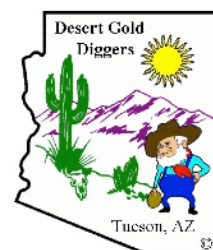


DESERT GOLD DIGGERS GAZETTE

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

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 Diggers has 20 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.

Hello Desert Gold Diggers! I hope everyone is doing good and surviving the hot summer weather. Activity at our claims usually slows down during the summer, but with the recent heavy monsoons, it should bring more of that shiny yellow stuff into our claims.



This next month the board and I will be addressing the Operating Instructions for DGD Claims and adding some new rules and clarifying others. The intent is to ensure that all club members—both new members and long-time members—are aware of the rules that guide our club when prospecting on BLM and Forest Service land. Although we have a good relationship with both agencies, there have been occurrences at several of our claims that could jeopardize that relationship and cause some real heartache for the club. I plan on discussing the most relevant issues at the next membership meeting.

Last but not least, the DGD outing schedule for the remainder of 2026 is included below. Please note that the September 5 outing will be held at the new AU1 claim rather than the Bruiser claims. The fall overnight outing is still scheduled for October 9-11 and more information about the outing will be distributed in the near future. In the meantime, be safe out there, enjoy yourself, and keep finding that beautiful yellow shiny stuff!

—Ralph

Updated Desert Gold Diggers Outing Schedule

The following is the updated outing schedule for 2026. The September outing originally scheduled at the Bruiser Claims will now be at the new AU1 claim.

DATE	CLAIM	AGENCY	TIME	MEETING LOCATION
JUL 11 (SAT)	BRUISER	FS	7:00 AM	Circle K in Oracle (American Avenue)
AUG 9 (SUN)	WISHFUL	FS	7:00 AM	Buenos Aires Wildlife Refuge (Arivaca Rd)
SEP 5 (SAT)	AU1	FS	7:00 AM	Buenos Aires Wildlife Refuge (Arivaca Rd)
OCT 9-11 (F/S/S)	HOPE	FS	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	FS	8:00 AM	Greaterville Road & HWY 83
JAN 9 (SAT) 2027	WISHFUL	Forest Service	8:00 AM	Buenos Aires Wildlife Refuge (Arivaca Rd)

Meeting & Event Summary (August-October 2026)

Membership Meetings

1st Tuesday of every month at 6:15 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

August:

04: Membership Meeting; 6:15 PM

09: (Sunday) Outing: WISHFUL
Claims; 7:00 AM; Buenos Aires
Wildlife Refuge (Arivaca Rd.)

18: Business Meeting; 6:30 PM

September:

01: Membership Meeting; 6:15 PM

05: (Saturday) Outing: AU1 Claim;
7:00 AM; Buenos Aires Wildlife
Refuge (Arivaca Rd.)

15: Business Meeting; 6:30 PM

October:

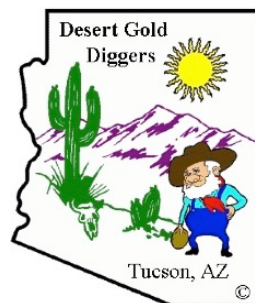
06: Membership Meeting; 6:15 PM

09-11: (Friday-Sunday) Overnight
Outing: HOPE Claims; 8:00 AM:
Camp site TBD.

20: Business Meeting; 6:30 PM

Welcome NEW Club Members!

Jon & Karrie Altland (Tucson)
Fernando & Rita Castillo (Vail)
Jay & Michelle Crawford (Sierra Vista)
Keith & Suzette Ehrlich (Tucson)
Victor & Maria German (Tucson)
Michael & Chelsea Germany (Tucson)
Nicholas & Katherine Grabrick (Tucson)
Matthew & Amanda Howard (Tucson)
Jay & Britney Huggins (Tucson)
John Kaseler (Tucson)
Richard & Annette Merritt (Sebago, ME)



Gregory Roberts (Tucson)
Doreen & Vincente Robins (Tucson)
James Ronyak (Tucson)
James Schindel (Maricopa)

Meet Ralph “Nick” Martel — DGD Board Member

Hello, my name is Ralph “Nick” Martel. My wife Kristina, our children Melanie and Ralph “Ralphie” and I joined DGD in January 2022, and this past April I joined the DGD board as a one-year board member. You can find us sitting in the back row of seats at almost every membership meeting.

I am a Tucson native who first became interested in prospecting as a five-year-old, when my father suggested that we could search for gold in the wash behind the house my parents had just purchased. While he and I never ended up doing any prospecting in our wash, the seed of gold fever was planted.

