

DESERT GOLD DIGGERS GAZETTE

The official publication of Desert Gold Diggers Inc., Tucson, AZ

The Desert Gold Diggers is a non-profit prospecting club based in Tucson, Arizona, devoted to all aspects of small scale mining including panning, sluicing, dry washing, and metal detecting. In addition to promoting small scale prospecting, the club exchanges ideas and information on the various aspects of prospecting & mining. Visit our webpage at <https://desertgolddiggers.com> for more club information.



Desert Gold Doggers has 19 claims in southeastern Arizona. The claims are located in several gold producing areas including the Greaterville, Arivaca, Oro Blanco (Ruby), Las Guijas, Old Hat (Oracle) and Banner (Pinal County) mining districts. The club is constantly evaluating and pursuing additional claims.

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From the Desk of Ralph Montañó

President, Desert Gold Diggers Inc.

Happy New Year Desert Gold Diggers! I hope everyone has enjoyed this mild winter weather and had the opportunity to get outside and find some of that shiny yellow stuff!

Elections for DGD Officers and board members will take place on April 7. I encourage everyone, especially our new members, to consider volunteering for our board positions. The club members that volunteer for these positions make Desert Gold Diggers a fun and successful club and I am certain we have many new members that have innovative ideas that could make DGD an even better club



Speaking of new members, I encourage new members that want to learn more about prospecting techniques or where to find gold on our claims, to touch base with any of our board members (see [page 5](#)) at the members meetings. We will be glad to assist you and/or pair you with someone that is experienced and will help you improve your chances of finding gold.

Acquiring new claims will be a priority in 2026. Several board members have been actively involved in sampling different locations that contain gold, and a couple sites look promising. As the price of gold continues to increase, it will be nice to have new gold-bearing claims for our members. I will keep you informed as our search continues.

Until next time—stay safe and good luck finding that beautiful yellow stuff!

— Ralph

12-Month Gold Price Trend

The price of gold rose to over \$5,000 per ounce for a short time on January 23. One of the biggest drivers of the gold price is global uncertainty; however, with inflation falling, gold prices could see a major readjustment should global uncertainty start to decline.



Meeting & Event Summary (February-April 2026)

Membership Meetings

1st Tuesday of every month at 6:00 PM.

Ellie Towne Community Center
1660 West Ruthrauff Road
Tucson, AZ 85705-1253

The monthly meetings are an opportunity for club members to socialize, listen to guest speakers, and participate in nugget raffles at the end of the meeting.

Guests are welcome to attend!

Business Meetings

3rd Tuesday of every month at 6:30 PM.

IHOP
4187 N. Oracle Road
Tucson, AZ. 85705-2721
(Southwest corner of Oracle and
Limberlost Road)

Club members are welcome to attend
the monthly business meetings.

Events Schedule

February:

03: Membership Meeting; 6:00 PM

08: (Sunday) Outing: PLACER
POND CLAIMS; 8:00 AM; Gardner
Canyon Road & Highway 83

17: Business Meeting; 6:30 PM

March:

03: Membership Meeting; 6:00 PM

06-08: Overnight Outing: NORTH
ARIVACA CLAIMS; 8:00 AM; Las
Guijas Road camp site.

17: Business Meeting; 6:30 PM

April:

07: Membership Meeting; 6:00 PM
Officer and Board Elections

12: (Sunday) Outing: BRUISER
CLAIMS; Circle in Oracle; 8 AM

21: Business Meeting; 6:30 PM

March Overnight Outing: March 6 - 8 (Friday-Sunday)



The overnight outing will be at the Las Guijas camp site. The initial turnoff point is right after the Mile Post 7 marker on W. Arivaca Road (lower right side of map). DGD will provide signage to help direct everyone to the campsite on W. Las Guijas-Cerro Colorado Road. Specific information will be provided before the outing.

Desert Gold Diggers 2026 Outing Schedule

DATE	CLAIM	AGENCY	TIME	MEETING LOCATION
JAN 10 (SAT)	WISHFUL	Forest Service	8:00 AM	Buenos Aires Wildlife Refuge (Arivaca Rd)
FEB 8 (SUN)	PLACER POND	Forest Service	8:00 AM	Greaterville Road & HWY 83
MAR 6-8 (FRI-SUN) *	NORTH ARIVACA	BLM	8:00 AM	Las Guijas Road Camp Site
APR 12 (SUN)	BRUISER	Forest Service	8:00 AM	Circle K in Oracle (American Avenue)
MAY 9 (SAT)	SNOOZIN	BLM	8:00 AM	Arivaca Rd. Mile Post 7
JUN 7 (SUN)	HOPE	Forest Service	7:00 AM	Gardner Canyon Road & HWY 83
JUL 11 (SAT)	BRUISER	Forest Service	7:00 AM	Circle K in Oracle (American Avenue)
AUG 9 (SUN)	WISHFUL	Forest Service	7:00 AM	Buenos Aires Wildlife Refuge (Arivaca Rd)
SEP 5 (SAT)	BRUISER	Forest Service	7:00 AM	Circle K in Oracle (American Avenue)
OCT 9-11 (FRI-SUN) *	HOPE	Forest Service	8:00 AM	Camp Site TBA
NOV 7 (SAT)	PILGRIM'S PRIDE	BLM	8:00 AM	Arivaca Rd. Mile Post 7
DEC 6 (SUN)	PLACER POND	Forest Service	8:00 AM	Greaterville Road & HWY 83
JAN 9 (SAT) 2027	WISHFUL	Forest Service	8:00 AM	Buenos Aires Wildlife Refuge (Arivaca Rd)

