



# GSSN HIGHGRADER

Issues 4 Vol. GO-XXXIV MAY 2000

The Official Monthly Newsletter Publication of the Gold Searcher's of Southern Nevada, Inc. A not-for profit Nevada Corp.

## BIG OUTING GOLD FOUND

The "Big Willie Outing" on May 13 & 14 was the greatest ever. Seventy-nine people signed in at the camp and I'm sure there were more that forgot to sign in. Look for a full report soon on what you missed, along with pictures. There was a little girl that wanted to sing for us but somehow she was missed when the wind cut short our campfire circle. At the campfire we auctioned off

the campfire circle. Also thanks to Mort and Frank for the fine auctioneering job. Watch out Boo Cool! All costs for this outings food and prizes were generated by the sale of tickets for a nugget donated by Paul Vandenberg at last October's 1<sup>st</sup> big Outing. We will continue to grow and have outings that are memorable for years to come.

items donated by our members There is also a gold nugget that was donated and we will sell raffle tickets at the next meeting and give you the donors name as soon as I get it. This money will be used for the next BIGGER outing.

Thanks to John Hodan, Bill Grant, Hugh Nelson, Mort Lamonde, Walter Mahr, Brad Fine. Their donations brought in \$126.00 at



Working At A GSSN Claim

### GSSN OFFICERS & BOARD MEMBERS

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- DANIEL GREEN
- EXPLORATION & CLAIMS**
- GREG OLSON
- NEWSLETTER**
- GREG OLSON

### FROM OUR PRESIDENT

I want to thank everyone for their support and all the assistance I have received since I was elected President this year. This truly is a fantastic organization. I encourage each of you to take advantage of the many benefits of the Club. We have great claims, great people, and a bright future. Thanks for your support. We need each of you!

*Frank Mahoney*

### GOLD SEARCHERS OF SOUTHERN NEVADA CALENDAR OF EVENTS & MEETINGS

JUNE	7	GENERAL MEMBERS MEETING
MAY	10	EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING
JUNE	24	OUTING PAHRUMP CLAIM
JULY	5	GENERAL MEMBERS MEETING

**MEETING  
MINUTES**

**Due to a computer problem with the Secretary's computer, the minutes for the General Meeting and the Executive Board Meeting for May 2000 will be read at the June 7 meeting and printed in the June 2000 Highgrader.**



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Gold Nuggets & Claims Bought And Sold

7/2000

**TIPS FOR NUGGETSHOOTING**

**How to Increase Your  
Gold Finds**

by Chris Gholson (ICMJ)  
Part I

From a prospectors standpoint, the metal detector may be one of the most significant breakthroughs of the twentieth century. It is believed that the first metal detector was discovered accidentally in 1925 when a radio engineer in the United States noticed a metal water tank was causing interference with his field experiments.

These original detectors were nothing short of clumsy giants. They required large heavy batteries and often a wooden wheelbarrow to cart them around in. Even the BFO (beat frequency oscillator) type of the late 1960s was extremely limited in depth penetration and the amount of ground mineralization it could handle. Consequently, electronic prospecting (or nugget shooting) really didn't gain momentum until the invention of the lightweight VLF (very low frequency) detectors of the early 1970s.

Since then, metal detectors have come to play an important role in many different fields such as archeology, military mine detection, security, geology, and criminal investigation, as well as a wide variety of industrial uses. This article will focus on the use of the metal detector as a prospecting tool. The tips contained within can be applied across the board, regardless of which type of detector you happen to be using.

**Dry Placer Areas**

Among the best areas to search

for gold nuggets with a metal detector are those where placer gold has been recovered in the past.

There is a difference between hard rock and placer gold deposits. Hard rock mining is the process of working small veins from the Earth's crust. Veins which carry gold or a variety of other precious metals are referred to as lodes, and are commonly associated with quartz. Usually the particles of gold in these veins are microscopic or are chemically combined with other elements within the ore (i.e., sulfides).

These types of veins are not well suited when searching with a metal detector, since it requires that a metallic target have a large enough surface area to generate sizable eddy currents and establish a secondary field, thereby allowing detection. In other words, if the minute gold particles are scattered throughout the vein or are chemically altered in some way, they may not create a large enough disturbance to be picked up by the detector. Another problem could be the depth at which the vein is positioned. If it is buried beyond the capability of the detector you won't be able to find it.