In the fall of 2021 while on a rock climbing and camping trip in Cochise Stronghold we came across an abandoned mine and Kristina and I started talking about how fun it would be to try panning for gold. Some online research and a few days in the field getting skunked quickly led to my discovering and joining the Desert Gold Diggers.

Both individually and as a family we took to prospecting like ducks to water. We have steadily accumulated better equipment moving from a pan, to a stream sluice, power sluice, high-banker, dry washer, and ultimately a trommel. However, our recirculating mini high-banker is my “go-to” piece of equipment.

I started having success in the field almost immediately, however very early on Joe and Becky told me that my beginners luck would wear off, and persistence is the real key to long term success in prospecting. I have taken their advice to heart and try to get out to the claims as much as I can, at least once a week, year round, rain or shine.

I am always looking for new partners and am happy to team up with club members for a day out regardless of experience level, ESPECIALLY if prospective partners have a 4WD and are willing to drive!

Outside of prospecting Kristina and I are avid outdoorsmen who enjoy hiking, fishing, camping and particularly rock climbing. We are prolific First Ascentionists, having established more than 100 pitches (rope lengths) of bolted sport climbs, and another 50 pitches of climbing using traditional removable protection, mostly here in southern Arizona.

Professionally, I have worked in the greenhouse and nursery trade for most of my adult life, focusing particularly on hydroponics, aquaponics and greenhouse cultivation of rare cacti and succulents.

I hope to see you out on the claims!

—Nick Martel



Outing Director's Report: June 7 (Hope Claims)

We met at the Highway 83 and Gardner Canyon turnoff at 7:00 AM. Twenty-one (21) members signed in and we then caravanned to the detector hunt where I hid 24 nickels for prizes of gold nuggets, Goldbacks, \$2 bills, \$1 coins, and a donated 1 oz copper round. One target for a dollar coin was not found.



The majority of club members, including Ralph and I, then headed out to the Hope 1 and 2 claims while others went their own way. Ralph was testing Hope 1 while three new members and I tested Hope 2 with drywashers. We were finding a few small colors. A member had car problems and was stuck on the trail so we had to come out the other way and Ralph gave the member a ride home. Remember these trails can be very rough so *go with another member when possible and be prepared*. If you are ever stranded, call Ralph or me as we can help.

Next outing is Saturday, July 11, at the Bruiser claims. Be safe and keep finding the shiny!

—Darrel Marihugh

Outing Director's Report: July 11 (Bruiser Claims)

Club members met at 7 AM at the parking area across from Circle K in Oracle on American Ave. Twenty-one (21) members signed in for the outing.



Members then headed to the metal detect location to hunt for 24 peso targets for prizes of gold nuggets, Goldbacks, \$2 bills and \$1 coins. It was a successful hunt because all targets were found.

Members then headed to the Bruiser 2&3 claims to metal detect and to set up and operate mini recirculating high-bankers and drywashers. Some members were finding a few flakes while a few members did pretty good. The weather was sunny, but it was nice in the shade and members were having fun.

The next outing will be on Sunday, August 9, at the Wishful claims. Members should meet at the Buenos Aires Wildlife Refuge on Arivaca Road at 7 AM.

Until next time keep looking for that shiny.

—Darrell Marihugh

Members Meeting Minutes: June 2, 2026

- Ralph Montañño convened the meeting at 6:04 PM; opened with the Pledge of Allegiance; introduced new members/guests; asked about June birthdays and anniversaries; shared MASH information.
- Ralph reported on three items: (1) A gold colored ring was found at the Brusier 1&2 claims last week by a Club member. If you lost a ring contact Ray to see if it's yours; (2) Information about the AU1 claim is now available. Please check with Hank Bassaraba or Becky Marihugh for the location maps; (3) Notice of Intent (NOI) information for the Club's claims located on National Forest land are listed in the Club's website or hard copies can be obtained at the Club membership meetings on the first Tuesday of each month.
- Darrell announced that the June 7 outing will be held Sunday at the Hope Claims. Members are asked to meet at the Gardner Canyon Road and State Highway 83 turnoff at least 15 minutes prior to the 7:00 AM departure time. The group will then drive to the nugget hunt area. After the hunt, members will proceed to the Claims to prospect.
- Ralph reminded members to stay alert to fire warnings and restrictions as they are announced.
- Hank played a video on how to use your metal detectors discrimination mode, particularly around old mine dumps. The presenter said that there are three basic mode: Ferris, non-Ferris and don't-know. Use a small coil and separate your targets. The video recommended to search each individual targets separately. If you find a target and it is trash, check your hole again to see if there is still something else in the hole. If the detector signals don't-know, keep checking the target area because it may contain trash and gold together. Many Club members have had readings that indicate trash, only to find gold that also located with the trash.
- General consensus from the club members was to dig every target.
- Members asked questions about the use of pin-pointers and there was a brief discussion of the proper ways to coil the wire on your detector.
- The June raffle followed and included the following winners:
 - Hat: Robert Burgette
 - Shirt: Jim Larson
 - Badge: Hank Bassaraba
 - Yellow ticket: Mary Gracia (3) Ken Herholz (3) Ralph Montano, David Doyle, Scott P., L.M. Tipping, Keith E.; Skyler Arney; and Tom Hayes.
 - Red ticket: Hank Bassaraba
 - Find of the Month: Keith Oliver
 - Hanover Bucket: Ed Madson and Mary Garcia.
- Ralph adjourned the meeting at 7:26 PM.

