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searching Facebook for rock-hounding within “Groups.” There, people will find many opportunities to join communities who do regular meetups.

So what do people do with their bounty? Rock tumbler can be inexpensive, and with a bit of polishing, people can have the materials to make jewelry and various crafts. Other people display their local rocks with other objects found at the beach.

#### Top places to go rock-hounding locally

If people are ready to get out there and hunting for their own semi-precious

stones, the best places to look are along the mouths of creeks entering to the ocean, or within the creeks themselves as the rocks flow from the mountains to the ocean. Here is a list of ideal spots to check out from the north end of the Cape Perpetua Scenic Area down to Hecla Head:

- Neptune State Park
- Cummins Creek



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Scouring rocky beaches for unusual stones, shells and driftwood is a calming activity to undertake all year at places like Bob Creek State Wayside.

- Strawberry Hills Wayside (just south of Nancy Creek)
- Bob Creek State Wayside (Bob Creek)
- Stonefield Beach State Park (Tenmile Creek)
- Muriel O. Ponsler Memorial State Park (Big Creek)
- Carl G. Washburne Memorial State Park (China Creek)

#### Rocks people may find

The most common rocks people will find in the area are various types of agates and jaspers, both of which are originated from chalcedony, which is a cryptocrystalline quartz mineral. Both types of rock are formed in igneous (volcanic) rock cavities.

Generally, most agates and jaspers took shape when gases were trapped in lava flows, and as the lava subsequently cooled and hardened, the empty fissures filled up with groundwater heavy in silica, or

quartz, and other mineral impurities.

You can tell which type of chalcedony it is based on the presence of various inclusions in the rock; jasper is often darker and opaque with spotted or striped patterns, whereas agates are translucent or semitransparent with uneven bands.

Agate is also harder and less porous than jasper, and beach agates will be smaller in size than those found further inland.

Agates range in color, and can be white, gray, orange, brown, pink, green, purple, black or yellow, while blue and green agates are rare to find.

Jaspers contain iron oxides, hydroxides and other impurities which cause them to be found with unique, multicolor combinations and patterns, and they are usually mottled, spotted, ringed or striped. Colors include brown, yellow, red and green, again with blue jaspers rarer to find.

Specifically in the Cape Perpetua area, people can find moss, sagenitic and carnelian agates, as well as bloodstone jaspers.

#### Best tips for a rockhounding trip

Winter is the ideal time to go rockhounding because

the beaches are less crowded so they will be less picked-over. There are also more storms in winter, and just after a storm as tides are moving from high to low is the best time for beach rock-hounding.

Exposed gravel beds and areas where there are basalt flows are close by, such as the rocky beaches at Bob Creek or the streams in China Creek, are the best locations to search for rocks.

When searching for agates specifically, people should position themselves between the rocks and the sun, with the sun behind them. If the rocks are dry, spray them with a water bottle, as semi-precious stones will be easier to distinguish when they are wet and shiny.

Always remember to stay safe on the beach, especially if people go out alone, and watch the tides. People should never turn their back on the ocean and watch out for sneaker waves.

To learn more about rockhounding, pick up a comprehensive book called “Rockhounding Oregon: A Guide to the State’s Best Rockhounding Sites” by Lars W. Johnson. People can also visit oregondiscover.com/beachcombing or rockseeker.com/category/state/oregon/ for more information about local rockhounding.

Download the USDA’s Rockhounding Guide at www.fs.usda.gov/sites/default/files/fs\_media/fs\_document/rhbrochureFS1091.pdf for rules and regulations regarding rockhounding etiquette.

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