***NOTE:** The March overnight outing is scheduled for March 6-8. If it appears that weather conditions will be too wet for this outing, members will be notified beforehand with information on the new outing date.

Officer and Board Member Elections - April 7, 2026

Elections for all Officer and Board positions will be conducted at the April 7 members meeting. This will be a “self-nomination” process and if you are interested in actively participating as a Desert Gold Diggers Officer or Board member, please complete a nomination form that will be provided at the March 3 membership meeting.

The charts below contain the names of the current Officers and Board members. All DGD members are eligible to run for Officer and Board positions. If you are interested in having a voice to improve our club, this is your opportunity. If you would like information about the responsibilities of each position, please contact Ralph Montañó or any current board member. **Please get involved and help make a difference!**

DESERT GOLD DIGGERS OFFICERS: 2025

PRESIDENT

Ralph Montañó

VICE PRESIDENT

VACANT

SECRETARY

William Vasko

TREASURER

Becky Marihugh

OUTINGS DIRECTOR

Darrell Marihugh

HISTORIAN

Mary Garcia

CLAIMS DIRECTOR

Hank Bassaraba

PR DIRECTOR

Amber Clark

GOLD MASTER

Joe Marihugh

MEMBERSHIP DIRECTOR

Becky Marihugh

GAZETTE EDITOR

Ray Darragh

DGD CLUB STORE

Hank Bassaraba

WEBSITE LIASON

Anibal Morales

DESERT GOLD DIGGERS BOARD MEMBERS

ONE-YEAR BOARD MEMBERS (2025)

David Fuller (Board Chairman), Grady Dees, Ed Madson, “Bedrock” Bob Masog, Katherine Manning

TWO-YEAR BOARD MEMBERS (2025-2026)

Ray Darragh, Becky Marihugh, Joe Marihugh, Bob Melzer, Louis Pill

THREE YEAR BOARD MEMBERS (2025-2027)

Hank Bassaraba, Howard Cooper, Darrell Marihugh

Meet Katherine Manning - DGD Board Member

Hi, I'm Katherine Manning. I was born in Tucson along with my 3 brothers. We spent most of our weekends outdoors hiking, exploring ghost towns and archery hunting. I was never a good hunter because I was usually looking at the ground for rocks and artifacts. I was always the last one back to the truck because my pockets would be stuffed with about 10 pounds of rocks. I have always said since I was little, "You'll see, one day I'll find a gold nugget!"

I have been in the club, along with my family, since about 2018. We discovered Desert Gold Diggers in an interesting way. My dad and brother were waiting for my other brother to finish an endurance trail race near Kentucky Camp. My brother dug a few scoops of dirt nearby where they were waiting, took it home, panned it and found a tiny piece of gold. He looked up what claims were nearby and saw Desert Gold Diggers. We joined soon after that! We have learned a lot from being members of the club. We started out with pans, but have learned how to high-bank, drywash, and metal detect.



Katherine Manning

I'm a RN with a Bachelor of Science in Nursing from Northern Arizona University and have worked at the Tucson VA for 17 years. Nine years on telemetry and the last eight in the cardiology clinic doing stress testing. Nursing is my second career; my first career was very different. I have a Bachelor of Science in Animal Science-Race Track Management from the University of Arizona. I worked for the Arizona Department of Racing, starting in the test barn for post-race equine drug testing to eventually being a steward for both horses and dogs. When they were running, I still worked on the weekends, at Rillito, and at the county fair meets in Douglas and Sonoita.

Daniel is my husband and is retired after 25 years in the Border Patrol. He was on the horse unit for many years. The stable is near Arivaca, so he is familiar with every road and ravine in that area. We have a 14-year-old in 8th grade, who is not as interested in gold and digging in the dirt as we are! We have 2 horses, one being Daniel's (also retired) Border Patrol partner "Melvin".

Our other hobby is Geocaching. It's a game where GPS is used to find hidden containers, like a treasure hunt. The containers can be big, small, in urban or remote areas and we have over 4500 finds.

What I like best when going prospecting is getting outside in the fresh air. If I end up finding nothing, or just a simple flake of gold, I'm still happy. I have not found that elusive nugget yet, but I know it is out there waiting for me. I hope you find one too!