Don't let me give you the impression that it is impossible to detect hard rock veins because this is not the case. Free-milling gold veins, especially the shallow epithermal type; can be found throughout the western United States. Over the years, epithermal deposits have been an important source of both hard rock and placer gold; the state of Nevada has been home to some classic examples.

Even though finding veins with a detector is a difficult business, prospectors with a keen eye do occasionally discover shallow gold quartz hard rock veins. My father came across a reef (or vein) not

*(Continued on page 3)*

**Mehring, Ray**

## TIPS FOR NUGGETSHOOTING

(Continued)

*(Continued from page 2)*

long ago in the tropical goldfield of the Northern Territory, Australia, and recovered 2.5 ounces of crystal-line gold from one hole. It is for the reasons listed above that recreational prospectors, and especially detectorists, are primarily interested in the location of nuggets (i.e., those pieces of gold too large to fit through a 10-mesh screen).

Placer gold can be loosely defined as free particles of gold (i.e., dust, flakes, nuggets, etc.) that have eroded away from the original lode, and have been deposited elsewhere by the forces of nature. By far the most powerful agent for moving gold is water. Pieces of eroded gold will be dispersed down a hillside by rain, snow melt, wind, etc., until they eventually find their way into a river or other water channel. The gold is swept up by the running water, redistributed and concentrated downstream. Because of its massive weight, gold has a tendency to become deposited in specific locations, which I will discuss later.

There is a considerable amount of alluvial gold to be found in the desert areas of Mexico and the western United States; primarily Arizona, New Mexico, Nevada, Utah, and southern California. While the geology varies from state to state, they all have one thing in common and 'climate. A vast majority of the gulches, gullies and washes that bisect the goldfields remain dry throughout much of the year. Monsoon flash flooding and wind erosion become the principle weathering processes and means for transporting gold in desert-type areas.

Short-lived torrential downpours and dust storms are nowhere near as powerful nor as efficient at classifying material as a constantly running

river; therefore, desert gold has a tendency to become scattered rather than concentrated. Lack of water prevents much of the gold from agitating down to bedrock. Consequently, nuggets will be found throughout the entire gravel strata. It is for this reason that the soil, rock, and other angular nibble found within desert (or dryplacer) gravels remains largely unsorted. Many times large nuggets (weighing several ounces) have been located only inches from the surface!

An important aspect of the dry-placer environment is that it greatly hampers gold recovery. Throughout the years, insufficient water prevented large-scale hydraulic mining, dredging and sluicing of rich desert gravels. Methods such as dry washing, winnowing, and dry panning had to be utilized instead. As most of you already know, water is the crucial ingredient needed for successful Id recovery. Without it, overall 90 efficiency of any operation can at best be described as "mediocre" The most productive areas have been worked to some degree by the old-timers without water and, as a result, they failed to recover much gold. Because of the lack of water, harsh climate, isolation, and insufficient recovery systems, a majority of these locations were abandoned and have remained largely unnoticed until recent times. With the advent of the modern metal detector, these dryplacer areas are once again yielding substantial quantities of nuggets. The metal detector is an effective tool for working desert regions. It is lightweight, relatively inexpensive, has the ability to find pieces smaller than 1 grain and is not dependent upon a water supply.

Dryplacer areas of the West are ideally suited for metal detecting.

Not only are the conditions (geological and environmental) present for large surface nuggets and shallow patches, but there are hundreds upon hundreds of acres of public lands available to prospect and claim. This provides the nugget shooter with a definite advantage, because it greatly broadens his or her search area. These vast regions of relatively unexplored back country may prove to harbor sizeable amounts of detectable gold. It's just a matter of getting out there and swinging the coil! However, you should be aware that there are certain areas which are closed to entry, such as military land, Indian reservations, state monuments, national parks, private land, wilderness areas, and wildlife refuges.

