

# CENTRAL OREGON ROCK COLLECTORS



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## Ultimate Guide to Mexican Crazy Lace Agate

by Jeremy Hall.      Part of the “Rock Seeker”  
articles sent by Bruce VanderZanden  
Part 2

### How Did Mexican Agate Form?

These agates are thought to be between 65 and 95 million years old. They're found in various limestone formations in Northern Mexico.

Agate formation isn't 100% understood, but the general idea is that hot water seeps into empty pockets in the limestone bedrock. The hot water carries large amounts of silica, which deposit as the water slowly evaporates. It's often thought that the water which forms them is closer to a gel due to the heat and pressure involved in their formation.

As time goes on, the agates will form in bands. We're still not quite sure if they form from the outside in or the inside out. Both theories have valid points, and the truth is that both could be true and it depends on the region in which they form.

Another theory holds that the silica forms a colloidal solution within the cavity and the separate layers are caused by differing particle sizes as the material cools over millions of years.

The various colors come from metallic ions that are present underground. For instance, red often comes from the same form of iron oxide which we generally



call rust. Different concentrations lead to different shades and different metals lead to different colors.

Agate formation is still being studied, but the above should give you a general idea of how they form.

## **What is Mexican Lace Agate Worth?**

Agates, while gorgeous, generally are only worth a few dollars per pound. Some reach a bit higher, but few actually reach true “gem” prices when rough.

Rough Mexican Agate is generally a bit more expensive than other varieties, but it doesn't compete with materials like Ellensburg Blue or



some of the mined-out varieties of stone found in other locations.

In general, it seems to run from \$8-\$15 per pound depending on the seller and the quality of the material. Slabs will generally run about the same as the per pound price (ie: \$8-15 per slab) but can reach higher prices when they're exceptional material.

Agate cabochons are essentially worth whatever someone will pay for them. It varies widely between different sellers, with US-based lapidaries generally being more expensive. Exceptional patterns can fetch large amounts per cabochon.

## **Where is Mexican Crazy Lace Agate Found?**

Mexican Crazy Lace Agate is found in quite a few locations scattered across the Mexican state of Chihuahua. For the most part, it's found in mountainous regions within the state, such as Sierra Santa Lucia.

For the most part, these stones are found in municipalities about halfway across the state, generally due south of Ciudad Juarez.

If you're interested in rockhounding in the area, it's best to find someone local to guide you. Mexico appears to be generally lenient when it comes to rockhounding, and some people have been known to take a car trip down there to collect, but you'll want to make sure you're aware of any local



regulations that you may run afoul of.

It will also help to brush up on your Spanish before heading out, for obvious reasons.

## Tips for Working With Mexican Agate

The main reason behind the popularity of Mexican Agate is it's workability. All true agates work slowly. Patience, and a lot of coolant, are pretty much a requirement of working with them. Apart from the occasional internal fracture, these agates tend to be very solid and there aren't any real caveats to working with them.



My preferred grinding and polishing regimen with agates starts at 220 grit and works progressively to 1500 or 2000 before using cerium oxide paste for the final polish. This generally gives a mirror shine to good material, but if the silica isn't quite up to par you may want to go up to 14000 or 50000 grit diamond paste.

This is a rather slow method, and you can start at 80 grit with this material if you prefer to be a bit more aggressive. I simply find that working it slowly allows for

more time to ensure you've got the pattern you want and avoid grinding away details you'd prefer to keep.

The real key to getting attractive cabs out of this material begins with slabbing, however.

Selecting rough can be tricky. The internals of these agates are rather complex, with banding, orbs, and even plumes depending on the piece. It can be almost impossible to figure out what's on the inside before you cut. The material is often sold "faced", meaning that a slice has been cut off to give a clue as to the actual contents of the stone.

Any material with obvious fractures should be avoided, especially if you're planning on making larger cabochons out of the material. Internal fractures do occur. But generally, cracked stones will have an outward sign.