Members Meeting Minutes: July 7, 2026

- President Ralph Montano convened the meeting at 6:14 PM with the Pledge of Allegiance. The meeting started later than normal due to schedule changes at the Ellie Community Center. Board members and those helping set up the meeting room may enter the building beginning at 5:30 PM and club members may enter at 6 PM.
- Ralph then asked if there were any guests at the meeting, and then asked if there was anyone having a July birthday or wedding anniversary. He asked if there was anyone to be included in the Mash report.
- Darrell announced that the July 11 outing will be held Saturday at the Bruiser Claims. Members are asked to meet at the Circle K in Oracle 15 minutes prior to the 7 AM departure time. The group will then drive to the nugget hunt area. After the hunt, members may proceed to the Bruiser 2 & 3 claims to prospect. Ralph reminded members to stay alert to fire warnings and restrictions as they are announced. Darrell also announced that the September outing will be held at the new AU1 claim. Meeting location will be the Buenos Aires Wildlife Refuge on Arivaca Road.
- Ralph and Becky provided information on new items that will be available at the Club store.
- Hank played a brief video on how to dry pan for Gold. The video demonstrated how to pan hard rock mine tailings in Australia. Ralph indicated that dry panning can result in an approximate 30% recovery.
- The July raffle followed. Winners included:
 - Hat: David Fuller
 - Shirt: David Fuller
 - Badge: Terry Fiche
 - Maroon ticket (gold nuggets): Alex Waddell, Doreen Robins, Melanie Martel (2), Steve Cowling, Kat Manning, Mike Byers, Joe Marihugh, David Doyle, and Bill Horky.
 - Red ticket: Melanie Martel and Bill Horky.
 - Find of the Month: Brad Guinyou.
- Ralph adjourned the membership meeting at 7:28 PM.
- After the membership meeting ended, board chairman David Fuller called for a special board meeting at 7:32 PM. The meeting was convened with a quorum of 9 Board members present.
- Ray moved that Becky be authorized to purchase a new Double sided printer. Motion was 2nd by Nick Martel and approved by unanimous consent.
- Becky requested that 50 embroidered Club hats be purchased for the Club store. Hank so moved, Nick 2nd and the motion was approved by unanimous consent.
- Board Meeting was adjourned at 7:38 PM.

Business Meeting Minutes: June 16, 2026

- Chairman: David Fuller convened the meeting at 6:30 PM.
- Secretary's Report: Bill read the May 19, 2026, Business meeting minutes. Darrell moved the minutes be approved, Ralph Martel 2nd the motion and it was approved by unanimous consent.
- Gazette Editor's Report: Ray reported that work on the next the gazette was proceeding. Ralph "Nick" Martel will prepare a Bio for the next addition.
- Webmaster: Anibal reported that the website was working well. If anyone has any questions or issues report them to Anibal.
- Membership Director's Report: Becky provided the report for May 1-29th. There were 11 new members, 6 renewals, and 8 non-renewals for a total Club membership of 365.
- Treasurer Report: Becky read the Treasurers report for the May reporting period. A copy of this report is available upon request.
- Gold Master's Report: Joe reported on the Clubs gold inventory, costs, and income for the May period. A copy of this report is available on request.
- Outing Director's Report: Darrell reported on the June 7 outing at the Hope claims. Twenty-one members signed in and proceeded to the metal detecting area and searched for 24 buffalo nickel targets. These were redeemed for prizes of gold, Goldbacks, \$2.00 bills, and \$1 dollar coins and a donated 1 oz copper round. One \$1 dollar coin target was not found. Members then headed to the claims. A member had car problems and was stuck on the trail. Ralph gave the member a ride home. Darrell reminded everyone that the

trails can be very rough and go with another member and be prepared. If stranded call Ralph or Darrell as they can help. The Saturday, July 11 outing will be held at the Bruiser claims. Members are to meet prior to 7 am at the Circle K at Oracle.