— Katherine Manning

Desert Gold Diggers 2025 Christmas Party

Over 90 club members and guests participated in the annual Desert Gold Diggers Christmas party the evening of December 2, 2025. Everyone had an opportunity to enjoy delicious baked ham, green beans, scalloped apples, mashed potatoes, various types of salads, and a large assortment of colorful and delicious desserts provided by club members.

The United States Marines provided a Toys for Tots collection box at the meeting and our generous club members did a wonderful job donating toys and making monetary donations to help make Christmas a little bit brighter for the less fortunate youngsters in our community. After dinner, Ralph Montaño conducted the raffles with numerous members leaving with cash (50/50 raffle), a Garrett PI (Pulse Induction) metal detector, a sluice box and other prospecting equipment, several bags of paydirt, and a gold specimen.

Everyone had a wonderful time visiting and sharing stories—and with the amount of food provided, nobody left hungry!

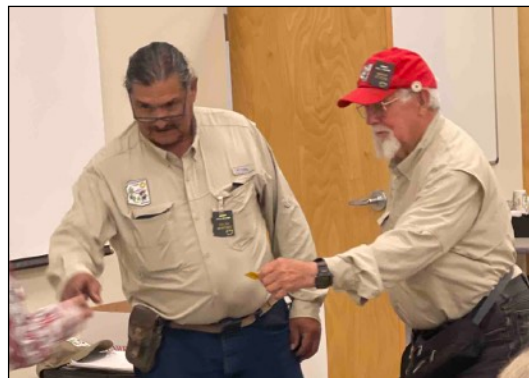


Christmas Party Raffle Winners

1. 50/50 Raffle: Doran Gray (\$409.50)
2. Gold Specimen: Katherine Manning
3. Garrett Metal Detector: Mark Blair
4. Sluice Box: Grady Dees
5. Gold Concentrate: Marion Vittetoe, Kevin Rogers, and Jana Darragh
6. Silver Feathers: Mel Martel; Kevin Rogers; John Shelnutt.
7. Surprise Boxes: John Christensen, Mark Blair, M. Lee, Kevin Rogers, Mari Harrison, Doran Gray, and Jim Larsen.



Doran Gray



THANK YOU to the board and club members who planned and organized the Christmas party; decorated the venue; prepared the main dishes; brought side dishes and desserts; donated toys to Toys for Tots, and helped clean up after the party ended. Your participation made the party a great success and your assistance was truly appreciated.

Outing Director's Report (December 7): Placer Pond

Members met at 8 AM off of Highway 83 and Greaterville Road turnoff for our December 7 outing at the Placer Pond claims. 26 members signed in and caravanned to the metal detect site. The morning was clear with a temperature in the upper 30's.

There were 24 targets hidden for the metal detect hunt for prizes of gold nuggets, silver, \$2 bills, and \$1 coins. All targets were located except one for a \$1 coin. The **gold nugget winners** were Skyler Arney, Grady Dees, and John Shelnett. Bob Clark won silver and Bink a \$2 bill.



After the metal detect hunt, members headed out to the claims. Some members tried their luck using metal detectors and others processed dirt with recirculation setups and a couple members were finding nice color. The temperature warmed up into the mid-60s by the afternoon and it was a beautiful day for prospecting.

The next outing will be at the Wishful claims on Saturday, January 10, so be sure to bring your recirculation set-up to the outing.

—Darrell Marihugh

Outing Director's Report (January 10): Wishful Claims

It was a cold morning with the temperature in the mid 20's. We met at Buenos Aires Wildlife Refuge at 8 AM and had 21 members sign in for our first outing of the 2026 year.



We caravanned to the Wishful 4 claim to participate in the metal detect hunt. We detected for 24 buffalo nickel targets for prizes of gold nuggets, \$2 bills and \$1 coins. The hunt was a success because all targets were found. The **gold nugget winners** were Joey Montañó, James Barthelmy, and Brad Guinyou. The \$2 bill winners were Maureen and Mike Lee.

We then headed down to Wishful 1 to prospect for gold. There were a few new members that we helped around the claim and provided some tips on how and where to find gold. The water was flowing and members were using mini high-bankers and panning with some smaller gold being found. It warmed up later in the morning and the outing was a success.

The next outing will be Sunday, February 8 at the Placer Pond claims in Greaterville. We will meet at 8 AM on Highway 83 at the Greaterville Road turnoff.