Gold deposits have been found in every one of the western states. Tracking down these locations is not all that difficult as long as you are willing to do a little research. There have been many "Where to Find Gold" books written on this subject and, believe it or not, they can sometimes lead you right to the nuggets. Other sources can be found at public and university libraries. You can obtain geological reports from your local office of the United States Geological Survey. They offer specific information about the minerals discovered in various states and counties. Due to their popularity, many of them have been reprinted and can be purchased from prospecting shops. Topographical maps, which are also put out by the USGS, can be useful in locating small prospects, mine-shafts, tailings, etc.

Another powerful new tool is the Internet, which has rapidly become one of the most influential mediums for the exchange of knowledge among global prospectors. There are entire web sites and forums dedicated to helping

*(Continued on page 11)*

**HIGHGRADER**

# Nevada leads U.S. in gold production

Donrey Capital Bureau

CARSON CITY -- Nevada again led the nation in gold production in 1999, generating 8.26 million ounces to equal three-quarters of the nation's total production of the precious metal, the Division of Minerals has reported.

The production numbers, released earlier this month, did not exceed the record of 8.86 million ounces produced in 1998, but remained high despite steadily declining gold prices, the agency reported.

According to the Gold Institute, the average gold price in 1999 was \$279 per troy ounce compared to \$294 in 1998, \$331 in 1997 and \$388 in 1996. The calculated value of 1999's gold production is \$2.3 billion.

"The lower gold prices have forced many producers to tighten their budgets; however, Nevada has some of the best gold mines in the world," said Alan Coyner, administrator of the Division of Minerals. "Despite the lower gold prices, mining is expected to remain an extremely impor-

tant industry in the state."

Silver production in Nevada in 1999 was 19.4 million ounces. At an average price of \$5.22 per ounce during the year, the calculated value of the silver produced is \$101 million.

It was the first time in seven years that silver production did not exceed 20 million ounces. Silver production in 1998 was 21.5 million ounces.

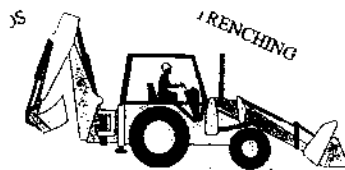
The total value of all mined commodities in 1999 in Nevada reached \$2.7 billion.

Friday, May 12, 2000  
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# MEETING

## GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING

OUR MONTHLY MEMBERSHIP MEETING IS HELD AT NEVADA PALACE HOTEL & CASINO 2ND FLOOR LOCATED AT 5255 S. BOULDER HIGHWAY, LAS VEGAS, NV ON THE FIRST WEDNESDAY OF EACH MONTH AT 6:30 PM - 8:00 PM ALL GUEST AND PROSPECTORS ARE WELCOMED. THE MAP TO THIS LOCATION IS LOCATED IN THE REAR OF THIS PUBLICATION.

## GSSN BOARD MEETING

GSSN BOARD MEETINGS ARE HELD THE SECOND WEDNESDAY OF EACH MONTH AT THE VALLEY VISTA MOBILE HOME PARK RE BUILDING ON CABANA DRIVE. MEETINGS BEGIN AT 7:00 PM ALL MEMBERS ARE WELCOME. TAKE DESERT INN TO CABANA AND TURN LEFT GO 1/4 MILE AND TURN LEFT INTO VALLEY VISTA MOBILE HOME PARK. REC BLDG. IS ON LEFT JUST INSIDE GATE.

## CLAIM'S COMMITTEE MEETING

CLAIM'S COMMITTEE MEETINGS ARE HELD THE SECOND WEDNESDAY OF EACH MONTH AT THE VALLEY VISTA MOBILE HOME PARK. THE MEETINGS ARE AT 8:00 PM. THIS MEETING IS THE SAME LOCATION AS THE BOARD MEETING AND ON THE SAME NIGHT.

**THE CLUB'S PHONE NUMBER : 393-GOLD (-4653)**

**PLEASE CALL TO GET HELP ON ANY MATTER.**

**THIS IS YOUR CLUB. PLEASE WRITE THE CLUB WITH ANY COMPLAINTS OR RECOMMENDATIONS**



## HAVE YOU SENT YOUR MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL

### HAVE WE RECEIVED YOUR RENEWAL?

We have not received renewals from the following members. If your name is on this list, please complete the application on the back of this newsletter and send it to the Club with your renewal check payable to Gold Searchers of Southern Nevada in the amount of \$20.00.

