Gold and Silver Mines of the Sierra Madre Occidental, Mexico

Part I: La India, Sonora, and Pinos Altos, Chihuahua
Part II: Palmarejo District, Chihuahua
Part III: La Cienega District, Durango

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Cover image: Panoramic view of the La Cienega mine, Durango (photo courtesy of Fresnillo plc).
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GOLD AND SILVER MINES OF THE
SIERRA MADRE OCCIDENTAL, MEXICO
Guillermo Gastelum-Morales

FIELD TOUR DESCRIPTION AND ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This is the third time that a field trip of this type has been organized in the Northern Sierra Madre Occidental of Mexico. Back in 2004, a non-SEG sponsored field trip was organized for SEG members, following the initiative of David A. Giles, SEG Regional Vice President for Mexico, Central America, and the Caribbean. A combination of driving and light airplane flights was used to visit the Naica mine (and its great crystal caves), the Pinos Altos prospect, and the Ocampo and El Sauzal mines. Fourteen attendees from Mexico, USA, Australia, and Canada participated in the trip.

Experience gained during this trip was useful when organizing the 2010 SEG-sponsored field trip, originally suggested by Peter A. Drobeck. This time, light airplane transportation only was used to visit six mines in three days: Mulatos (Alamos Gold), Dolores (Minefinders), Pinos Altos (Agnico-Eagle), Ocampo (Gammon Gold), Palmarejo (Coeur), and El Sauzal (Goldcorp). Although the trip was successfully carried out, only an average of 4 hours were spent at each location, a fact that left some of the 15 participants (including one student) wanting to learn more on the individual deposits.

This time, a different approach was used, which includes visiting fewer mines but spending more time in each one of them, using again the time-saving (but somewhat expensive) light airplane transportation. The schedule is as follows:

- **Wednesday October 1st**: Trip from Keystone to Chihuahua, overnight at the Encore Hotel.
- **Thursday October 2nd**: AM flight to La India mine, PM flight to Pinos Altos mine, overnight at Cahuisori, Chihuahua.
- **Friday October 3rd**: AM flight to Palmarejo mine, overnight in Temoris, Chihuahua.
- **Saturday October 4th**: AM flight to La Cienega mine, overnight in the mine camp.
- **Sunday October 5th**: AM flight to Chihuahua, to arrive in time to catch the AA flight to Dallas.

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