—Darrell Marihugh

Membership Meeting Minutes: December 2, 2025

- Members started arriving at the Ellie Community Center at 5 PM to set up food and the Toys for Tots collection boxes for the annual Christmas party.
- Ralph Montañó convened the meeting at 6:02 PM; opened with the Pledge of Allegiance; introduced guests/new members; asked about members with birthdays and anniversaries; announced it was Bob Melzer's 98th birthday; discussed MASH report and announced that Phillip Lipton had passed away; condolences were sent to the family.
- Ralph thanked club members for bringing toys and donations for the Toys-for-Tots program which DGD promoted this year.
- Darrell Marihugh announced the December 7 outing will be at the Placer Pond claims. Members are to meet at the Greaterville/Sonoita turnoff before 8 AM on Sunday. He also reported that he found a nice gold nugget metal detecting at the Pilgrim's Pride claims and there's still gold out there and the outings are a good way to find it.
- Ralph thanked Becky Marihugh for her work on preparing the December Christmas dinner which included ham, mashed potatoes, gravy, green beans, and spiced apples. He also thanked everyone who helped and brought the numerous side dishes and desserts. The many club members who attended enjoyed a delicious meal and good company.
- Raffle winners:
 - Gold specimen: Katherine Manning
 - 50/50: Doran Gray (\$409.50)
 - Garrett Metal Detector: Mark Blair
 - Sluice Box: Grady Dees
 - Gold Concentrate: Marion Vittetoe; Kevin Rogers; Jana Darragh.
 - Silver feathers: Mel Martel; Kevin Rogers; John Shelnutt.
 - Surprise Boxes: John Christensen, Mark Blair, M. Lee, Kevin Rogers, Mari Harrison, Doran Gray, and Jim Larsen.
- Ralph noted how well the dinner was attended and thanked everyone who helped make the Christmas dinner a success. At the end of the meeting, Becky provided plates and encouraged members to help themselves to any of the leftover dinner, sides, and desserts. Ralph once again thanked everyone for attending.
- Meeting adjourned at 7:34 PM

Membership Meeting Minutes: January 6, 2026

- Ralph Montañó convened the meeting at 6:04 PM; opened with the Pledge of Allegiance; noted that there were over 100 people at the meeting; introduced guests & new members; recognized birthdays/anniversaries; discussed MASH information.
- Darrell Marihugh announced the January 10 outing will be held at the Wishful claims, south of Arivaca. Members to meet at the Buenos Aires Wildlife Refuge Arivaca trail head (on Ox-Bow Rd.) at 7:45 AM Saturday. The group will leave at 8:00 and travel to the metal detect area.

Membership Meeting Minutes: January 6, 2026 *(continued)*

- Ralph introduced Bev Anderson, a retired National Forest Service Geologist, who's presentation concerned the geology/history of the Greaterville Mining District. Her presentation covered topics including geologic origins of the Greaterville & Rosemont mineral deposits, productive gold bearing geologic formations, mining law of 1872 and updates, and federal/private 50-50 ownership patterns. She presented the District's total historical production of gold, 18,500 oz, [worth over \$83 million dollars at today's price] and silver 6,000 oz (\$500,000 at today's price). The largest gold nugget found in the Greaterville District was 37 oz (\$165,000 at current prices)]. Ralph presented her with a gold nugget in appreciation of her talk.
 - The January raffle winners included:
 - Hat: Robert Burgette
 - Shirt: Mike Blair
 - Badge: Joe Marihugh
 - Yellow Ticket: Kathy Manning; Keith Oliver; Rick Harrison; Joe Rust; James Single; Skyler Arney,
 - Gold Specimen: Ray Darragh
 - Red Ticket: Bink and Keith Oliver.
 - Ralph thanked everyone again for attending, especially ,new members, and encouraged everyone to attend this Saturdays outing. He noted this was the largest attendance of a monthly meeting in the last few years.
 - Meeting adjourned at 7:30 PM
-

Business Meeting Minutes: December 16, 2025

- Chairman David Fuller convened meeting at 6:30 PM.
- Ray read previous minutes; minutes approved.
- Gazette: Ray is working on the December/January issue; need the biography of a new board member for the newsletter.
- Webmaster Report: Discussed the issue of getting confirmation when final payment is received from members; members get an automated response that their application will be processed in 7-10 days.
- Membership Director Report: Becky provided an update on membership: 13 new members and 9 non-renewals for a total of 315 members.
- Treasurer Report: Becky read the Treasurer's report. She also provided a Finance report for the month of November. General discussion followed.
- Gold Master: Joe provided a detailed report regarding the Club's supply of gold after the November Membership meeting. Additional raffle tickets need to be sold before the 6 gram nugget can be raffled at a future members meeting.
- Outing Director: Darrell reported on the December 7 outing at the Placer Pond claims. For specific outing details, see the Outing Director's report on [page 9](#).

Business Meeting Minutes: December 16, 2025 *(continued)*

- Claims Director Report: Hank discussed the need for members to be mindful of the concerns expressed by the Forest Service regarding sensitive species found on our claims. The NOI acknowledgment letters identify the environmental concerns for each claim on Forest Service land.
- Historian Report: Mary is trying to find speakers for future members meetings from the U of A and Pima College geology departments.

OLD BUSINESS

- Bedrock Bob found the AU1 claim sign that someone had removed.
- Becky purchased silicone heating mats for future outings and Christmas events and used funds that were approved by the board at a previous meeting.
- DGD donated a full box of toys for Toys for Tots, including \$90 in cash donations.

