they begin to widen or change in velocity, such as along the insides of bends or in slow-water areas below rapids. Gold also tends to work its way to the bedrock and often accumulates in crevices, depressions, and potholes in the rock underlying the streams.

Before you head out to buy gold mining equipment, I suggest you review online sources such as the website Gold of NC from the NC Geologic Survey. They offer several publications on gold in North Carolina through their internet sales site, North Carolina Geological Survey Shop. The website <https://www.ncgoldfoundation.org/> is a rich source of information about the history of gold mining in NC. The NC Gold Festival is in Marion, NC, in early June. A plethora of information is also available by using internet search engines and artificial intelligence programs.

So, there you are! If you make a huge gold strike in our local area, don't forget my words of encouragement and gold search tips. I should at least rank a free steak dinner. Then again, you might not find enough to buy me a can of Vienna sausages! Apologies for the misquoted saying by Mark Twain used as the title!

REED GOLD MINE

If you enjoyed the article above and would like to learn more, you can visit the original Reed Gold Mine in Cabarrus County. The Reed Gold Mine became a designated National Historic Landmark in 1966 and is open to the general public. The site hosts a visitor center with

a museum and gift shop, a picnic area, historical structures, hiking trails, and outdoor exhibits. All the activities mentioned above are free. For additional fees, you can take a guided underground tour into several restored mining tunnels and even pan for gold! Gold panning is permitted from April through October for 5\$ per person.

Reed Gold Mine is located at 9621 Reed Road in Midland, NC. The mine is open Tuesday through Saturday from 9:00 am – 5:00 pm and closed on Sundays, Mondays, and most major holidays.

WHAT'S HAPPENING IN OUR AREA

WHAT	WHEN	WHERE
21st Annual NC Gold Festival	June 6 – 7 Fri – 2:00 PM – 9:00 PM Sat. 9:00 – 6:00	251 Lucky Strike Drive and 1296 Polly Spout Road, Marion, NC (They are across the road from each other.)
Piedmont Open Air Gem, Mineral, & Jewelry Show & Sale	June 7 Hours: 9:00 - 5:00	Piedmont Triad Farmer's Market, 2914 Sandy Ridge Rd., Colfax, NC
Raleigh Rock, Mineral, Fossil, and Jewelry Show	June 7- 8 Hours: Sat-10 - 6 Sun- 10-5	NC State Fairground, Kerr Scott Building, 4285 Trinity Rd., Raleigh, NC
Land of the Sky Rock Show	June 20 – 22 Hours: Fri/Sat 9:00-6:00 Sun 10:00-4:00	39 Spring Cove Rd Land of the Sky Event Venue Swannanoa, NC
The 2025 Greater Charlotte Gem, Mineral, Fossil and Jewelry Show	June 27 – 29	4751 State Hwy 49 Cabarrus Events Center - Gold Hall 1 Concord, NC

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Club Meetings
2nd Tuesday of Month, 7:00PM
St Aloysius Catholic Church
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