#### CURRENT JUNE 2000

Spratley, David  
 McWeeney, Theresa  
 Selman, Phillip & Jeanne  
 Ayers, Rich & Jennifer  
 Coffman, Mark & Nita  
 Powell, William & Kelly  
 Suggs, Charles  
 Tyson, Arthur & Judy  
 Powers, William  
 Blyth, Jim  
 Vandevot, Dave  
 Hall, Ed & Linda  
 Campbell, Wayne G.  
 Gervick, Richard  
 Pinch, Charles  
 Wilson, Sherri  
 Hahn, Larry & Christina  
 Wagner, Reid & Elaine  
 Allen, John & Brenda  
 Atwell, Larry & Eva  
 O'Connell, Rick  
 Wargacki, David  
 Strickler, Terry & Jan  
 Kendrick, Jack  
 Janeczko, Ron  
 Hagen, Jerome

#### ONE MONTH MAY 2000

Parker, Denise & Cary  
 Downes, Tom & Deborah  
 Wilson, Bill & Jay  
 Huffman, Rodney & Star  
 Abrams, Howard  
 Auserwald, Frank & Judi  
 Cherry, Kevin & Annette  
 Mahoney, Chris & Georgine  
 Warren, Robert & Sally  
 Baker, Bruce H.

#### TWO MONTHS APRIL 2000

Ess, Ken & Barb  
 Garza, Sigifredo  
 Woodward, Todd  
 Hull, Robert  
 Melton, Robert  
 Mullens, Michael  
 McCachren, Ron & Elizabeth  
 Klier, Gene & Mary  
 Bradbury, Harold  
 Denton, Ada  
 Blair, Michael  
 Davis, Brian & Gwen  
 Pooler, Bruce & Sam  
 Headman, Deloris  
 Burke, Rudy & Kerrie  
 Bradley, Harold & Debra  
 Abromowitz, Tony & Kristie

Haws, Jack & Dee  
 Gedrites, Rick

#### THREE MONTHS MARCH 2000

Bond, Jack & Maria  
 Verdi, Carlo & Antionette  
 Longshore, Robert & Mona  
 Lavryk, Joseph  
 Della Gagna, Domenick  
 Manning, Bill

Caldaro, Benedict  
 Banegas, Alex & Kathy

#### LAST CALL

FEBRUARY 2000  
 Howard, Tom  
 Osborne, Leonard

If you know any of these members, please encourage them to send in their renewal as soon as possible.

Call Greg Olson, Membership Committee with questions related to dues.

Thank You!

Please send in your renewal as soon as possible so you don't miss out on any of the Club's exciting events.

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## A PROSPECTOR'S PHILOSOPHY

By Dan Green

There are only two things to worry about.

Either you are well or you are sick. If you are well, then there is nothing to worry about.

But if you are sick, there are two things to worry about.

Either you will get well or you will die.

If you get well, there is nothing to worry about. If you die, there are only two things to worry about. If you go to heaven there is nothing to worry about.

But if you go to hell, you'll be so busy shaking hands with friends that you won't have any time to worry!

Don't worry...

Keep Digging!!!

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**GOLD  
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*What is the Gold Searchers  
of Southern Nevada?*

It is a local, non profit, Las Vegas Club comprised of members from all walks of humanity. Be it young "Greenhorns" or "Seasoned Prospectors." Some members are experts in such fields as Geology, Mineralogy, and even Mine Engineering. Some are Couchpotatologists. But most of all, members have a common love of their freedom to explore the "Great Outdoors."

*GOLD FEVER* spurs a lot of us to get out and extract enjoyment out of our mother earth, and learn more about her hidden wealth. There's a wealth of knowledge to be obtained, and friendships to be made. Lest we forget, the wealth of excitement in finding that beautiful, yellowish metal called **GOLD!**

Though finding **GOLD** is not our sole priority (we do public service for the mining industry, such as teaching scouts, and public school

**(702) 393-GOLD**

students how to pan gold), it is, however a lot of what we are about.