Botryoidal portions of the stone often, but not always, point to the familiar orbicular or "bull's eye" patterns. These can also be found inside some nodules, just because there isn't a botryoidal side doesn't mean the internal will only consist of fortifications.

Most people will want to cut against the grain of the stone. This shows off the internal "waves" or fortifications more readily. Don't be afraid to experiment, however, as the material can show surprising patterns when cut in different directions.

Mexican Agate is also a good carving material if you lean that way. Just make sure to keep the material wet, since getting it too hot will cause fractures in the stone. It's suitable for both relief carvings and for more complex, three-dimensional carvings due to the hardness of the material.

Also, as with any agate, make sure you're wearing at least an N95 mask when working with it. The ultra-fine silica particles thrown off when working with the material will cause cumulative damage and, eventually, silicosis if proper precautions aren't taken.



## Safety Reminder

Please remember there has been flooding in recent areas which also means mud. Also in some of the rock hounding areas there is still snow. It may be warm here but up in the rock hounding areas it is often much colder. In past years, there was still snow at Hampton in March. People have gotten stuck, search and rescue has had to pull them out. Also in most of the rock hounding areas there is no cell service.

**Please be safe!**

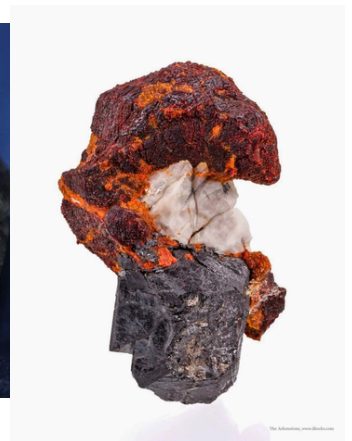
Always let someone know where you're going  
and take someone with you.

## STATE BY STATE ROCKS, GEMS, MINERALS

New Jersey



State Mineral: Franklinite



Franklinite is a black, opaque, zinc-iron-manganese oxide mineral that's found in Franklin, New Jersey. It's mined as an ore for zinc and manganese. Franklinite is the official state mineral for New Jersey. The neighboring boroughs of Franklin and Ogdensburg in Sussex County comprise the Franklin mining district and are home to two of the world's most famous zinc mines, the Franklin Mine and the Sterling Hill Mine. These two former mines contained the largest concentration of franklinite in the world where it is found in the zinc ore body of the Franklin Marble. Today, both mines are used as educational facilities and offer tours, exhibits and gift shops.

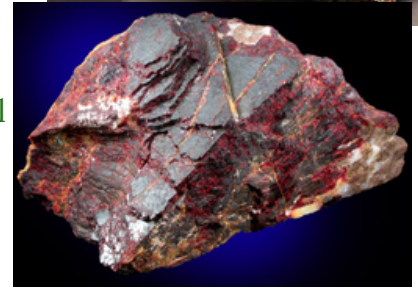
Franklinite is found with a wide array of minerals, many of which are fluorescent including willemite and calcite, and may also occur with orange zincite. Twentysix countries and seven states in the US have reported a minor occurrence of franklinite. However, none of which compared to the quantity as found in the Franklin mining district of New Jersey.

Franklinite, a metamorphic mineral, has a striking black color. Specimens of franklinite showing both iridescence and opacity are common and have a metallic to dull luster. Franklinite is paramagnetic, meaning that it is weakly magnetic. At one time franklinite was used to produce many different products. Large crystals of previous mining eras are no longer found. Today, franklinite has a worldwide reputation and is a mineral much sought-after by collectors.

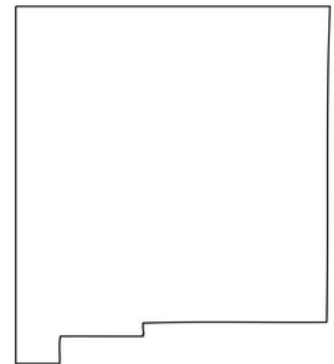
One of the earliest uses of franklinite was as an ingredient in brown paint (Jackson, 1850). Brown paint made from franklinite was even used in the House and Senate wings of the United States Capitol in Washington, D.C. during construction in the 1850s.

