

TONTO National Forest



Recreation
Opportunity
Guide

www.fs.fed.us/r3/tonto



GATHERING FOREST PRODUCTS

ROCKHOUNDING & PROSPECTING

Most of the forest is open to the rockhound interested in collecting rock or material specimens. Arizona is rich in mineral deposits and rock diversity. These rocks and minerals have played a major role in the settlement and development of our state. A by-product of mining has been the development of the "rockhound" or mineral collector. Those interested in cutting and polishing can find fire agate, jasper, turquoise, amethyst and many other rocks and minerals.

The Tonto National Forest offers many accessible areas for rockhounding. Winter is the best season for this type of exploring because of the mild temperatures.

With many seasonal and perennial streams in the area, gold panning has become a favorite hobby of many casual prospectors. Much of national forestland has been claimed for mineral exploration. Be careful not to trespass on existing mining claims.

Generally, prospecting and rockhounding activities that are limited in nature and are not ground-disturbing do not require any paperwork.

However, more extensive prospecting activities that require the use of tools such as shovels and picks may require that a plan of operation be filed with the Forest Service. A permit would also be required. Check with the district in charge of the area where you would like to prospect to determine if a plan is required.



Tonto National Forest Ranger District Offices:

Cave Creek RD	480-595-3300
Globe RD	928-402-6200
Mesa RD	480-610-3300
Payson RD	928-474-7900
Pleasant Valley RD	928-462-4300
Tonto Basin RD	928-467-3200