We are a fun-loving bunch that welcomes new members, and we gather together on the first Wednesday of each month at 6:45 PM, at NEVADA PALACE HOTEL AND CASINO, 5255 S. Boulder Highway, Las Vegas We voice our

opinions as one on such matters as land use, and mining laws. Also, to help others who have become aware of our recreation or livelihood. We teach how to use mineral rights without abusing them, and work to protect our rights to continue in our prospecting interests. The majority of our members own a Metal Detector. Our Club plans field trips where such an instrument could help unearth that precious metal. Others in our Club put more trust into known gold extracting equipment, such as Dry Washers or Recirculating Sluices. Some of their equipment is handmade, and some of it is store bought. Being in a local Club, such as ours, can help you to see and use a variety of mining equipment first hand in a location known to produce **GOLD.**

Our Club is open for your

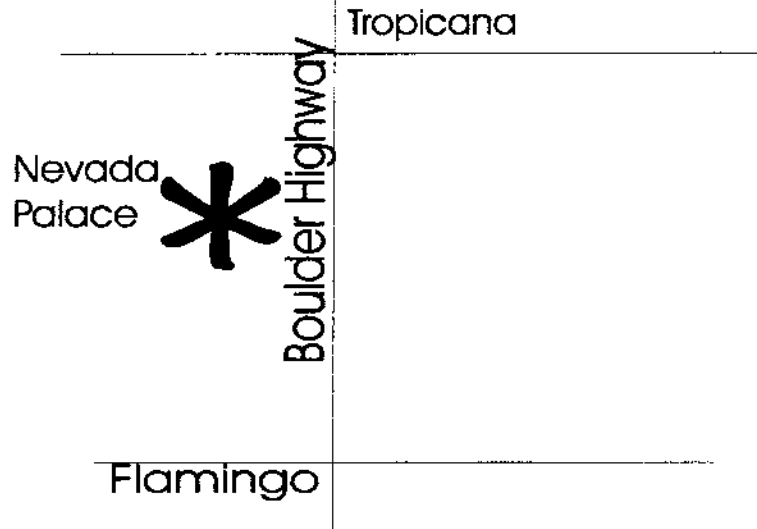
*Denton, Ada*

inspection. You may attend **TWO GENERAL MEETINGS** and/or go one **FIELD TRIP** with the **GOLD SEARCHERS OF SOUTHERN NEVADA** free of charge. After that, simply join the Club for a mere membership fee of \$35.00 for the first year and \$20.00 each year thereafter. This is a "**FAMILY MEMBERSHIP**" which includes all your immediate family. Once you join, you receive the Club's monthly newsletter, **THE HIGHGRADER.** The **HIGHGRADER** contains news from the general and board meetings, upcoming field trip information, articles relating to prospecting, and you may even submit your own articles or place an ad in the Free Classified section for publication. We would love to have you join our Club! A membership application is in this issue for your convenience. Simply complete and enclose your check for \$35.00 then either bring it to our next meeting or mail to us at:

**GSSN  
PO Box 96732  
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Meetings held 1st Wed. of each month  
at 6:45 pm at Nevada Palace Hotel 2nd Floor  
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(Cut Here And Return Bottom With Check)

**APPLICATION TO:**  
**GOLD SEARCHERS OF SOUTHERN NEVADA, INC.**

(Important Notice - Please Read Carefully)

Due to the nature of gold prospecting and/or recreational mining activities, you and/or your family are hereby forewarned that it can be dangerous and hazardous. These activities are most often outdoors and often in remote areas. You and your family are responsible for your own safety, Gold Searchers of Southern Nevada, Inc. is not and shall not be held responsible for any and all damages and/or injuries that might occur during any Club activities or events.

Dues are \$35.00 for the first year (single or family), renewable at \$20.00 annually on the month joined. Club name badges or Club hats are \$5.00 each. Make checks payable to "GOLD SEARCHERS."

Bring to meeting or mail to:

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Name \_\_\_\_\_ Spouse \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

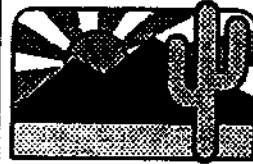
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# HOT MEMBER ADVERTISING

This is the new advertising section established for our members who offer products and services. Shop these ads each month and please support our members. If you are interested in advertising your product or service on this page contact **Greg Olson at** Ads are only \$20 for six months. Ads may be customized for you. All ad sizes are approximate and will be resized by the editor to fit the page. Exact sizes or ad placement within the publication are not represented or guaranteed. All advertising may be cancelled at any time by the Club and the Club reserves the right to not accept any advertising.



