



## Arizona Rocks 33

Text and photos by Ray Grant

Here are some more places of geologic interest in Flagstaff that are worth a visit. If hiking (sliding) up and down a cinder cone seems like way too much work, at Red Mountain you can walk on a relatively flat trail into the middle of an eroded cinder cone (there is one area where you need to climb a very short distance and there were stairs there the last time I visited). Red Mountain is about 25 miles northwest of Flagstaff on route 180 and there is signage on the road about where to stop.

Red Mountain is unusual because you can walk into the center of the cinder cone where it has eroded away. The eroded formations are quite spectacular. Also, if you look down you can find black crystals of augite and clear crystals of labradorite that have weathered out of the volcanic material.

The Grand Falls of the Little Colorado is also worth a visit, but you want to go when there is water flowing in the Little Colorado. The best times are late spring when snow in the White Mountains is melting or in the summer after some good monsoon rain in the White Mountains. When the Little Colorado is flowing it picks up lots of mud so the falls have been described as mud falls or chocolate falls. A lava flow filled in part of the small canyon that the river was flowing through forcing it around the flow and the falls formed where it goes back into the canyon. It is a good idea to go on the internet and find out more information about this trip and to get directions. I was there some years ago and you could drive with a regular car, but the road was dirt and rough.



Sign for Red Mountain Trail



Red Mountain Eroded Cinder Cone, north of Flagstaff



Eroded volcanic rock at Red Mountain



Eroded volcanic rock at Red Mountain



Lava flow that moved the Little Colorado and caused the falls



Grand Falls or Chocolate Falls, Little Colorado River

Be sure to check out the article “The Importance of Field Trips” in the March 2016 issue of *Rock & Gem*. In the article, Ed Winbourne of the Daisy Mountain Rock & Mineral Club in Anthem, AZ, describes several different field trips that the club members have taken and includes a trip to Grand Falls along with a picture.