

## A Published Report on Your Claims in Gold Basin

There's renewed interest in the treasures of King Tut's tomb since museums across the nation, including the Los Angeles County Art Museum, began exhibiting artifacts from the Boy King's tomb. But did you know that in the far northwestern corner of Arizona there's a huge basin surrounding what is known as the King Tut Mine, a basin filled with rich placer deposits?

Actually, two basins, Gold Basin and Lost Basin, are located near the King Tut Mine. During your trip to these gold-filled basins, you might want to treat your family with a visit to the old mining towns of Goldroad, Oatman, Mineral Park, Chloride and White Hills. Some are totally ghosted, while others are tourist ghost towns. A lot of nuggets and gold dust were left behind by old-timers in the high desert lands that surround these old mining camps near Kingman, including the town of Chloride, which is off Highway 93 between Dolan Springs and Kingman.

You'll find placer gold deposits west-southwest of the King Tut Mine in Gold Basin; an area that's almost within shouting distance of Grand Canyon National Park. It is

### Among a Checkerboard of Landowners

To reach the Gold Basin Placer Field, take Highway 93 toward the northwest out of Kingman and drive to the turn-off for Dolan Springs on Pierce Ferry Road. Drive through Dolan Springs to the intersection of Antares Road and Pierce Ferry Road. Take Antares Road toward the northwest, up Hualapai Wash toward the White Hills, for a distance of six miles until you come to a Jeep

road that leads to White Elephant Wash. Senator Mountain can be seen toward the west and Golden Rule Peak to the north. The entire region is south of the border of the Lake Mead National Recreation Area (which is off-limits to prospectors) and is known to geologists as the Gold Basin Dry Placers. Joshua trees, sagebrush and Yucca plants punctuate the landscape.

The Gold Basin Placers are found among a checkerboard of land

owners, including Bureau of Land Management sections, as well as private lands kept under claim by various mining companies. The placer deposits in Gold Basin were discovered in May of 1932 by W.E. Dunlop. In August of that same year, 100 men were working the basin area using dry washers, leaving behind throw-out piles.

By June of 1933, the number of men working the Gold Basin Placers was reduced to 43. In that same month, a large-scale dry-treatment plant was set up by S. Searles consisting of a grizzly, a trommel, screens and a battery of 12 large dry-washers with a capacity of 20 yards per hour. According to the Arizona Bureau of Mines' publication, *Gold Placers and Placering Arizona*, Bulletin 168: "Gold Basin is floored largely by a detrital fan that slopes eastward from the White

Hills to Hualapai Wash. This fan is approximately six miles long from west to east by five miles in maximum width."

The gold-bearing gravels in Gold Basin are found mostly in the arroyos

and gulches, between elevations of 3,300 and 2,900 feet, and are composed mainly of "medium-grained, angular schist and gneiss fragments together with a minor amount of finely divided quartz," according to the above-cited source. The thickness of the placer gravels varies from one to three feet and rest upon a bedrock of firmly cemented gravels. The gold occurs partly as flour gold and partly as angular fragments; as a result, both a metal detector and a dry washer are required to recover the gold. However, a more recent development, the Gold Buddy, a self-contained, recirculating high-banker using battery power (automobile batteries), has been used with considerable success (along with a gold detector which you can use to scout out grains of sand-sized gold nuggets) to recover gold in the basin.

### Ancient Channels of Gold-bearing Gravels

In recent years, placer geologists have determined the gold-bearing placer deposits of Gold Basin occur in weak-cemented gravels resting on top of older caliche-cemented gravels. During the latter part of the Tertiary age, stream courses containing these gold-bearing gravels realigned themselves into crisscrossing patterns at different depths. Simply put, these maneuvers created ancient channels of gold-bearing gravels. In the past, almost without exception, prospectors recovered gold by working the buried surface channels and were not aware of "...the deeper, older buried channels, terraces and cobbled basins that continue to exist just a few feet below the arroyo surface," according to Delos Toole in his book, *How to Find Arizona's Placer Gold*.

there, just to the north of the White Hills, where silver was found in 1892 and where a bad flood wiped out most of the town of White Hills just after the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. You can recover placer gold in the Gold Basin region using a metal detector, a dry washer or a self-contained high-banker like the Gold Buddy. Lode deposits, placer gold gravel and platinum group nuggets are all found throughout the region, as are meteorites. The Gold Basin ghost town site is located west of the Grand Wash Cliffs, south-southwest of the King Tut Mine, and just north of the intersections of Pierce Ferry, Stockton and Antares Roads.

