

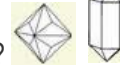


## Recreational Mineral Collecting



Limited collection<sup>1/</sup> of rocks and minerals for personal use is allowed on most National Forest System lands. These materials may be collected without a permit provided the collecting is for personal, hobby, and noncommercial use. For commercial<sup>2/</sup> or other uses of rock material, contact the local Forest Service Office.

What types of recreational rock and mineral collecting are allowed on the National Forests?



Collection of small amounts<sup>1/</sup> of widespread, low-value, relatively common minerals and stones (common quartz crystals, agate, obsidian) for noncommercial use.

Hobby mining activities; such as recreational gold panning or use of metal detectors<sup>3/</sup> to prospect for gold nuggets and other naturally occurring metals.

Are there any National Forest areas that are *closed* to recreational collecting?

Certain lands within the National Forest are not open to collecting due to wilderness designation or other sensitive areas. Contact the Forest Service for local information.

It is always a good idea to check with the Bureau of Land Management for specific locations to find out whether or not there are mining claims in the area.



Would I need a permit or other permission?

No permit or notification is required for collecting if the following applies:

Collecting of samples is on the surface (no digging with hand tools or mechanized equipment).

Collection is for personal use and esthetic values (cannot be sold or bartered).

For the following activities, please contact the Forest Service to discuss permitting or authorization:

Activity that *does* involve digging with hand tools or mechanized earth-moving equipment, including bobcats, suction dredges, 'high banking' or dry washing equipment.

Commercial activities including collecting mineral or fossil specimens for re-sale.

Removal of more than insignificant amounts<sup>1/</sup> of landscape rock.



However, the following items may *not* be collected or removed by casual collectors:

Vertebrate fossils (dinosaurs bones, fish, - anything with a backbone), and shark teeth.

Archeological resources including any material remains of prehistoric or historic human life or activities, which are at least 50 years old, and includes the physical site, location, or context in which they are found. (36 CFR 261.2)



The collection of **projectile points**, **pottery**, or any other archeological resource or artifact is not allowed (36 CFR 261.9 (h)) without a permit. Projectile points include 'arrowheads' and any prehistoric human-modified stone.

<sup>1/</sup> You may collect reasonable amounts of specimens. Generally, a reasonable amount is up to 10 pounds.

<sup>2/</sup> Commercial use is any trading, bartering, or selling of rocks and minerals from National Forest System Lands.

<sup>3/</sup> Searching for artifacts (man-made objects) with metal detectors is discouraged, as any ancient or historical artifacts found may not be removed from federal lands, such as old coins, metal implements, or utensils.





## Hobby Collecting of Fossils and Petrified Wood

Limited collection<sup>1/</sup> of common invertebrate or plant fossils such as shells, leaf imprints, corals, etc., for personal use is allowed on most National Forest System lands. These materials may be collected without a permit provided the collecting is for personal, hobby, and noncommercial use. For other uses of this material, contact the local Forest Service Office.



**Fossil (Paleontological) resource** means any evidence of fossilized remains of multicellular invertebrate and vertebrate animals and multicellular plants, including imprints thereof (36 CFR 261.2). There are four major types of fossils: **ichnofossil** (a.k.a. imprint or trace fossil), **plant**, **invertebrate**, and **vertebrate**.



**Ichnofossils (or trace fossils)** are typically sedimentary structures consisting of a fossilized track, trail, burrow, or tube resulting from the life activities and behavior of an animal, such as a mark made by an invertebrate creeping, feeding, hiding, or resting on or in soft sediment. Some non-sedimentary examples include tooth marks (resulting from predation), skin impressions, and coprolites (fossil dung).



**Fossil plants** are the fossilized remains of all parts of a plant. **Petrified wood** is a common term used for wood fossilized by silica, where the woody structure is visible. A free-use permit may be issued to amateur collectors and scientists to take limited quantities of petrified wood for personal use. A permit is required for commercial sales<sup>2/</sup> of petrified wood.



**Invertebrate fossils** are the fossilized remains of animals lacking a backbone. A few examples include: ammonites, trilobites, snails, clams, and insects. Invertebrate and plant fossils (including invertebrate and plant trace fossils) may be collected without a permit, from the surface without digging and for personal, hobby, educational, and noncommercial use only. A permit is required for research/scientific purposes.



**Vertebrate fossils** are the fossilized remains of any animal having a bony skeleton or backbone such as: fish (includes sharks and rays), amphibians, reptiles (including dinosaurs, mosasaurs, and turtles), birds, mammals, and all trace fossils from vertebrate animals, such as dinosaur tracks.

The collection and/or duplication of vertebrate fossils, including vertebrate trace fossils, from National Forest System Lands requires a permit (36 CFR 261.9 (i)). Permits are issued to qualified paleontologists and researchers who curate the fossils for scientific and educational purposes.

No permits for the collection of any fossils (plants, invertebrates, vertebrates, or any trace fossils) are issued for commercial purposes, except for petrified wood. Trading, bartering, or selling any fossil material (plants, invertebrates, vertebrates, or any trace fossils) removed from National Forest System lands is prohibited.

<sup>1/</sup>You may collect reasonable amounts of specimens. Generally, a reasonable amount is up to 10 pounds.

<sup>2/</sup>Commercial use is defined as any trading, bartering, or selling fossils or petrified wood from National Forest System lands.

