

Mount Antero Gem Collecting

By

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Mt. Antero rises 14,269 feet above the Arkansas River Valley and can be seen from U.S. 285 when looking to the west. Mt. Antero is a classic Colorado gemstone-collecting locale, as well as the highest gemstone- collecting site in North America (Voynick, 2002). There are many interesting minerals that can be found on Mt. Antero including aquamarine, phenakite, smoky quartz, fluorite, biotite mica, and blue, and blue-green common beryl. There is still some float to be found on the talus-covered mountain, while it is more rare to discover an intact pegmatite pocket in its entirety.



Aquamarine specimen I found August of 2006
Image by Amanda Schaak

The views from this gem collector's paradise are no doubt a stunning, one of a kind experience. The collecting season on this mountain lasts only about four months due to the unpredictable weather and heavy snow storms that come in the spring and fall. Getting to this location will require a high-clearance, four wheel drive vehicle. If gem collecting is your reason for heading up Mt. Antero, it is not recommended that you hike up, but drive up as to have more time for your crystal hunt. Drastic changes in temperature and weather conditions are another good reason to have a safe vehicle retreat nearby.



Severe weather moving in rapidly on the saddle between Mt. Antero, and Mt. White
Image by Amanda Schaak

Mt. Antero is infamous for its severe weather, including powerful electric storms, hail storms, and blizzard like conditions that can appear out of a warm, clear sky within less than 30 minutes. These storms tend to occur more often in the afternoons and evenings, making an early start up the mountain essential to your trip. Collectors should only bring a small shovel, a spade, a hand rake, and possibly a chisel and rock hammer to dig for gems. Carry all of your food, water, and sun-screen needs with you in a pack. Expect all possible weather conditions and dress in layers, making sure you have coats, thick clothing, and a rain parka for this trip. Most of all, enjoy what is likely one of the most scenic, memorable rockhounding experiences you will ever behold.

References:

Voynick, Stephen M., 2002, Colorado Rockhounding: A Guide to minerals, Gemstones, and Fossils, Missoula, MT, Mountain Press Publishing Company, 371 p.