Dunlop also found the nearby King Tut Placers in 1931. Here, a gravel-floored plain, from 3,000 to 4,000 feet above sea level, rises southwestward between Grapevine Wash and the base of a low northward-trending ridge locally called the Lost Basin Range," according to the above cited source. The richer gold-bearing gravels occur within an area some eight miles long by an undetermined width and are mostly composed of slab-shaped schist pebbles. These deposits are generally less than two feet thick and rest upon caliche-cemented gravels. The gold found at the King Tut Placers occurs partly as fine material and partly as flat, rugged nuggets that are known to range up to one-sixteenth of an ounce in weight. The easiest way to reach the King Tut Mine and its nearby placers is to continue on Pierce Ferry Road, past the turn-off to the Gold Basin Placers, until you come to a Jeep road that leads westward to the mine at a distance of one and three-quarters of a mile to the west of Pierce Ferry Road.

"The King Tut Placers probably originated from erosion of a group of gold-bearing quartz veins in the Lost Basin Range. The ruggedness of the gold nuggets, many of which carry attached quartz, indicates a local derivation," according to the source cited above. Lode gold deposits were discovered and worked in the Lost Basin Range in 1886 and in the Gold Basin area in the 1870's. The Cyclopic Mine, which is located in the Gold Basin District, was discov-

ered in the late 1880's and consists of several open cuts, a 55-foot shaft, several shafts from 40 to 50 feet deep, an old 300-foot incline that passed through the ore zone, and several hundred feet of old drifts and stopes, most located within 30 feet of the surface. The Cyclopic Mine is about 40 miles from Chloride, south of the Gold Basin placers. Maps and information on both the Lost Basin and Gold Basin districts can be found in Delos Toole's *Where to Find Arizona's Placer Gold*, self-published by the author, and can be purchased by contacting Toole's website at [www.DelosTooleAuthor.com](http://www.DelosTooleAuthor.com).

The ghost town of Mineral Park is just off Highway 93, which leads to Las Vegas (in case you strike it rich in Gold Basin), to the northwest of Kingman. With the Cerbat Mountains as a backdrop, the Keystone Mine makes a picturesque site with an old wooden head frame, the remains of a mill, and the wrecks of three or four buildings where gold was discovered in 1870 by soldier-prospectors attached to nearby Fort Mohave, as well as less than successful miners leaving the gold fields of California.

### A Splendid Example of a Ghost Town

On the way to Kingman, you may want to take time out to explore the completely ghosted mining town of Oatman along Old Highway 66, where you'll find the remains of numerous rock-walled structures, among them stores and homes, as well as the remains of a two-story adobe hotel. Traces of gold were found here in 1863, but the outcrops were low grade and prospectors moved elsewhere. The rich veins were there, but remained hidden for another 53 years. Further along Old Highway 66, in the direction of Kingman, you'll come to a splendid example of a tourist ghost town, Goldroad, the site of the major motion picture *How the West Was Won*. It's also where the famed Tom Reed Mine was discovered in 1908. Today, abandoned homes and stores line Goldroad's streets in addition to quaint shops catering to tourists. Between 1908 and 1931, the Oatman District, which includes the Tom Reed and other mines near Goldroad, produced more than \$36 million in gold.

Research is the key to any successful nugget-shooting expedition. You may accidentally stumble upon a nugget patch near an old mining camp; however, your best chance to succeed is to do your due diligence in advance by studying maps, particularly current topographic maps,

and books about ghost towns and old mining camps.

Aerial photographs can be most helpful in the search for old mining camps, because they reveal object and features, including prospect hole and old mines, that you normally do not see when you visit a site. The U.S. Forest Service maintains an extensive collection of aerial photos. Write to the Engineering Staff Unit, U.S. Forest Service, U.S.D.A. Washington, D.C. 20250 for more information.

Good luck and good hunting!

### Sources:

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