- Claims Director's Report: Hank reported that everything is in order. Claim location information and maps are available for Club members.
- Historian's Report: No report; Speakers for the next two meetings have not been confirmed.

OLD BUSINESS

- The topic of new Club embroidered hats/t-shirts was further discussed. New ice chests were purchased for the Club outings. There was additional discussion of items purchased for the club store.

New BUSINESS

- There was general discussion about the summer hours for Ellie Townes Center given the weekly Youth Activity programs. There was general discussion about scheduling the first outing at the AU-1 claim. Ralph Martel moved that the September 6 outing be changed from the Bruiser Claim to the AU-1 claim, Darrell 2nd and the motion was passed unanimously. There was general discussion about the Club holding a Group dig at a future date.
- Bob Melzer moved the meeting be adjourned, Grady 2nd and the motion was approved by unanimous consent at 7:18 PM.

Business Meeting Minutes: July 21, 2026

- Chairman: David Fuller convened the meeting at 6:30 PM.
- Secretary's Report: Bill read the June Business meeting minutes. Howard moved to approve, Grady 2nd, and approved by unanimous consent.
- Gazette Editor's Report: Becky read Ray's report concerning the Gazette. A draft copy was distributed to the Board members for review.
- Webmaster Report: Anibal was unable to attend the meeting. Becky highlighted issues that she will bring to his attention to help resolve.
- Membership Director's Report: Becky provided the June report with 5 new members, 12 non-renewals, and a total Club membership of 363.
- Treasurer Report: Becky read the June Treasurers report. A copy of this report is available upon request.
- Gold Master's Report: Joe reported on the Clubs gold inventory, costs, and income for the June reporting period. A copy of this report is available on request.
- Outing Director's Report: Darrell reported on the July 11 outing at the Bruiser claims. Specific information about the outing may be found on page 5. The next outing will be held August 9th at the Wishful claims.
- Claims Director's Report: - Hank reported that 1,000, dollar coins were ordered for Club prizes. Work has also continued on organizing the club store.
- Historian's Report: Mary reported that she is continuing to work on getting speakers from Asarco and the University of Arizona Geology Department for the Clubs up-coming meetings.

OLD BUSINESS

- Ralph presented samples of shirts embroidered with the Club emblem and name. The club patch cost \$15 dollars and the name was an additional \$5.00. Options for purchasing the new hats/shirts at the club store were discussed.

New BUSINESS

- Becky read a letter from two documentary film makers about filming prospecting activities in the heat of summer. Their was general agreement to get more information about the project. Ralph informed the Board that arrangements to pay the Claim renewal bills will be made in August. There was general discussion about renewing the contract for Port-potties prior to the October outing. Becky moved, Grady 2nd that the current provider be retained for the next outing and that options for lowering the cost be explored.
- Becky informed the Board about a Go Fund Me page being set up for a member needing a lung transplant. Grady moved that this information be shared in the Gazette and that the Board respond as appropriate, Hank 2nd, and the motion passed by unanimous consent.
- Ralph reported on the need for a future sale of donated prospecting equipment. There was general discussion including the use of the funds to help pay for a Club Group dig. It was unanimously agreed that information/photos regarding the items be included in the next Gazette.
- Darrel moved that the meeting be adjourned, Nick 2nd and the motion was approved by unanimous consent at 7:32 PM.

What's Happening with Gold Prices?

In one of the most dramatic starts to any year, gold soared to record highs in January 2026, crossing above \$5,500 per ounce before dipping below \$4,000/oz in late June—a 27% decrease. Overall, the spot price of gold has traded mostly sideways. Trade concerns, geopolitical crises involving Iran, Israel, and the US, and central bank buying and selling have contributed to gold's volatile spot price.

Down roughly 20% year-to-date, gold nonetheless ranks among the top performers over the past 12 months, as other assets play catch-up. The first half of 2026 showed that gold remains sensitive to heightened geopolitical concerns and abrupt shifts in investor sentiment. It also showcased the growing relevance of Asian markets in gold price discovery. At current levels, gold's price is broadly in line with a global backdrop of moderate growth, cooling but still elevated inflation, and expectations of further – but limited – central bank tightening. Under these conditions, gold will likely stay relatively rangebound ($\pm 5\%$). However, the stage is set for a possible breakout.