New BUSINESS

- Trail Life Scouts would like to participate in a February outing. Discussion followed.
- March outing originally scheduled for March 6-8; however, the date may change depending on weather conditions.
- Bob motioned to adjourn and meeting adjourned at 7:19 PM.

Business Meeting Minutes: January 20, 2026

- David Fuller convened the meeting at 6:31 pm.
- Secretary Report: Ray read the December 16 minutes. Joe moved to approve the minutes, Bob 2nd and the motion was adopted by unanimous consent.
- Gazette Editor Report: Ray discussed the next issue of the Gazette and then handed out a draft copy for review. The March Outing dates need to be finalized as soon as possible.
- Webmaster Report: Anibal reported the Club's Web site was operating well. Suggested Board members think about how to improve the web site. He identified several issues for discussion including: email privacy, claim location maps, and including outing pictures. Darrell suggested a gallery of outing activities be developed. Anibal noted that the

Web site should be kept simple with proposals for improvements be brought to next month's meeting for discussion. The Board concurred.

- Membership Director's Report: Becky stated there were 32 new, 3 renewed and 8 non-renewals, for a total of 351 current members. The cost of membership materials (badges, envelopes/stamps and paper) have increased. She suggested that an increase in new membership fees might be considered this year pending further evaluation of costs.
- Treasurer Report: Becky read the Treasurer's report. She also provided a Finance report for December 2025. General discussion followed.
- Gold Master Report: Joe provided a detailed report regarding club gold inventory, expenditures and income since the last business meeting.

Business Meeting Minutes: January 20, 2026 *(continued)*

- Outing Director Report: Darrell reported that the January 10 outing was held at the Wishful Claims. Full details may be found on [page 9](#). Next Outing is at the Placer Pond claims located at Greaterville.
- Claim Director Report: Hank reported that review of the Club's claims located in Forest Service lands has been completed. No new information regarding claims located on BLM areas. A general discussion regarding the location and establishment of additional claims followed.
- Historian Report: No report.

OLD BUSINESS

- There was a general discussion of the Trail Life program requests. Discussion of the March Spring Outing dates was conducted. Motion by Joe, 2nd by Becky & Bob that

March 6-8 be set, with monitoring of projected weather conditions. Motion was passed unanimously.

New BUSINESS

- Hank asked for volunteers to help inventory items in the club's storage shed. He suggested a sale be held at the next meeting to reduce surplus inventory. Becky suggested we identify files that no longer need to be retained. Joe suggested we raffle off items donated by a member and the proceeds used to support a common dig at a future outing. He reported that the Hang Over drawing can be held at the next meeting. Officer and Board elections are coming up on April 7.
- Bob moved, Darrell 2nd that the meeting be adjourned, and approved by unanimous consent at 7:19 PM.

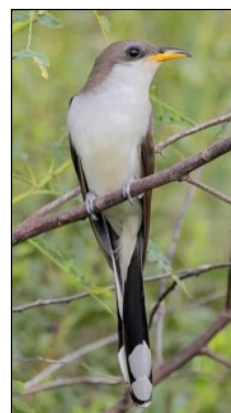
An Endangered Species at Bruiser 2 & 3

DGD Claims Director, Hank Bassaraba, worked very closely with the Forest Service (FS) in 2025 to ensure DGD complied with all FS rules and regulations. One FS requirement was that members would not remove any trees while prospecting the Bruiser claims since they are near the habitat of an endangered species—the Yellow-billed Cuckoo.

The Yellow-billed Cuckoo is a long-distance Neotropical migrant that spends winters down in South America arriving in Arizona in June, and heading south again by late August. Their distinctive drawn-out croaking call is commonly heard and their tendency to call before storms has led them to be known colloquially as the “rain crow”.

The cuckoo was once a common species in southern Arizona; however, with the loss of riparian forests to dams, livestock grazing, water withdrawal and other factors, the cuckoo is found in a mere handful of locations in Arizona, California, Colorado, New Mexico, Nevada and Utah. With an 80% decline in population, it is now listed as Threatened under the US Endangered Species Act in 2014.

Please be mindful of this endangered species while prospecting on the Bruiser claims and maybe you will see or hear a Yellow-billed Cuckoo this summer.



Yellow-billed Cuckoo

Welcome NEW Club Members!