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# Things To Do On The *www.goldsearchers.com* Internet Web Site

There are plenty of things to look at and do at the new  
[www.goldsearchers.com](http://www.goldsearchers.com) web site.

- \* **View Club Library List**
- \* **Order Club Claim Maps**
- \* **Submit Ad For Highgrader**
- \* **View Club Claim Updates**
- \* **Visit McCaw School of Mines Self Guided Tour**
- \* **Request Newsletter & Membership Information**
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- \* **Visit On-Line GSSN**
- \* **Member Discussion Groups**
- \* **View Outing Photos**

**This site is designed, developed and scripted by Greg Olson. Please visit the site often as he updates the information daily.**

## Surfing For Gold

The Gold Searcher's are on the internet. Please visit us at:

[www.goldsearchers.com](http://www.goldsearchers.com)

This is the official web site for the Gold Searcher's of Southern Nevada. We are looking for people to help create content for the web. If you have any information or ideas and would like to participate on the web project please call Greg Olson at 313-2600.

**WANTED**

If you have computer programming experience related to the Internet including Java script knowledge, then

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## Nugget Shooting (Continued)

*(Continued from page 3)*

the small miner locate precious metal deposits. Joining a prospecting club is also a good way to gain access to proven gold bearing property and meet new friends.

Probably the most simple and inexpensive source of information is other prospectors. Not all prospectors are secretive-some are willing to share their knowledge if you are friendly and willing to listen. Talk with them and find out where they are hunting. Maybe if you get to know them, they will not mind if you do a little detecting in their areas

Whether you're prospecting the dry washes of the rugged Sonora Desert, or an alluvial fan in northern Nevada, one thing should be kept in mind-check to see if the area has at least some record of placer production. Some districts have been very rich in lode gold, but have only given up minimal amounts of nuggets. As mentioned before, check old bulletins, prospecting books, maps, surf the web and talk with other hunters. Your chances of finding gold greatly increases if you search within the vicinity of known nugget bearing areas.

Where to Start After you have done some research and have chosen a gold bearing area to visit, you must decide where to begin searching with your metal detector. Whenever exploring a new goldfield, I strongly recommend that you always start off hunting in the gulches, gullies and washes. The reasoning behind this statement is simple. Our location has produced placer gold in the past, therefore it must have (at least at one time) contained numerous gold bearing veins. Over time, this auriferous material has been slowly eroding down the

steep hillsides in an attempt to reach equilibrium with nature. These gulches, gullies, and washes represent the point of lowest energy (excluding the center of the earth), consequently the alluvium (rocks, boulders, soil, etc.) and gold collects in seasonal water channels. We must keep in mind that the original landscape has been altered due to natural weathering processes which have been occurring for many, many years. Entire hillsides have eroded, waterways have changed course, and boulders have been tumbled. Therefore, if there is any gold in the area, there is a high probability that pieces will have made their way into one of these washes.

Before going any further it is important to mention that desert waterways vary considerably, both in appearance and size. According to Straight, "Gulches are narrow, steep, V shaped depressions, often full of brush and difficult to work. Gullies are a wider, less steep version of a gulch. A wash is a larger 'U' shaped depressions. If large (wide, deep) enough, it is called a canyon. Both gulches and gullies feed into washes." Throughout this article you will notice that I use the term wash" to describe any dry watercourse found within an and region, regardless of its size or appearance. This may not be the best use of terminology, but I will use the term for simplicity.

Another benefit of wash hunting is that it allows you to mentally limit your search area. A wash may be anywhere from five to thirty feet wide, whereas a hillside is much larger. Trying to cover the vast area of a hillside can seem overwhelming and may leave you feeling frustrated. They are just too big and time consuming. So unless you know of a particular hill that is a

*(Continued on page 12)*

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My home phone number is 70.

We hope to see you at an outing soon.

Dan Boone

## Nugget Shooting (Continued)

*(Continued from page 11)*

carrier, I would suggest sticking to the washes.

