



## Arizona Rocks 60

Text and photos by Ray Grant

The Arizona-Sonora Desert Museum has some other great geology exhibits along with Arizona's state dinosaur. In the early 1970s the Museum formed their Earth Sciences Department. They decided to use caves as the centerpiece for the geology exhibits. They built an amazing artificial cave that as you go through it, you would believe you are in a real cave. In the rooms in the cave are exhibits about caves, about fossils, about minerals and about the geological history of the region. Over the years the Desert Museum has accumulated a very extensive mineral collection, one of the best in Arizona. Only a small part of their collection is on exhibit. There is also a fossil dig, a mine dump where you can collect a mineral, and often docents with hands on displays such as mineral identification are waiting to talk to you. You can spend a day just learning geology but then there are all the plants and animals not to be missed.



Part of the artificial cave



Pocket of gypsum crystals moved from a mine in Mexico



Exhibit of fossil mammals found in Arizona



Some of the minerals on exhibit



Docent with hands on mineral identification display