On the upside, clear catalysts – a worsening economy or renewed geopolitical shock, a shift towards lower interest-rate expectations, or a wave of dip buying – could reignite gold's momentum and lift it back towards \$4,500/oz or above. If the signals are strong, gold could push even higher. Conversely, an environment of resilient growth, rising yields, and calmer markets could see gold slip further – though a fall of more than 10% from current levels may be tempered by bargain-hunting demand.

Greg Shearer, head of Base & Precious Metals at JP Morgan, acknowledges that recent investor interest in gold has declined. “Gold is stuck in a bit of a technical no-man's land, trudging above the 200-day moving average around \$4,340/oz and capped for now below the 50-day moving average at \$4,730/oz. Amid this sideways plod, and with growing worries that the Fed might have to respond to energy-driven inflation with hikes, gold is on the back burner for most investors at the moment,” Shearer said.

One of the strongest factors driving up the price of gold was central bank buying around the globe. From 2021 to 2025, central bank gold purchases averaged 225 tons per quarter — roughly double the pace from 2016 to 2020. As 2026 has progressed, that pace appears to have cooled significantly. Central banks sold 129 tons of gold in the first quarter of the year, while net reported purchases of gold amounted to only 16 tons in the first quarter of 2026, representing a sharp drop in momentum.

China appears to be making the most purchases of gold at this time, from around a one-ton-per-month pace for the six months through February to five tons in March and eight tons in April.”

One unanswered question remains: will gold prices hit all-time highs again in 2026?

The preceding excerpts were obtained from the following two sources:
<https://www.jpmorgan.com/insights/global-research/commodities/gold-prices>
<https://www.gold.org/goldhub/research/gold-mid-year-outlook-2026>

Gold Price: Year-To-Date (YTD) Trend

Gold closed at **\$4,063** an ounce on July 20, 2026, and has recently trended down from a high of \$5,344 an ounce on January 29, 2026.



An Interesting Arizona Find: Gold in Quartz

An incredible gold specimen from Arizona was discovered using a metal detector by a prospector, Bud Guthrie, in 1989. Unfortunately, the treasure that Bud Guthrie had found ended up being well over a foot below ground requiring more than a bit of digging to extract what is one of the largest nuggets ever to come out of the Grand Canyon State even though it was found almost 40 years ago.

The astounding Gold in Quartz nugget, found in Dolan Springs, Mohave County, Arizona, was the find of a lifetime for Bud Guthrie and the nugget has achieved a good bit of fame in the subsequent 35-plus years after its unearthing. After spending hour after hour searching with his "gold bug" metal detector, and turning up little save an occasional stray bullet, Guthrie moved a few miles east into desert country where there appeared to be some old mine workings. Sweeping the open areas between scrub bushes, he was rewarded with a beep and began to dig. A full 16 inches down he ran into something solid and the rest, as they say, is history.



Fred: the Gold in Quartz Nugget

The superlative specimen, lovingly named "Fred" by its finder, weighs 70 ounces and is estimated to contain 60 ounces of gold. This exceptional piece, from the well-documented find, has been featured in several magazine articles and mineral displays including being awarded the Copper medallion during the special Arizona Centennial exhibit at the Tucson Gem & Mineral Show.

Excerpts obtained at: <https://fineart.ha.com/itm/minerals/golds/gold-in-quartzdolan-springsmohave-coarizona-usa-total-3-items-/a/5324-72037.s>

Gold Nugget Raffle



The **4.6 gram** gold nugget will be raffled at the August membership meeting on Tuesday, August 4.

Raffle tickets are \$2.00 each and additional tickets may be purchased at the meeting.



4.6 gram nugget

Club Store

Be sure to stop by the Desert Gold Diggers Club Store at the monthly membership meetings. You can purchase clothing and prospecting items such as:

- Columbia long-sleeve shirts
- DGD polo shirts, T-shirts, hats, and patches
- DGD club license plates
- DGD window transfer decals
- Bucket handle grip replacements, scoops, and numerous other prospecting items.

The Club Store also carries laminated color topo maps with the GPS coordinates and directions to the claims. The store is in the process of re-stocking and it may take some time to purchase new items and we appreciate everyone's patience.

Please help support Desert Gold Diggers with purchases from our club

MASH Report

DGD member Chris Warren's partner, Patricia, is in need of a double lung transplant. Patty has idiopathic pulmonary fibrosis (IPF), an incurable lung disease that, if left untreated, always results in death. Her condition has deteriorated to the point that the Mayo Clinic in Phoenix has told her she is now a good candidate for transplant.



