

# Pearl Lake, NH

By Larry Bull

Pearl Lake, NH is located in Lisbon, NH not far off of Route 302. It is in what would be called northern NH and takes about three and half hours to get there from the Worcester, MA area.

The lake area is very pretty during the fall with the fall foliage early and the snow on the nearby mountains in the later fall providing a beautiful background. I know that the springtime and summer also have their beautiful views, but the bugs can reduce the quality of the collecting experience.

The collecting area is across the road from the lake on a very steep hillside. You have to make your way up the hillside some one hundred yards or so before you get into the heart of the collecting area. As a side note make sure you behave as the local police chief or sheriff lives in the first house to the right of the collecting area as you face the hillside.

There is a large area of rock outcropping where the effects of long time exposure to the elements have weathered the schist away to set the staurolite and garnet crystals in relief from the rock itself. Unfortunately the same weathering which set the crystals in relief has sometimes had some adverse impact on the crystals of the staurolite themselves. But keep faith as that is not always the case. It just takes some patient looking to find those which have not been weathered to such a degree as to make them undesirable. The real difficulty in locating the good ones is all the moss covering the rock. It is everywhere in large thick mats. It takes some work to expose the rock, but can definitely be well worth the effort. However, the work does not end with the finding but only now begins. The biggest problem is getting these wonderful crystals out of the matrix without destroying them. The best strategy seems to be to take off as large a piece of rock as possible. (You can always trim it down.) The schist seems pretty hard until you try to get a piece of the rock to slab off. It's only then that you see how soft the rock is and that instead of splitting the rock just kind of pulverizes. But if you keep at it you will eventually get the rock to slab off. Hopefully it will contain on its face some wonderful staurolite crystals.

The other way to go about finding staurolite and garnet crystals is to dig in the soil for the crystals that over time have managed to weather out completely from the rock. This is a more difficult task as the amount of soil for the most part is limited and where it is the roots can be a formidable obstacle to deal with. But with some perseverance and hard work it can prove to be very productive.

The evidence is present as witness to the fact that some people have made the effort in the past. That is always a good sign that something must have found worth the effort or at least that's the way an optimist would view it. Although there are a few of us demented rockhounds who it seems sometimes just dig for the sake of digging.

I had not collected in this location for maybe ten years or so (my how time flies) but another member of our club, Ed Anderson, had mentioned wanting to go there. So, we set off the last day of September 2005 to see what we could find.

I had not been to the location since before the sheriff/chief built his new home. Things did look a little different, but I am not sure if that is just hazy memory or the changes created by the construction in the area.

Again it was not hard to find the staurolite and garnet crystals, but finding the good ones presents the challenge. We did find some good areas to work both the rock itself and soil digging. In both cases

good material was found. We had a very pleasant day although it was unseasonable cold (only in the 40's) for that time of year. On the plus side there certainly were no bugs to be seen.

The ride to get up there and back is always something special and especially so the part as you pass through the heart of the White Mountains on Interstate 93.

This trip begat several more trips over the course of the next twelve months culminating in the most recent trip on Friday September 1, 2006. Up to this point every trip (two) had been more and more productive. But this trip, things did not go as well. Ed was very enthusiastic as was his son, Kevin. Both Ed and Kevin had been up there recently and done well. So we all thought we were really going to find some great staurolite crystals. Unfortunately such was not the case we started well with both Kevin and I finding a nice matrix piece in the first couple of minutes, but after that it was mostly garnets or worse, nothing. It's really hard to find nothing as there are garnets all over but that was the case on this day.

Then after cleaning up and packing up, Ed pulled the vehicle out on the road only to discover that we had a flat tire which appeared to have been man-made.

We have not given up on this location, but we all said we were not in any big hurry to rush back.

Staurolite On Schist, Crystal size 8 x 15 mm