Fred Appel (Coolidge, AZ)
Lincoln & Michelle Beard (San Manuel)
Chris Bennett (Vail, AZ)
William & Thelma Berry (Vail, AZ)
Mike and Lou Busby (Tubac, AZ)
Ron & Resa Collins (Boncarbo, CO)
Glen & Daniella Corey (Tucson)
Willard Detweiler (Green Valley, AZ)
Daria and Kathy Drobzeva (Tucson)
Jon & Darcie Ecker (Marana)
Alfonso Fernandez (Spearfish, SD)
Connie and Gary Flynn (Tucson)
Sabas & Susana Gracia (Sahuarita)
Steve & Maud Grater (Tucson)
Steven Groetken (Tucson)
Tom Hayes (Oro Valley)
John Holmes (Sahuarita)
Kevin Keck (Tucson)
Thomas Keeler (Casa Grande, AZ)
Jason Kiniry (Wichita Falls, TX)
Frank Kobus (Tucson)
Sean & Lisa Lakeman (Tucson)
Jim & Debra Lehmann (Green Valley, AZ)
David & Raghad Lepley (Tucson)

Jacob Lepley (Bloomfield Hills, MI)
Terry Linkhart (Tucson)
Mark & Linda McCurdy (Tucson)
Jim Maddux (Vail, AZ)
Ross Major (Tucson)
Charles & Yuming Mandt (Tucson)
Todd & Irina Miller (Tucson)
Joshua & Miriam Morrison (Tucson)
Joseph & Corrine Montaño (Tucson)
Kimon Popores (Corpus Christi, TX)
Topher & Lori Pruett (Tucson)
Greg & Michele Schickling (Tucson)
Steffen & Sarah Schulte (Tucson)
Michael & Dawn Sheets (Klawock, AK)
James and Chris Single (Tucson)
John Stringer (Tucson)
Mike Taylor (Oro Valley)
Alex & Grace Waddell (Tucson)
Tony Wolter (Tucson)
James Wood (Tucson)

Price of Silver Skyrockets!

On January 23, silver closed at **\$103.91 an ounce, a 257% increase** over the past 12 months. The reason silver has appreciated so quickly is due to high demand from the technology industry, expectations of a US Federal Reserve interest rate cut, and concerns about supply shortages. Rising gold prices led investors to seek silver as a more affordable alternative to gold, further driving up its value and causing the increase in the price of silver to significantly outpace the price of gold during 2025.

Gold Nugget Raffle



Raffle tickets are still available for a beautiful **6.78 gram gold nugget!** Tickets are \$2.00 each and may be purchased from the Goldmaster at the members meetings on the first Tuesday of each month. The raffle winner will be announced at the **February** members meeting.



6.78 gram nugget

MASH Report

1. Carol Crites fell and broke her arm.
2. Izaak Boza suffered a stroke and has completely recovered.

If you have an illness, injury, or death in the family please contact Amber Clark at amclark4691@gmail.com

Club Store

Be sure to stop by the Desert Gold Diggers Club Store at the monthly membership meetings. You can purchase Columbia long-sleeve shirts, DGD polo shirts and T-shirts, DGD hats and patches, license plates, DGD window transfer decals, bucket handle grip replacements, and numerous other prospecting items.

The Club Store carries DVDs that contain the color “topo” maps, GPS coordinates, directions to the claims, and other useful information. Laminated topo having color maps on one side and the GPS coordinates and directions on the other side are also available.

Please support the Desert Gold Diggers with purchases from our club

Market Place.....

**GREAT
DEALS**

FOR SALE:

- Three home-made dredges to extract material out of water-filled areas.
- Rocker box and gold pan (\$75).
- Mini sluice with dream mat and gold pan (\$75).

For additional information, please contact Skyler Arnie at (520) 990-7601.



Rocker Box

Sluice

FOR SALE: Two Metal Detectors

1. Nokta Makro Gold Racer Metal Detector: \$350
2. MineLab GPX 6000: \$4000

If you are interested in either of these metal detectors, please contact David Fuller via text at (208) 604-3991 or e-mail sparkinelectric@gmail.com

If you're searching for something specific you'd like to buy or sell, or have lost/found something while on our claims, please contact DGDGazette51@gmail.com.

Gold Scam Targets Retirees

As gold prices continue to rise, a new scam is targeting retirees and the latest incident occurred in Show Low, AZ.

In this case, a man told investigators that a woman with a foreign accent called him in October, identifying herself as Holly O'Brien, a U.S. marshal. She told the man that someone had stolen his identity and used it to rent a car, which was later left in El Paso, Texas. She then claimed that police had found illegal drugs and blood in the driver's seat of the car, and she warned the man he would be charged with a crime unless he could prove his identity by sharing details about his possessions.

He did as she asked and agreed to hand over \$100,000 in gold coins from his private collection to a courier on October 27. The scammer then instructed the man to withdraw \$180,000 from his bank and buy more gold coins, all to be picked up by another courier on November 14. Fortunately, authorities were able to gather enough evidence to catch the courier who was expected to pick up the gold coins.

On November 14, 2025, authorities in Navajo County, Arizona, arrested Ankit Sahoo, 27, of New Jersey, in Snowflake. Sahoo was in the country on an expired student visa from India and had flown from St. Louis to Phoenix to collect the money. Although Sahoo was apprehended, the man's \$100,000 in gold coins are gone for good.