Patty

Chris and Patricia will need to move to Dallas where the hospital performing the double lung transplant is located. The cost of the surgery approaches 1 million dollars. While insurance covers a great deal of that cost, it doesn't cover it all. Chris can't leave the house to work as he is her caregiver, so that limits their ability to cover monthly bills.

Chris and Patty would be forever grateful for any assistance during this incredibly difficult time. Please access the following site if you would like to make a donation:

<https://www.givesendgo.com/help-us-get-a-double-lung-transpl-gcthk>

Ralph will provide additional information at the membership meeting on August 4.

Market Place: Equipment for Sale

Desert Gold Diggers is selling five pieces of sophisticated prospecting equipment that will be displayed at the August membership meeting. Any reasonable offer will be considered and proceeds will fund a future common dig at a weekend outing.

Minelab GP 3000

Pulse Induction metal detector which includes two difference coils, harness, and carrying case.

Whites TM808 Speciality Metal Detector

This metal detector can find treasures buried anywhere from 4-20 feet deep. It's operable virtually anywhere, regardless of interference or ground minerals.

SSP-2050 Pulse Induction Discriminator

A pulse induction metal detecting instrument with 18-inch coil designed for deep detection in challenging environments, it excels in finding metal objects buried deep.

Pro-Accumeter VI

A scientific instrument used for accurately locating treasure, subsurface metals, placer deposits, and ore deposits and used geologists, prospectors, and treasure hunters.

Direction Location System (DLS)

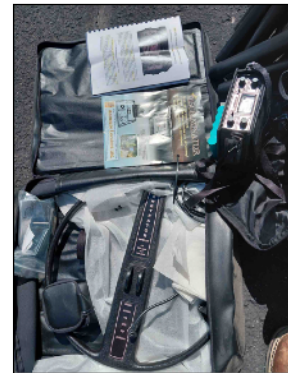
This system utilizes advanced technology to improve detection accuracy and efficiency in locating gold.



Minelab GP 3000



Whites TM-808



SSP 2050



Pro-Accumeter



Direction Locating System

Record Gold Nuggets from California

The California Gold Rush sent thousands of people west with the same dream: find enough gold to change their lives overnight. Most prospectors spent long, exhausting days sifting through riverbeds and dirt for tiny flakes or small nuggets. Every once in a while, though, someone found something so large that it became part of Gold Rush legend.

The Calaveras Gold Nugget

One of those discoveries was a massive gold nugget that weighed as much as a grown man. The nugget weighed 195 troy pounds and was discovered in 1854 at Carson Hill, California, and was valued at \$43,000. Back then, even a modest find could transform a prospector's future, and this discovery played a significant role in the California Gold Rush, as it highlighted the area's rich mineral resources and attracted many prospectors to the region.

Carson Hill is now a ghost town in Calaveras County, California, but it was once a productive gold mining site during the California Gold Rush. The town is named after Sergeant James Carson, who traveled through Weber Creek and joined a gold mining party before heading south in search of gold. The group panned for gold at a small tributary of the Stanislaus River, and that stretch of the river became known as Carson Creek, and the area later took the name Carson Hill after James Carson.

On November 29, 1854, five miners were digging for gold at the Morgan Mine in Carson Hill when one of them, Perkins, discovered the 195-troy-pound gold nugget. The men originally planned to take it to New York, but they sold it on the way to a New Orleans buyer for \$40,000.

The California Gold Rush had a profound impact on the state and the country, bringing tremendous wealth and helping shape California into the prosperous state it is today. The Carson Hill gold nugget remains one of the most famous and valuable gold nuggets ever discovered in California.

Though the whereabouts of the gold nugget are unknown, it remains one of the most popular nuggets ever discovered during the California Gold Rush. Many more miners and everyday people flocked to Carson Hill after the discovery, and it became a symbol of the wealth and prosperity the Gold Rush brought to the state.

Aside from the 195-troy-pound Carson Hill (Calaveras) nugget, California saw several other remarkable gold nugget discoveries during and after the Gold Rush. These finds helped fuel the rush of people eager to dig for gold across the state:

The Monumental Gold Nugget

The Monumental gold nugget was discovered in 1869 at the Sierra Buttes Mine in Sierra County and weighed 103 pounds. It was later broken into chunks and gold dust, though a replica is on display at the Kentucky Mine Museum.

Record Gold Nuggets (*continued*)

The Magalia Nugget

In 1859, miners found the nugget in Magalia, California, and it weighed 54 troy pounds. The original was melted down, but replicas are owned by the Paradise Chamber of Commerce and the Division of Mines and Geology.

