

## Things to Remember:

1. *Collection of reasonable amounts of rocks, minerals or common fossils is allowed for personal use only and is not to be sold or bartered for commercial purposes.*
2. *Collection is from surface only.*
3. *No undue or unnecessary degradation of the land is allowed during the removal of rocks, minerals or fossils.*
4. *Goldpanning is limited to the use of gold pans and restricted to active stream beds and unvegetated gravel bars.*
5. *Collection and removal cannot be aided with motorized equipment or sluice boxes.*
6. *Collecting from wilderness areas, caves and historical or archeological areas is not allowed.*
7. *Do not excavate, remove, disturb or deface historical or archeological resources.*
8. *Mark Twain National Forests lands are not contiguous, so be careful not to trespass on private lands.*
9. *Remove all litter.*
10. *When in doubt, contact the appropriate District Office.*
11. *Enjoy your visit !*



## District Offices

**Eleven Point Ranger District**  
1104 Walnut  
Doniphan, MO 63935  
(573) 996-2153

**Houston/Rolla/Cedar Creek  
Ranger District**  
108 S Sam Houston Blvd  
Houston, MO 65483  
(417) 967-4194

**Ava/Cassville/Willow Springs  
District Office**  
1103 S Jefferson  
Ava, MO 65608  
(417) 683-4428

**Poplar Bluff District Office**  
1420 Maud St  
Poplar Bluff, MO 63901  
(573) 785-1475

**Potosi/Fredericktown  
Ranger District**  
Highway 8 West  
Potosi, MO 63664  
(573) 4385427

**Salem District Office**  
1301 South Main  
Salem, MO 65560  
(573) 729-6656



## Mark Twain National Forest

## Recreational Mineral, Rock and Fossil Collecting



Mark Twain National Forest  
Supervisor's Office  
401 Fairgrounds Road  
Rolla, MO 65401

## Recreational Rock, Mineral and Fossil Collecting

### **What is recreational rock & mineral collecting?**

Recreational collecting is the occasional surficial removal of small (reasonable) amounts of samples (hand-size) of rocks or minerals for personal use only. Samples are not to be sold or bartered for commercial purposes.

### **What is recreational fossil collecting?**

Recreational fossil collecting is the surficial removal of reasonable amounts of common invertebrate and plant fossils for personal use, not to be sold or bartered. Collection of vertebrate, uncommon invertebrate and plant fossils requires a permit or other authorization from the Forest Service.

### **Where can I collect?**

Recreational collecting is allowed on Mark Twain lands, with the exception of the following: Wilderness areas, leased/permitted areas, caves, or where otherwise prohibited.. Mark Twain lands are fragmented, so be sure you are not on private land.

### **Can I use shovels and other equipment to dig for rocks, minerals or fossils?**

No, surface disturbance must be negligible. Tools would be limited to rock hammers or garden trowels. Metal detectors may be used with proper Forest Service authority.

### **Can I pan for gold?**

Recreational gold panning is allowed only in active stream channels or unvegetated gravel bars and is limited to the use of a gold pan. Digging in stream banks is not allowed. Sluice boxes are not allowed.

### **Am I likely to find gold in the streams?**

Probably not. The geology of Missouri is not favorable for gold deposits of this kind.

### **My rock club would like to collect some rocks for our personal collections. Do we need a permit?**

Generally, amateur rock clubs or school groups would not need a permit for recreational collecting. However, based on the number of people and the type of activity a permit or authorization may be required. For example, groups of 25 or less only engaged in hobby or academic collecting would not necessarily require a permit or authorization. However, you should contact the District Office when making plans.



### **What is a "reasonable amount"?**

An amount is considered reasonable if it can fit in your pocket or a large rock sample bag.

### **I saw some bricks near an old furnace. Can I collect a few?**

No! These are archeological or historical resources and may not be excavated, removed, disturbed or defaced.

### **Can I get some rocks for my fireplace, maybe about a truck load?**

This is not recreational collecting. You would need a contract for the removal of the stone and pay the appraised rate. You may also have to post a bond.

### **How do I know which areas are closed or if I would need a permit or other authorization.**

If in doubt, contact the appropriate District Office for information on authorization requirements or closed areas.



### **USDA Forest Service**

Mark Twain National Forest  
Supervisor's Office  
401 Fairgrounds Road  
Rolla, MO 65401  
Phone: 573-364-4621  
Website: [www.fs.usda.gov/mtnf](http://www.fs.usda.gov/mtnf)