Amity Toth of the Snowflake-Taylor Police Department stated "the scams are a significant national problem." In the Show Low case, the scam caller identified herself as a U.S. marshal, used an official tone, and made the



victim fearful and anxious. She persuaded him to give her important details, including his name, date of birth, Social Security number, and a list of his financial assets. Unfortunately, victims never hear from the scammers again and end up losing all their money.

Even though four people were convicted for similar crimes in 2025, estimated losses due to these gold scams totaled more \$186 million.

The FBI reminds everyone **do not share private information with strangers online or via phone.** Law enforcement will never request financial information or threaten arrest in a phone call. If someone representing himself as a law enforcement officer or government employee does request financial information, it is important to request name, badge number, criminal warrant number, and any other details that could verify the caller's identity. As precious metal prices continue to increase, so will the attempts by scammers to prey on seniors and the uninformed. Hopefully the preceding information will prevent you from becoming a victim of one of these scams.

(Citation: Stein, A. (2025, December 17-22). As Gold Prices Rise, a New Scam Is Targeting Retirees. *The Epoch Times*, A.1.)

Metal Detectors in Arizona: 2026 Perspective

Over the past year, many new DGD members have inquired about learning more about methods of finding gold using metal detectors. The excerpts from a recent article provide information that many new DGD members will find both interesting and useful.

Advancements in Gold Finding Metal Detectors: Technology, Features & 2026 Models

Gold-finding metal detectors of 2026 are a far cry from the crude, analog models of the past. Innovative manufacturers like Minelab have introduced breakthrough technologies designed for mineralized soils, deep deposits, and the dynamic geological conditions of Arizona. These modern devices integrate *multifrequency and pulse induction (PI) sensor arrays*, robust signal processing algorithms, and intuitive user interfaces that simplify gold retrieval, even in the most challenging terrains. The convergence of advanced devices, sensor innovations, improved signal processing algorithms, and smart interfaces has made these tools indispensable.

Key Technologies Explained

- Multiple Frequency Detection: *Simultaneously scans several frequencies*, improving identification of small and large gold particles.
- Pulse Induction (PI): *Highly resistant to ground mineralization*, allows deep penetration in mineral-heavy soils—crucial for Arizona mining.
- Ground Balance Calibration: Adjusts to diverse soil conditions, removing noise from iron oxides and salts.
- Noise Cancellation: Eliminates electrical and geological interference for clear signals.
- Discrimination Features: Differentiate gold from other metals and trash targets, reducing wasted effort.

Success in gold metal detecting in Arizona isn't simply about owning the best digital technology—it's a blend of local terrain knowledge, proper device calibration, and using proven field techniques. Here's how prospectors are using modern detectors to achieve greater precision and larger gold recovery even in the diverse and mineralized soils that Arizona offers:

- Ground Balance the detector: Failure to do so will lead to missed targets or too many false positives, especially in Arizona's varying landscapes.
- Sweep Slowly and Methodically: Rapid swings can miss deep or faint signals, especially small flakes.
- Use Noise-Cancelling Headphones: Even the most advanced detectors pick up tiny audio cues that are lost without isolation.
- Overlap Your Strokes: Ensures no ground is left undetected, crucial in riverbeds and heavily mineralized patches.
- Discriminate Targets Carefully: Avoid over-filtering; some Arizona gold carries unique signatures often similar to small iron-rich stones.
- Field Test Finds: Always pan or crush suspicious material; even modern detectors may misclassify exceptionally small particles or complex alloys.

Metal Detectors in Arizona: 2026 Perspective *(continued)*

2026: The Features of the New Smart Detectors

- Bluetooth and App Integration: Sync real-time data with mobile devices for mapping and sharing finds.
- Cloud-Based Analytics: Record, review, and analyze detection statistics for shifting field strategies.
- Lightweight & Modular Builds: Trek extended distances with ergonomic, high-stamina models suited for Arizona's mountains and deserts.

Comparison: Metal Detectors by Technology/Arizona Region Suitability

Detector Model	Technology Type	Depth (inches)	Price Range	Optimal Terrain	Detection Efficiency
Minelab GPZ 7000	ZVT (Zero Voltage Transmission/PI)	32–41	\$9,000 – \$9,500	Desert, Riverbeds, Mountains	98%
Garrett Axiom PI	Pulse Induction	26–31	\$3,000 – \$3,500	Highly Mineralized Soil	94%
Nokta Makro Gold Kruzer	VLF (Very Low Frequency)	15–24	\$600 – \$700	Plains, Dry Riverbeds	88%
Fisher Gold Bug 2	VLF (71 kHz)	10–18	\$700 – \$850	Shallow Soil, Rocky Flats	86%
XP DEUS II	Multi-Freq. / VLF	16–23	\$1,400 – \$1,700	Desert, Ghost Towns	89%
Minelab Equinox 900	Multi-IQ (Multi-Freq.)	14–21	\$1,100 – \$1,350	Plains, Alluvial Fans	84%

Note: Desert Gold Diggers does not promote or recommend one brand over another. The preceding chart is provided as information only and the price ranges listed for each detector may differ significantly from what is listed.