The 50-Pound Nugget From Tuolumne County

In 1851, Mr. Strain found a 50-pound slab nugget near Knapp's Ranch in Tuolumne County. The nugget was about 14 inches long and was worth about \$8,500 after it was crushed and melted.

The El Dorado Nugget

Miners discovered a crystalline gold piece near Spanish Dry Diggings in El Dorado County in 1878. It weighed more than 12.6 troy pounds and is now on display at the California Mining and Minerals Museum in Mariposa County.

The Mojave Nugget

The Mojave nugget was found near Randsburg, California, in 1977 by Ty Paulsen using a metal detector. It weighed about 12 troy pounds and was later donated to the Natural History Museum of Los Angeles County. (The Boot of Cortez)

California has a long history of gold discovery, and the 195-pound Calaveras Nugget found at Carson Hill helped shape the state's development and the nation's economy. Today, gold mining continues in California on a smaller scale, still generating revenue for the state.

Many large and spectacular fragments of native gold have been found in California. Most of these were taken during the gold rush and contributed further to the excitement in the mining camps and "stampedes" to the various "diggings". Few of these nuggets exist today since most were melted down soon after they were discovered.

Although bigger is often better when it comes to gold nuggets, the most famous nugget of all, found by Marshall at Sutter's Mill in 1848 and which led to California's gold rush, ***weighed less than a quarter of an ounce***. It is not known if this nugget still exists. A flake of gold which Captain Folsom sent to Washington in 1848 and described as Marshall's first piece is now in the Smithsonian Institution.

Additional information regarding gold nugget discoveries may be found at: <https://247tempo.com/the-gold-nugget-so-massive-it-weighed-more-than-most-men/> and <https://westernmininghistory.com/library/203/page1/>

Gold Monster 2000 Review

The January 2026 issue of the Gazette contained information on some of the new technology in metal detectors in 2026 as well as the more popular metal detectors. The new Minelab Gold Monster 2000 was on that list and has quickly established itself as one of the most talked-about gold detectors in recent years. Designed specifically for gold prospecting, it combines advanced Multi-Au™ technology, lightweight construction, and beginner-friendly operation. The Gold Monster 2000 was developed as the successor to the highly successful Gold Monster 1000, which was initially introduced by Minelab back in 2017.

Key features of the new Gold Monster 2000 include:

- Multi-Au™ Hybrid SMF-PI Technology
- Automatic Ground Balancing
- Fully Waterproof Design
- Lightweight Construction
- Compact Folding Shaft
- Multiple Search Modes
- Rechargeable Battery System
- Advanced Gold Detection Algorithms

There are many club members that own and have found gold with their Minelab Gold Monster 1000. Although both detectors have a similar appearance, there are significant differences between the two. The following chart provides information on the difference between the detectors.

Comparison of Minelab Gold Monster 1000 and Gold Monster 2000

Feature	Gold Monster 1000	Gold Monster 2000
Detection Technology	Single-frequency VLF (≈ 45 kHz), tuned for small-gold sensitivity.	Multi-Au™ SMF (12–76 kHz) simultaneous multi-frequency for both fine and deep gold.
Ground Handling	Automatic ground balance and noise cancel; best for moderate soils.	SMF reduces false signals in hot ground and black sands; ideal for mineralized terrain.
Target ID	Simple Gold Chance Indicator (Gold vs. Iron).	0–99 numeric Target ID + real-time gold probability meter for faster decisions.
Audio Response	Basic high/low tone with threshold.	Echo Wave™ audio with smoother threshold and enhanced tone clarity for faint targets.
Design	Lightweight, collapsible aluminum shaft.	Telescopic carbon-fiber shaft, waterproof coil (1 m), rain-resistant IP55 control pod.
Skill Level	Beginner to Intermediate – turn on and go.	Intermediate to Pro – more data and fine control.
Warranty	2 Years	2 Years

Gold Monster 2000 Review *(continued)*

The Gold Monster 2000 is primarily designed for natural gold prospecting rather than general treasure hunting. It is important to note that the Multi-Au technology is a unique feature of the Minelab Gold Monster 2000. It combines simultaneous multi-frequency detection with Pulse Induction-inspired signal processing, specifically designed for gold prospecting. The Multi-Au technology is proprietary to the Minelab Gold Monster 2000, making it distinct in the market for gold prospecting. Other detectors may have their own unique technologies, but they do not replicate the specific capabilities of the Multi-Au system.