One of gold's amazing natural properties is its high specific gravity. Gold is extremely dense and heavy compared to most other elements found in the environment. Gold is 19,000 times denser than air, 19 times denser than water, more than 3 times denser than quartz, and twice as dense as lead.

Because running water is scarce, desert gold will not concentrate in the same manner as the alluvial or "stream placers" of the California Mother Lode. However, because of gold's density we are still able to make specific predictions about where it is most likely to accumulate. Once a nugget is removed from the original lode and finds its way into a wash, it will eventually be acted upon by the movement of water. If the water velocity is high (i.e. during a flash flood) the nugget may be swept downstream for a considerable distance until it reaches an area where the water pressure slackens and it can come to rest. If the water velocity is slow, the nugget may only travel a very short distance before dropping out.

Remember, gold is dense. It doesn't want to move and it will take the shortest path possible between any two given points. Gold can be found virtually anywhere in a wash, however it does have a tendency to hug the inside bends. This occurs as a result of the difference in water pressure created whenever flowing water is forced to change direction. The centrifugal force causes a much greater flow of energy towards the outside bend, which creates a lesser force towards the inside. Whenever you are prospecting a wash you should always thoroughly detect the inside bends, especially those with exposed bed-

rock.

Another situation in which you are likely to encounter deposits of nuggets are areas where a narrow wash suddenly widens. A wide wash is able to handle a much larger volume of water, therefore the water flow will slow down. This becomes particularly important during periods of high water. As we already discussed, heavy elements (such as gold) will drop out wherever the water flow slackens. Unfortunately, so will gravel, rock and other overburden. This accumulation of material creates additional depth and you will have to compensate accordingly in order to maximize your chances of hearing a faint target. Pay extra special attention to overlapping and slow down your coil sweep speed. Those sections of a wash which have abrupt changes in width could contain possible pay streaks.

Gold nuggets can be trapped by obstructions and various changes in the bedrock. Things like large boulders and tree roots are quite capable of stopping gold in its journey downstream. If a boulder is lying directly in its path, the gold will have no choice but to either wedge underneath it, or go around it. The protruding boulder causes the water to flow much slower behind it. Any gold that makes it around the boulder may become concentrated on its downside because there is insufficient force to keep it moving. Whenever you encounter one of these boulders it is always a good idea to sweep your search coil around its base. If it is not too large, you may want to roll it out of the way and detect the virgin ground underneath.

Tree roots and clumps of shrubs can also act as natural nugget traps. Occasionally pieces of gold will become entangled in these roots and will remain there for many years until eventually the plants dies and

is washed downstream. Interestingly, I have a friend who uncovered a shiny 8 dwt. nugget simply by gathering dirt from uprooted trees situated on the banks of Lynx Creek, Arizona. So, next time you get a Signal from those tree roots, be sure to investigate it, just don't damage the tree in the process. Bedrock (also referred to as country rock) is the outermost layer of the earth's crust. A nugget can't get below the bedrock but can get lodged in the cracks. This is very important for the detectors because many times the washes found in dry region placers have bedrock that is shallow or even exposed. Since all metal detectors have a limited depth ability) it is beneficial to hunt areas that are close to bedrock because the nuggets will be within detectable range.

The morphology of the bedrock will most certainly change depending upon the composition and geological conditions that are prevalent in the area you are searching (granite, schist, slate, etc.). The appearance will also vary from place to place (i.e. color, texture, etc.). I generally classify bedrock as being of two types: rough or smooth.

Rough bedrock is sometimes called "nature's perfect sluice box," and it is highly regarded among electronic prospectors because of its excellent nugget trapping ability.

Jagged decomposed outcrops full of deep cracks and crevices make it virtually impossible for the gold to escape. If a nugget wedges itself within one of these cracks it will remain there until the bedrock breaks down or a lucky hunter comes along and removes it. Whenever you encounter areas such as this, slow down and focus your efforts on the cracks. If you receive a signal in a crack, first remove the gravel, sand and rocks with your

*(Continued on page 13)*

## Nugget Shooting (Continued)

*(Continued from page 12)*

pick or hand. Then close your eyes and gently blow into the crack. This will clear away any excess material and hope fully expose the nugget. If you still don't see the nugget, use a flathead screwdriver to scrape any other material and blow it out again.