The main use of franklinite would be as an additive in iron and steel making. Strong, durable iron made with manganese-bearing franklinite was used in many products including steamboat shafts, railroad cars, axles for train engines, and horseshoes.

Franklinite was also notably used to strengthen safes. Herring & Company, a major safe manufacturing company in the US during the mid 1800's, began manufacturing its safes with franklinite.



## New Mexico



### State Gemstone: Turquoise

Turquoise occurs in spots where acidic water comes into contact with copper, forming veins or nuggets of stone. This solidified hydrated copper aluminum phosphate has been found in Russia, China, and Iran as well as across the Southwest United States in Arizona, Colorado, Nevada, southern California, and New Mexico. (It takes its name from the French turquoise or "Turkish stone," though there is little of the mineral found in that country today.)

The resulting turquoise ranges in color from chalky white to uniform, robin's-egg blue (common at Arizona's Sleeping Beauty mine) to spider-webbed blue green (found at New Mexico's Los Cerrillos mine). The stone is ranked



between a 5 and 6 on the Gemstone Institute of America's (GIA) Mohs hardness scale, meaning turquoise can be easily carved but isn't as hard as, say, a diamond (a Mohs 10).



As early as the sixth century A.D., the Ancient Puebloan people of what's now the Southwest U.S. mined the mineral, extracting turquoise with simple tools and carving it into beads, pendants, and nose plugs. Since 1896, archaeologists have discovered more than 200,000 pieces of such turquoise at northern New Mexico's Chaco Canyon, including beads and small sculptures from the mysterious "Room 33," a tiny, treasure-laden tomb for 12 a dozen people tucked into one of the stone pueblos. Researchers have used isotope tracing to prove that some of those ancient Chaco stones came out of the earth at

Los Cerrillos, a tiny, picturesque mining village located about halfway between Albuquerque and Santa Fe on what's now known as the Turquoise Trail. "But it's more of a contemporary scenic byway that recognizes an ancient north to south trade route," says Swentzell. "You won't necessarily find much turquoise anymore."

Today, much of the turquoise in New Mexico—including the majority of deposits in Los Cerrillos—has been mined out. Some operations closed in the early 20th century when the gems were depleted, others simply converted to more profitable copper mining.

There are 23 Indigenous tribes in New Mexico, including members of 19 pueblos, three Apache tribes, and the Navajo Nation. Their artisans have been using turquoise in jewelry and objects for hundreds of years. Applications were myriad: Kewas carved the stone into disc-like heishi beads, Zunis inlaid it into shells. Adornments and objects were created to wear on feast days, use in ceremonies, or to trade with others.

Spanish colonists brought silversmithing to the Southwest in the 16th century. This meant Indigenous people merged new methods and materials with traditional ones. The results were dazzling: vine-like, sand cast silver Navajo bracelets set with blue nuggets, Zuni turquoise mosaics on silver earrings.



### **References:**

[statesymbolsusa.org](http://statesymbolsusa.org) [sos.nm.gov](http://sos.nm.gov)  
[dep.nj.gov](http://dep.nj.gov) [nationalgeographic.com](http://nationalgeographic.com)  
[google.com](http://google.com)

Did you see that we have a new logo!



Thanks James!! We appreciate you taking the time to do this for us. We can now get shirts, stickers and business cards.

You can order your shirt at:

<https://www.customink.com/g/bbv0-00cx-vv7u#>

Thanks to Roger Whiteman for the original logo that has lasted us for so many years.



**Remember: Field Trip April 12th**

**Beers Mtn and China Hollow**

Meet at Madras Safeway by 6am. Limited space!!!

This is a fee dig, cash or check. Up to \$5/lb. Must have high clearance vehical. Contact the club if you are interested in going.