The Gold Monster 2000 performs exceptionally well on:

- Fine gold
- Small flakes
- Tiny nuggets
- Shallow natural gold deposits

The detector maintains strong performance on medium-sized nuggets commonly found in active prospecting regions. Although the Gold Monster 2000 performs well for its class, it is not designed to compete directly with premium deep-search detectors such as the GPZ 8000. Prospectors focused primarily on deep gold deposits may benefit from larger Pulse Induction systems.

Sensitivity is where the Gold Monster 2000 truly shines and many prospectors consider sensitivity to small gold one of the detector's strongest advantages. This makes it particularly useful in areas where larger nuggets have already been recovered and only smaller targets remain. Consequently, the Gold Monster 2000 is an excellent choice if:

- You hunt small gold nuggets.
- You want a lightweight detector.
- You are new to prospecting.
- You need excellent value for money.

User Reviews and Community Feedback

Prospectors consistently highlight several strengths. The most common positive comments include:

- Excellent sensitivity
- Easy operation
- Lightweight design
- Fast setup (lightweight telescopic shaft with collapsible carbon-fibre construction)
- Great performance on small nuggets

Common criticisms include:

- Less depth than premium detectors
- Limited advanced customization
- Not designed for large deep targets

Gold Monster 2000 Review *(continued)*

Overall user satisfaction remains very high, especially among hobby prospectors and small-gold hunters. Users have stated it delivers all the benefits of a highly sensitive VLF detector while at the same time offering ground-handling capabilities that approach those of a PI detector.

The information in this article was obtained at <https://goldot-tec.com/blog/gold-monster-2000-review/>. For those interested in learning about the top 10 metal detectors in 2026, you may want to read the article *The Best Gold Metal Detectors (2026): A Complete Buyer's & Prospector's Guide* which may be found at: <https://seriousdetecting.com/pages/top-gold-detectors>.

Some Gold Prospecting Humor

An old geezer, who had successfully prospected for gold for many years, became very bored and decided to open a medical clinic. He put a sign up outside that said: "Dr. Geezer, MD: Get your treatment for \$500 -- if not cured get back \$1,000."

A local doctor, Doctor Young, was positive that this old prospector was an old fraud and didn't know beans about medicine. He thought this would be a great opportunity to get \$1,000, so he went to Dr. Geezer's clinic and this is what happened:

Dr. Young: "Dr. Geezer, I have lost all taste in my mouth. Can you please help me?"

Dr. Geezer: "Nurse, please bring medicine from box 22 and put 3 drops in Dr. Young's mouth."

Dr. Young: "Aaagh! What are you doing—this is gasoline!"

Dr. Geezer: "Congratulations! You've got your taste back—that will be \$500."

Dr. Young was very annoyed, but paid Dr. Geezer. After a couple days of stewing, Dr. Young went back to recover his money:

Dr. Young: "I have lost my memory and I cannot remember anything."

Dr. Geezer: "Nurse, please bring medicine from box 22 and put 3 drops in the patient's mouth."

Doctor Young: "Oh no you don't, that's gasoline!"

Dr. Geezer: "Congratulations! You've got your memory back—that will be \$500."

Dr. Young, now having after lost \$1000, leaves angrily. After several days he was fuming and decided enough is enough and goes back to Dr. Geezer's office:

Dr. Young: "My eyesight has become weak I can hardly see!"

Dr. Geezer: "Well, I don't have any medicine for that, so, here's your \$1000 back."

Dr. Young: "But this is only \$500..."

Dr. Geezer: "Congratulations! You got your vision back! That will be \$500."

The moral of the story: NEVER try to outsmart a "seasoned" gold prospector!



August 2026 Special Events

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

September 2026 Special Events

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
AUG 30	AUG 31	1 Member's Meeting 6:00 PM	2	3	4	5 AU1 Claim 7:00 AM
6	7 LABOR DAY	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15 Business Meeting 6:30 PM	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30			

Editor's Note

The dog days of summer are finally upon us and prospecting in the hot, humid weather can be exhausting. There is a lot of prospecting equipment that makes the job easier, which gives credence to the old saying "work smarter, not harder."

If you are interested in looking at equipment that can make locating gold a bit easier, you'll enjoy the prospecting equipment that will be displayed at the August 4 membership meeting. The club will be selling some pulse induction (PI) equipment (p.13) that can locate targets buried as much as 20 feet deep. Personally, I have no desire to dig a 20 foot hole, but I would be game to find a nice nugget that's buried a bit deeper than what my Gold Monster 1000 can detect!



Ray Darragh, DGD Gazette Editor

Be safe, have fun, and hope to see you at the next membership meeting.

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



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"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.