

THE FLUME

The Park County Republican & Fairplay Flume

Park County Historical Society gold panning trip made for a great day

Visited the site where gold was first found in Park County By Pat Mauro, Contributor

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Using a pan

Bill Douthett demonstrating his gold panning technique. (Photo courtesy Pat Mauro)

The Park County Historical Society gold panning and mining trip Aug. 11 was a day of great fun and adventure. We all met at the Como Community Center, and drove to Peabody's (former railroad siding and placer claim), across from Robert's Cabin, at the foot of Boreas Pass.

As we approached the Tarryall Creek crossing, we stopped to review a picture in the handout distributed for the trip. One picture, taken from the highway history

sign at the top of Kenosha Pass, shows a Ute Encampment in South Park, but it doesn't state where in South Park that it's located.

We made our way up to Robert's Cabin and parked there. From there, we hiked down to Tarryall Creek, and set up our gold panning and sluicing operation. Bill Douthett, grandson of PCHS founders Harold and Lenore Warren, demonstrated the fine art of gold panning.



Using a sluice

Bill Douthett setting up a sluice box in Tarryall Creek. (Photo courtesy Pat Mauro)

Douthett has been prospecting in Park County for many years, continuing his family involvement with Park County history.

We pulled samples to pan from tailings left from the days of dredging on the creek, by the Cooley Gravel Co. in the

1940s and others that preceded their operation.

We broke for lunch, and every one inspected their pans to check their findings. We also explained how the hydraulic placer mining was done, which was another mining process which operated farther up Tarryall Creek.

After we all ate, some of the attendees departed. We moved farther up the creek, where two attendees had been panning. We set up the sluice box, and processed diggings from the creek, where a diversion structure was installed.

We were able to use the material processed through the sluice box, to pan the higher concentrates after being processed. We panned the higher grade samples after that.

We then left the site, and searched the area for the original site of Hamilton, using the pictures from the handout. We were able to find some rocks, showing some of the structures' foundations seen in the photos, which was where gold was first found in the county in 1859.

Everyone enjoyed the experience, and the weather was great. We plan on having another trip next year, so stay tuned. See us at www.parkcountyhistory.com, and on our Facebook page.