

What are Oregon Sunstones?

Sunstones are feldspar crystals that formed in lava. Thirteen to fourteen million years ago, a volcano in Steens Mountain erupted, pouring out massive amounts of lava. The lava flow was subsequently covered by a vast lake and remained underwater for thousands of years. As the lake gradually dried up, the exposure to weather caused the lava to decompose and reveal loose sunstones.

Know Before You Go

The boundaries of the Oregon Sunstone Public Collection Area are marked by orange plastic posts that say 'Oregon Sunstone Public Collection Area,' and corners are marked with large Bureau of Land Management triangles on wooden posts.

There are many private mining claims surrounding the public collection area and several within it (see map). Collecting sunstones from a private claim without permission is not allowed and may result in legal penalties. Please take the time to know where you are before collecting.

Due to the isolated location, rock hounds visiting the collection area should be well prepared. The only facilities available at the site are a pit toilet, picnic tables, and a shade structure. You are welcome to camp anywhere within the Oregon Sunstone Public Collection Area. There is no fee for collecting sunstones, but you may not collect sunstones for trade or commercial purposes.

Private Mining Claims

Within the Oregon Sunstone Public Collection Area is a 20-acre parcel of private mining claims (see map). Private mining claims are also located outside and adjacent to the Oregon Sunstone Public Collection Area.

Large mechanized mining claim operations are visible near the entrance to the Oregon Sunstone Public Collection Area. Mining on these claims is regulated through Federal and State permits. These claims are restored at the end of mining operations. No public collection is allowed within these private mining claims.

Collecting

As you walk within the Oregon Sunstone Public Collection Area, keep your eyes to the ground and look for the opaque yellowish stones, picking them out of the soil and rocks. Sunstones can be red or green, but pale yellow is the most common color. Hand tools such as shovels and picks may be used for digging, but please fill in any holes you create. Mechanized equipment for digging is strictly prohibited.

Flora and Fauna

Although the Oregon Sunstone Public Collection Area may seem somewhat desolate, it is always possible to observe desert animals. During daylight hours, black-tailed jackrabbits, cottontail rabbits, short-horned lizards, sagebrush lizards, and the western skink may be seen. Nighthawks may be observed catching insects in the evening, and coyotes heard howling at night. While sagebrush and greasewood are the most common plant, native grasses such as Indian rice grass and Needle and Thread grow in the area.

Directions to the Site

From Plush: Take County Road 3-10 (the Hogback Road) north for about 10 miles (this road turns to gravel after 4 miles). Turn right onto Country Road 3-11 and drive ½ mile then turn left onto BLM Road 6155. Remain on 6155 for about 8 ¼ miles then turn left onto BLM Road 6115. Follow the 6115 road for about 5 miles until you can turn right onto BLM Road 6195 and see the entrance sign for the Sunstone Collection Area.

For southbound travelers on Highway 395: From Highway 395, turn left (east) onto Country Road 3-10 (the Hogback Road). Stay on the Hogback Road for

20.2 miles until you can turn left on County Road 3-11. Drive ½ mile and turn left onto BLM Road 6155. Remain on the 6155 road for about 8 ¼ miles then turn left onto BLM Road 6115. Follow the 6115 road for about 5 miles until you can turn right onto BLM Road 6195 and see the entrance sign for the Sunstone Collection Area.

Caution: Bureau of Land Management roads are unpaved and impassable in wet conditions even with a four-wheel drive vehicle. If you are planning a visit from November through May, contact the Bureau of Land Management Lakeview District Office for information on weather and road conditions.

The nearest services are located in Plush, Oregon approximately 23 miles south. Services include gas and groceries at the store, and picnic tables, water, and toilets at Egan Park.

District Contact Information:

Lakeview District

Lakeview Resource Area
Bureau of Land Management
1301 South G Street
Lakeview, OR 97630

(541) 947-2177

www.or.blm.gov/lakeview

BLM/OR/WA/GI-05/033+1122.32

Oregon Sunstone Public Collection Area

BLM

Lakeview District



Welcome to Oregon Sunstone Public Collection Area

The Oregon Sunstone Public Collection Area allows visitors to enjoy collecting these rare and beautiful gems in their natural setting. Located in the remote Rabbit Basin, the Oregon Sunstone Public Collection Area is in the high desert habitat of sagebrush and open spaces of south-central Oregon.