**Volunteers Needed**



The Pow Wow in Prineville beginning June 17<sup>th</sup>.

Some are needed for set up, and we are also looking for those that can help during the show.

If you are interested email us at [corc.rocks@gmail.com](mailto:corc.rocks@gmail.com)

**NEXT CLUB MEETING:**

**April 16**

**Doors open at 5:30  
meeting starts at 6**

Meetings are held at: 3800 SE Airport Way, Bldg 3, Redmond, OR 97756

# Upcoming Events

Rock shows you may want to visit

**April 2025**

**26-27—GRANTS PASS, OREGON:** Annual show; Rogue Gem & Geology Club, Inc; Josephine County Fairgrounds Pavilion Building, 1451 Fairgrounds Rd;

**May 2025**

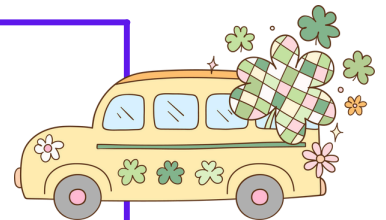
**3-4—ROSEBURG, OREGON:** Annual show; Umpqua Gem & Mineral Club; Douglas County Fairgrounds, 2110 Frear Ave; Sat. 9-5, Sun. 10-4;

**24-25—LAKEVIEW, OREGON:** Annual show; Tall Man Rock Chippers; Lake County Fairgrounds Lakeview Oregon, 1900 N. 4th St; Sat. 9-5, Sun. 9-4;

*For more information and coupons go to [www.rockngem.com](http://www.rockngem.com)*



**Save the Dates...  
CORC Field Trips**



**April 12**  
**Beers Mtn and China Hollow**  
**One day only**

**May 17 & 18:**  
**Milepost 27 & 32**

**June 14 & 15:**  
**Bear Creek**

**July 19 Picnic at**  
**American Legion Park**

**August 16**  
**Richardsons Rock Ranch**

**September 13 and 14::**  
**Joe Cota's Rock Shop/Dig**  
**in Sweet Home**

**October 11 & 12: 3 Amigos Claim**

*Please Know All Field Trips are Subject to Change*





## **2025 CORC Board Members**

**Tonia Smith**  
**President**

**Nancy Johnston**  
**Vice President**

**Snow Hartley**  
**Secretary**

**Lupe Severson**  
**Treasurer**

**Ken Lawson**  
**Field Trip Committee\_**  
**Co-Chair**

**Eric Smith**  
**Field Trip Committee\_**  
**Co-Chair**

**Barb Thompson**  
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**Scott "Plaid" Peterson**  
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**Patricia Moreland**  
**Past President**

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**Newsletter Editor**

**Ashton Bowlin**  
**Webmaster**

### **Volunteer Coordinator**

**Chenowa Hartley**  
**James Shaman**  
**Barb Thompson**  
**Ed Taft**  
**Social Media**

**Ed Taft**  
**James Shaman**  
**Bruce Vanderzanden**  
**OCRMC Representatives**

## **Membership**

**\*\*2025 Renewals are due by  
April 30th.**

**Renew ONLINE at the  
CORC website.**

**(corockcollectors.com  
->Membership-> Join Now)**

**Renew by MAIL or IN PERSON.**  
**Print the membership form from the CORC**  
**website and mail it to:**  
**Central Oregon Rock Collectors (CORC)**  
**4817 SW Volcano Ave**  
**Redmond, OR 97756**  
**or bring it to the next meeting or field trip.**

### **Annual membership dues are:**

**\$20 for individuals,**  
**\$25 for household**  
**and \$5 for juniors.**

**(Note: Junior memberships are for minors**  
**who are accompanied by a club member**  
**from a different household.**  
**e.g. Grandparents, aunts, uncles)**

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### **Contact Us:**

**Email: corc.rocks@gmail.com**

**Mailing Address: 4817 SW Volcano Ave**  
**Redmond, OR 97756**

**Meeting Address: 3800 SE**  
**Airport Way Bldg, 3 "The Annex",**  
**Redmond, OR 97756**

# ANNOUNCEMENTS

**Sanding/Polishing  
Slabs/Thundereggs**

**.50/square inch**

**Contact: Dan Siroshon  
(541)954-8234**

## Faceting and Cabbing Machine

Dale B. Barrett, who lives in Redmond,  
will cut and facet stones for members at  
a very affordable price.