Metal Detectors in Arizona: 2026 Perspective *(continued)*

Future Trends — 2026 and Beyond

As we head into 2026 and beyond, the evolution of gold metal detecting in Arizona will be shaped by greater technological convergence, digital reporting, artificial intelligence, and global mining pressures. Prospectors and miners should be prepared for:

- Wider integration with mobile & cloud platforms: Real-time find sharing, GPS mapping, and AI-led pattern recognition.
- Ai-Optimized Targeting: Detectors already use advanced signal algorithms—expect more learning-based interfaces predicting likely gold occurrence based on soil and previous finds.
- Data-Driven Collaboration: Community databases will influence where and how prospectors target, making rare solo finds increasingly valuable.
- Satellites Hand-in-Hand With Ground Detectors: More Arizona miners blend satellite mineral detection services with on-the-ground detector teams for prospecting.
- Enhanced regulation & eco-compliance: Automated reports will support compliance with evolving federal/state mining policies and environmental protections.

Commonly Asked Questions about Metal Detecting in Arizona

What's the best gold finding metal detector for Arizona in 2026? Answer: The Minelab GPZ 7000 is a top-scorer for advanced prospectors due to its technology, extreme depth, and high accuracy in heavily mineralized soils. Hobbyists may find excellent value in models like the Nokta Makro Gold Kruzer or Fisher Gold Bug 2, especially for shallower, alluvial terrains.

Can metal detectors find gold in all Arizona regions? Answer: Most modern detectors excel in multiple terrains—deserts, riverbeds, and mountains—but each region may require ground balance calibration and frequency adjustments. Refer to the comparison table on [page 18](#) for optimal models by region.

How does satellite mineral detection fit with gold detectors? Answer: Satellite data platforms like Farmonaut's (see link below) complement detectors by screening huge territories for high-prospectivity zones, thus narrowing fieldwork and preserving resources. Ground teams then deploy detectors on the most promising zones for faster, more cost-effective gold recovery.

What's the greatest mistake new Arizona prospectors make? Answer: [Skipping ground balancing each time the soil changes.](#) Arizona has widely varying mineral soils, from high iron oxide content in the Sonoran Desert to clay in mountain valleys. Proper calibration is essential for true signal detection.

In conclusion, if you are interested in reading about the future trends in gold prospecting and metal detecting in Arizona utilizing satellite technology (e.g. Farmonaut), the entire article is located at <https://farmonaut.com/mining/gold-finding-metal-detectors-arizona-2026-guide>

February 2026 Special Events

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
1	2	3 Member's Meeting 6:00 PM	4	5	6	7
8 PLACER POND Claims: 8 AM	9	10	11	12	13	14 VALENTINES DAY
15	16 PRESIDENTS DAY	17 Business Meeting 6:30 PM	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28

March 2025 Special Events

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
1	2	3 Member's Meeting 6:00 PM	4	5	6 NORTH ARIVACA Claims	7 NORTH ARIVACA Claims: 8 AM
8 NORTH ARIVACA Claims	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17 Business Meeting 6:30 PM	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31				

Editor's Note

2025 was a fun and successful year, but 2026 can be even better. One way to ensure that is by getting more involved in our club activities.

The DGD annual elections are on April 7, and I join Ralph and all the board members in encouraging anyone interested in making Desert Gold Diggers an even better club, to volunteer for Officer and/or Board of Director positions. The DGD Officers and board members do an incredible job ensuring that monthly meetings, weekend and overnight outings, and various community activities are well-planned and successful. If you'd like to have more of a voice in the direction of our club, this will be an excellent opportunity, especially for newer members, to get more involved and help make a difference.

Until next time, be safe out there and happy prospecting!



Ray Darragh, DGD Gazette
Editor

"May you always find yellow in the bottom of your pan"



The Desert Gold Diggers Gazette is published as a service to the members of Desert Gold Diggers Inc. Opinions expressed in this newsletter are those of the management and its members and neither the Desert Gold Diggers, its Board, nor the editor of this publication assume any liability for damages resulting from the use of Gazette information and club maps. There are risks associated with prospecting and the Desert Gold Diggers membership application states:

"I acknowledge that prospecting and prospecting locations can be dangerous with numerous natural and artificial hazards. By signing up, as a member of the Desert Gold Diggers Inc., I, my spouse, my family, and/or my guests agree to release the Desert Gold Diggers Inc., their officers or assignees, and/or property owner(s) from any liability incurred during prospecting operations/outings. I further agree to have any guests accompanying me to one of the clubs claims on a private outing, to sign a club waiver prior to the outing."

The Desert Gold Diggers Board encourages submissions of articles from club members about prospecting or mining, as well as opinion pieces or the sale of items. All submissions will be reviewed and approved by the Board prior to inclusion in the Gazette.