

***Public Lands News:***  
***The Mojave Trails Natl Mon subgroup***  
***is up and running – what's next?***  
*by Gregor Losson*

**T**HE PROCESS of developing a management plan for the 1.6 million acres of the Mojave Trails National Monument (MTNM) in the California desert has begun. Many historic rock and mineral collecting areas are located within its boundaries. They include the Cady Mountains, Sleeping Beauty, Hector, Lava, and Mesquite Hills, the Bagdad-Chase and Lavic areas, the southern Bristol Mountains, Homer Mountain, and Danby Dry Lake, as well as the Marble, Clipper, Piute, Little Piute, Sacramento, Ship, Calumet, Sheephole, and Iron Mountains.

Since the monument was created in 2016, the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), which administers the monument, left in place accommodations for rockhounding until a final management plan was drafted. After years of delays, the planning process is now on a fast track towards production of a Record of Decision (ROD) targeted for late summer 2024. The planning is proceeding on two tracks. One track is the work undertaken by the BLM's Needles Field Office. BLM field manager **Mike Ahrens** and MTNM manager **Noelle Glines-Bovio** are taking the lead on developing the management plan under the guidelines of the NEPA law's requirement of public participation. So in the future, there will be meetings for public comment related to the road network and reconciling the monument management plan with other land use planning products where they overlap the monument.

The other track is the MTNM subgroup of the Desert Advisory Council (DAC). My name is **Gregor Losson** and I am your gem and mineral collecting representative on the subgroup. These are BLM's goals for the subgroup:

- MTNM subgroup members will become fully aware of the various MTNM plan issues and considerations.



Gregor Losson at Cady Peak, with a view of Sleeping Beauty in the background, home to historic collecting areas for agate, jasper, calcite, pyrolusite, barite, strontionite, and micros of secondary lead minerals.

- MTNM subgroup members will share their understanding of the planning issues with their representative constituents to gain public perceptions and possible resolutions.
- MTNM subgroup members will provide transparency to the public interested in the planning process.
- MTNM subgroup members will provide recommendations to the DAC regarding the MTNM management planning process, and the DAC may share those recommendations with the BLM.

I would like to report to our communities of rockhounds, micromounters, lapidarists, mineralogists, and mineral and fluorescent mineral collectors that the BLM's Needles field office and the MTNM management are coordinating their activities with the MTNM subgroup. The subgroup members will be able to educate the BLM and each other about the interests, concerns, histories, and expectations of our constituents. So far, the subgroup has been learning the various "guardrails" that will affect the management plan, such as the West Mojave Route Network Plan (WMRNP), the Desert Renewable Energy Conservation Plan (DRECP), and the MTNM proclamation itself. We will be working towards making a final recommendation to the DAC, which in turn will make a recommendation to the BLM.

As your MTNM subgroup representative, I have been introducing myself to our clubs and organizations and still have many more to contact. We need to identify who is interested in access and wants to participate. To introduce myself here, here's a little background. I've spent 35 years exploring the California deserts and collecting minerals, much of it in the Cady Mountains. I am on the board of directors of the Southern California Friends of Mineralogy and a member of the Mineralogical Society of Southern California. After participating in the 13-year access battle of the WEMO/WMRNP, I turned my materials into the 200-page, "Established Roads of the Mojave Desert Volume 1: The Cady Mountains." I will continue to reach out to our communities and organizations to inform you about progress of the MTNM subgroup, and most importantly to learn what you feel is important to be addressed.

### **How to reach the MTNM subgroup Rockhound representative**

You can reach **Gregor Losson** two ways: email me at [eczlosson@yahoo.com](mailto:eczlosson@yahoo.com) or email the public lands representative for SDMG at [editor@sdmg.org](mailto:editor@sdmg.org), and **Lisbet Thoresen** will forward your messages to me.

### **Some Rockhound resources**

The Facebook groups [LA-Rocks](#) and [Ruth Hidalgo's](#) great page [Save Rockhounding in the Mojave Trails National Monument](#) post updates on MTNM along with SDMG's newsletters, bulletins, and email campaigns. The AFMS, CFMS, and ALAA are also participating and getting out updates via email. Mojave Trails overlaps numerous significant collecting areas that many of us have fought to maintain access to for many decades. We are now standing on the precipice of a decision-making process that will soon be made final. Please contact me and let's complete this long journey together, pressing for the outcome so many have been striving for decades to achieve.

BLM's MTNM web page:  
<https://on.doi.gov/2LklnNz>

BLM's MTNM Subgroup of the DAC web page:  
<https://on.doi.gov/3WrFjDp>

Join SDMG's mailing list, select Public Lands:  
<https://bit.ly/sdmg-signup>



Minerals from the historic collecting areas of the northern Cady Mountains basalt (age 20 million yrs). *Top to bottom:* a, b) Vesicular agate from the historic collecting areas of the Baxter Wash basalts, which formed when the basalt first cooled; c.) later, after the basalt faulted, the hot fluids deposited fluorite, shown here is a specimen with the cavity infilled with quartz spheres. Photos: G. Losson.