You might also consider fitting your pick with a strong magnet. As you're digging, periodically rub it into the crack. If the target is a piece of ferrous trash it will quickly be removed, saving you from, unnecessary work. Fortunately, if you are digging up the bedrock and the signal persists, your chances of it being gold greatly increases.

You may also notice concentrations of black sand (magnetite and hematite) in these cracks. Black sands are heavier than ordinary sand and settle in much the same way as gold. The presence of black sand in a crack is a good indicator of gold, but just like everything else it is not a definite guarantee.

Smooth bedrock will have a slick, polished look, almost as if someone has taken an electric sander to it (and in a sense this is what has actually happened). Smooth bedrock started out as being rough, but because of the sheer amount of water, sand, rocks and boulders that have scoured its surface, it has lost the original texture. Usually smooth bedrock will be found in the lower ends of a wash or at the edges of drop-offs; like waterfalls. Most of the time the nuggets will hit these areas and just slide right on by, although this is not always the case.

I remember one occasion when I received a signal from a very smooth section of bedrock. There didn't appear to be any sign of a crack, but I decided to dig anyway. After 20 minutes of prying and chipping I discovered a flat 38 grain nugget. It seems that at one time a

crack had existed which originally trapped the nugget, but over time the crack had pinched shut and was smoothed over, vanishing without a trace. This is somewhat of an exception, as most of my gold has come out of the rough bedrock. If time is of the essence, your best bet is to bypass the smooth stuff and concentrate on the rough sections.

The final thing I would like to briefly mention is thick brush. Because water tends to collect and pool in desert washes, it is not surprising that they are often full of vegetation. I do not particularly enjoy hunting in the brush, and I am assuming that neither does anyone else. Your arms get scratched up, your clothes get snagged, it is very difficult to swing the coil, and it's likely to contain rattlesnakes or other desert critters. So normally when a person reaches a brushy spot, they walk around it and commence detecting in a more open area- This is exactly why I will hunt the brush. These places are tough to detect, so chances are they are virgin, and there is no telling what they might be hiding. I found this out the hard way when a friend

picked up a quarter ounce nugget behind me in a thicket of brush. It was a tough lesson to learn, but it has paid off greatly since then. Try working the brush sometime-I think you will be surprised at what you find.

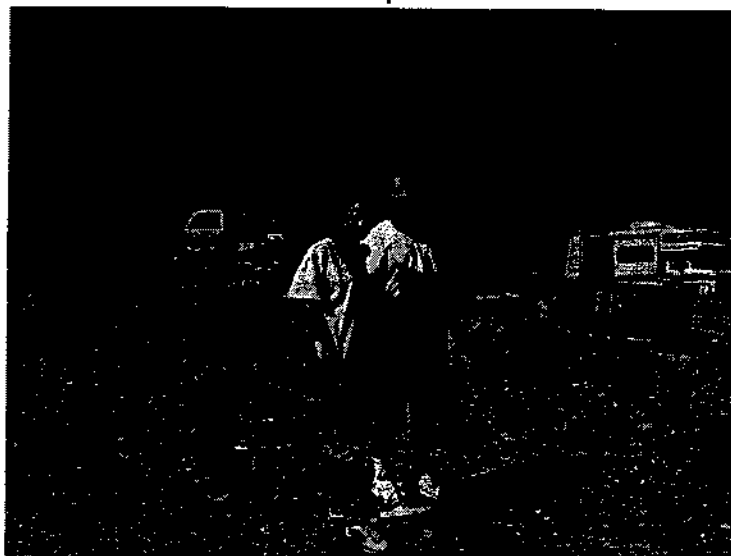
If you are interested in learning more about detecting for hard rock gold or dry washing, I would strongly suggest reading some of the books written by my friend Jim Straight. Jim has accumulated a wealth of knowledge about prospecting and his books have proven themselves to be an invaluable source of information

*Editor's Note: Next issue, we will discuss detecting around old dry washer workings.*

### References

McCracken, Dave., 1993, *Gold Mining in the 1990's*. Keene Industries, California.

Straight, Jim., 1996, *Advanced Prospecting & Detecting for Hard rock Gold*. Jim Straight, Rialto California.



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