Interested:

Contact Dale @ 541-694-0325 or  
Email: Flyboy@bendcable.com

EST. 1935  
**PETERSEN**  
ROCK GARDEN



**Volunteers wanted:**  
staff for the museum/gift shop

Interested?? contact:  
petersengardenmuseum@gmail.com

**Museum/Garden Hours:**

**March 22- May 22**  
Wednesday - Sunday 10 - 4

**May 23 until winter starts**  
7 days a week 10-4

**Do You Need  
a Rock Cut?**

**Check out the  
pinned post  
on our Facebook  
page to find  
someone  
that can  
help you out!**



**Would You Like to  
Contribute to Our  
Newsletter?**

*We would love to hear from our members!*

Email corc.rocks@gmail.com  
with your ideas.

To post an announcement or ad in the  
CORC newsletter please email  
[corc.rocks@gmail.com](mailto:corc.rocks@gmail.com).

**You must be a current member to do so.**

### **CigarBoxRock Lapidary**

63291 Nels Anderson Rd  
Bend, Or

Open Tuesday- Saturday

9:00am - 3:00 PM

[CBR@Bendnet.com](mailto:CBR@Bendnet.com)

541-389-9663 Or

541-280-5574

Follow us Facebook  
and Instagram

[Cigarboxrock.com](http://Cigarboxrock.com)



We are looking for a  
*Volunteer Coordinator*  
to be a part of our team!

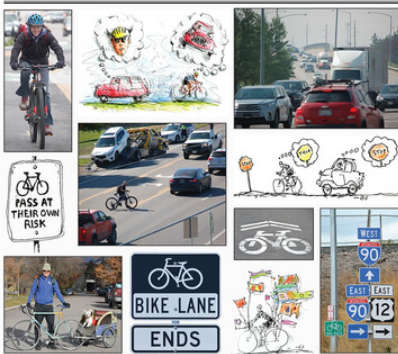
Interested??

contact: [corcrocks@gmail.com](mailto:corcrocks@gmail.com)

## **CORC Member and Author Offers Road Safety Advice**

### **Whose Lane is it Anyway?**

How Cyclists and Motorists Can Share the Roads Safely



Tom Edgerton

Design, Photos, and Illustrations by Greg Siple

Redmond club member and cyclist Tom Edgerton has a self-published and insightful guide to how cyclists and motorists can share the roads safely. The book, titled *Whose Lane is it Anyway?*, summarizes what he has learned traveling the roads for the last 50 plus years, as both a driver and a cyclist. The result is more than 100 pages filled with advice about how people can use the roads well with others. Tom's work addresses issues that have confounded drivers and riders since bicycles and motor vehicles began competing for road space early in the last century. With original thoughts and astute reflections, he notes how increased respect for others can help everyone better understand and mitigate the challenges we can all face on the roads.

The book contains an abundance of real-life anecdotes with perspectives, truths, and surprises we can all learn from. It's an upbeat, interesting read with engaging quotations, color images, and fun, even quirky, hand-drawn "biketoons."

See [whoselaneisitanyway.com](http://whoselaneisitanyway.com) for more information about the book. Utah bicycle attorney Ken Christensen notes that "everyone should read it before hitting the road."

The book costs \$18.00 and is available through Amazon. Better yet, save on shipping and get it directly from Tom. Email him at [whoselaneisitanyway24@gmail.com](mailto:whoselaneisitanyway24@gmail.com), or look for him at our April or May meetings – he'll be the one with a bike helmet!