

2. Kalispell Pyrite

See map on page 22.

Land type: Mountains

GPS: N48° 33.91140' / W114° 40.45200'

Best season: Late spring through fall

Land manager: USFS, Flathead National Forest

Material: Limonite, pyrite

Tools: Rock hammer

Vehicle: Any

Accommodations: Camping and RV parking in Flathead National Forest; camping, RV parking, and motels in Kalispell

Special attractions: Flathead Lake and Glacier National Park. The Northwest

Montana Historical Society Museum in Kalispell has displays on local history.

Finding the site: From US 93 north of Kalispell, just before the town of Olney and

about 0.5 mile after the Girl Scouts Camp, turn left onto Good Creek Road. Drive

3.3 miles and turn right onto Martin Creek Road. Drive 4.3 miles and park on the

right at FR 910A. If the gate is closed, walk 0.5 mile up FR 910A to the sharp corner

and several outcrops of blue-green rock in the mountainside. Look for evidence of

previous digging.

Rockhounding

The Belt rock in this particular area produces some quality pseudomorph limonite after pyrite cubes. Originally formed as pyrite, the limonite occurs as a secondary material due to oxidation of the original pyrite. Small samples of pyrite cubes can be found in the greenish-blue rocks just before the bend; but the limonite after pyrite cubes, which are up to 1½ inches in size, are found in the rock outcrops just at, and slightly past, the corner. The outcrop has been highly worked so you may have to expand your search from the starting point. The biggest cubes are found by breaking pieces loose from the parent rock and hoping for a lucky split. Small pieces can be found in the loose rocks at the bottom of the outcrop. The cubes tend to easily “pop” free from the belt rocks.

Sites 1 and 2

