

SOME ICE AGE GEOLOGY, by Art Storbo, January 2026



My wife Sharon and I have pursued our hobby of Ice Age geology for nearly 20 years in retirement. That hobby has included belonging to two rock clubs - Bellevue and North Seattle, as well as the Puget Lobe chapter of the Ice Age Floods Institute (IAFI), for which I wrote most of a brochure that can be seen at this website: <https://npshistory.com/publications/iafi/brochures/puget-lobe.pdf>

In early fall 2025, we extended our Ice Age geology experience while on a trip to Minnesota and the New England states. While in Ellsworth, Maine, we



Sharon and our daughter Jennie on exposed schist with grooves left from rocks embedded in ice moving south some 15,000 years ago, Ellsworth, Maine.

saw the historic spot where Swiss Geologist Louis Agassiz finally convinced American geologists in 1857 that North America had indeed been in an Ice Age, when present-day northern tier states were overrun by ice from Canada some 15,000 years ago.

While in New Hampshire, we saw North America's largest glacial erratic – the Madison Boulder. Composed of granite, it was dragged by the ice only about 10 miles. It's nearly 90 feet long, 23 feet high, and 37 feet wide. It weighs an estimated 5,000 tons.

We also collected a few yooperlites. Yooperlites are found on the south shore of Lake Superior, by walking the shoreline gravels after sunset and at night with UV light in hand, pointed to the gravels afoot. Yooperlites, a billion years old, contain sodalite – sodium aluminum silicate chloride, $\text{Na}_8(\text{Al}_6\text{Si}_6\text{O}_{24})\text{Cl}_2$ - and glows in UV light, so are said to be “easy” to find at night. Sharon thought that was a bit optimistic, as our chances of finding a yooperlite on first try were far less than 50-50, and Michigan was not on our itinerary. Yooperlites are so named because they are found in the Upper Peninsula (UP) of Michigan, where locals are known as UPrs or YooPers. Yooperlites were picked

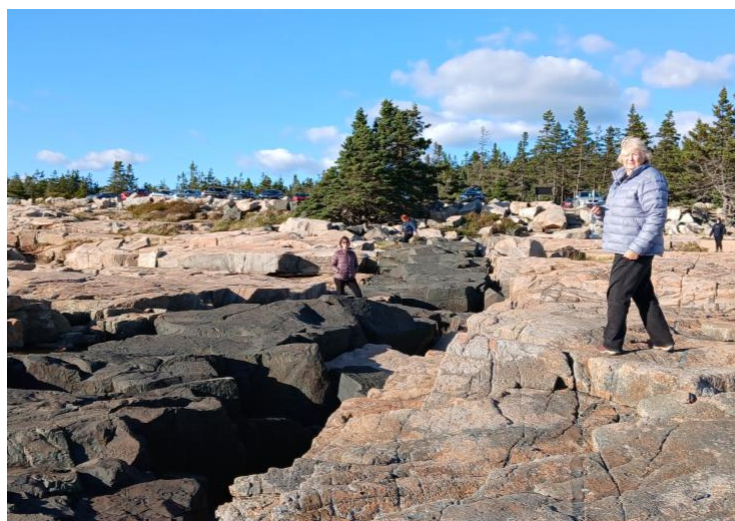


Jennie and Art in front of the Madison Boulder, North America's largest glacial erratic, about 83 feet long, weighing an estimated 4,662 tons. It is found in New Hampshire.

up by the ice in Ontario, Canada and carried south from Canada by the last ice sheet, then dropped in this part of the Great Lakes area where the ice melted. We picked up our yooperlites at a local rock shop in Bangor, Maine.



Yooperlite under UV light, from Lake Superior area.



Sharon near a 12 ft-wide intrusion of black diabase in white granite, Schoodic Peninsula, Maine.

Also of interest was Maine's Schoodic Peninsula, very rugged, with huge diabase (black basalt) intrusions in cracks in the white basement granite, some as wide as 12 feet.