



Crystal Collecting

Eldorado National Forest



Crystal collecting is allowed in National Forest Lands. In the Eldorado National Forest crystal collection is permitted as long as no significant resource damage is done by the collector. Before you go into the Forest to collect crystals there are a few things you need to know.

Size Counts

It is the amount of ground disturbance that you do that is the difference between responsible use of the Forest and citable resource damage. If you do cause significant resource damage you could be cited and fined under Federal Law.



On the Georgetown Ranger District limit your exploration hole size to about the equivalent of two 5-gallon buckets (2 cubic feet) . Fill in anything beyond this amount as you explore. When you finish for the day, fill in your holes. Leave the site in good shape for someone else to enjoy.

Use Only Hand Tools

Do not use mechanized equipment. Note: the type of equipment you use to dig for crystals, whether it is a buck knife, shovel, pickaxe, or rake, is not what determines whether you are creating resource damage. Some people can move a lot of dirt with a shovel.

There Is No “One Situation Fits All” Rule

Significant resource damage is site specific and is defined by the District Ranger. If you are uncertain if the holes you plan to dig will cause significant resource damage then file a Notice of Intent with the District Ranger. Your proposal will be reviewed within 15 days and you will be notified if further steps need to occur to prevent resource damage.

Respect Private Property

Please remember that not all land in the forest is public land. The Georgetown area has private land mixed in with national forest lands. Nothing in this brochure is intended to give you access to private lands or to authorize you in any way to collect crystals on private land. It is the your responsibility to know that the land where you intend to collect crystals is open to that kind of activity.

Mining Law

Exploration, prospecting, developing, and processing are all part of a reasonable mining operation. With these rights come responsibilities under Federal law. If you have questions about how the mining law relates to recreational crystal collecting contact the District Ranger.

Some Good Rules Of Thumb Are:

- ◆ Respect private property.
- ◆ Know if the area is open to crystal collecting.
- ◆ Turn in a **Notice of Intent** to the District Ranger if you aren't sure whether your activities will cause significant resource damage.
- ◆ Use only hand tools.
- ◆ Limit holes to ~ 2 cubic feet.
- ◆ Don't dig in road beds.
- ◆ Don't undercut trees.
- ◆ Fill in your holes.
- ◆ Leave No Trace of your activities.

RESPONSIBLE CRYSTAL COLLECTION

Crystal hunting has been a popular activity on the Eldorado National Forest for decades. Unfortunately, some collectors have caused significant resource damage to the land. The Forest Service has the regulatory responsibility of ensuring that no new resource damage occurs.

This brochure gives guidelines to help Forest users understand the difference between legal collection and illegal resource damage.



USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

Contact Information:

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