



Park County Historical Society tours Wellington Lake mining area

Contributed by Pat Mauro, Park County Historical Society

October 16, 2015

The Park County Historical Society took a field trip to a mining site near Wellington Lake on County Road 68.

The mining site was part of the Consolidated Feldspar Corp., located in Parkdale County.



The edge of the pit

The pond at the bottom of the mining pit was formed when a previous owner hit ground water. Current mining claim owner Kirk Hilbelink thinks the best ore might be at the bottom of the water. (Courtesy Photo)

We met at McGraw Memorial Park, and our entourage drove to the parking area near Windy Peak Outdoor lab (formerly Sylvania of the Rockies). We had to hike to the mine site. The hike was spectacular, as we wound up the hill to the mining site. We passed the remains of one of the buildings, when the

Consolidated Mining Co. was in operation, circa 1950-60.

The mining claim owner, Kirk Hilbelink, was our guide. He explained how he has been working the claim for more than five years. We were able to make our way around the pit, which had created a beautiful site itself. A pond is located in the pit, and it's believed there may be some great finds there, but it's been a trick for Kirk to drain it.

The area has many aspen trees, which were shining in their gold attire. Geologist Peter Modreski explained to our group, the many types of geologic formations that created the various types of gems and minerals in the area.

Kirk explained the locations of various digs he's made in the pit, and showed examples of his finds, and how he found them.

We had an enjoyable lunch in the pit area. We made our way around the pit area, to see the various gem/mineral formations that make up the mining area. We hiked back down the hill, and stopped to see the cab of one of the company trucks, which is still on site.

Our group then drove to Estabrook, where we stopped to view the train depot, which is still

in use as a residence. We also viewed the railroad bridge, now used as part of the driveway to get over the North Fork of the South Platte River.



Going nowhere

Author Pat Mauro sits in the remains of an old truck near the mining claim. (Courtesy Photo)

The tour continued to the Insmont area, where we were able to view the “witchhat” home, built circa 1900, and was the former residence of former PCHS member/artist Frank Vavra. Frank’s artwork hangs in the Bailey Public Library.

This concluded another one of a kind adventure of the Park County Historical Society. Join the society, to keep history alive in Park County. Watch The Flume’s Community Corner section for upcoming events or visit www.parkcountyhistory.com.