

Department of Geological Sciences, Central Washington University, Ellensburg Washington

Introduction to the Discovery Rock Garden

- The Discovery Rock Garden at Central Washington University (CWU) is an outdoor classroom for students at all levels and an outreach educational experience for visitors to the campus
- A corresponding virtual tour of the Discovery Rock Garden created by CWU Geology graduate students can be enjoyed by anyone anywhere (<https://www.geology.cwu.edu/discovery-rockgarden/>)
- Boulders in the Rock Garden represent rock types found in Washington State and the Pacific Northwest

A Silver Lining?

The temporary switch to online learning in 2020 presented an opportunity to develop the virtual tour of the Discovery Rock Garden


- Each new cohort of CWU Geology Master's Degree graduate students traditionally undertakes a collective public outreach project
- The online virtual tour continued this tradition under the limited access to indoor facilities under COVID restrictions
- Each student adopted a boulder and wrote a description
- Subsequent graduate student cohorts have added to the online map

How Does the Map Work?



- Exterior signs in the garden have a QR code that links to the map
- Visitors can explore the Discovery Rock Garden on their phone while strolling the grounds
- **Try it yourself!**

Scan the QR Code on the map on this poster or visit www.geology.cwu.edu/discovery-rockgarden/

- A **tap on a rock hammer** icon brings you to the page for that boulder 

- A second click takes you to an in-depth look at that rock type, geared toward a general audience:

- How did it form?
- Where is it from?
- How old is it?
- How is it used?



Discovery Hall Rock Garden **Interactive Map**

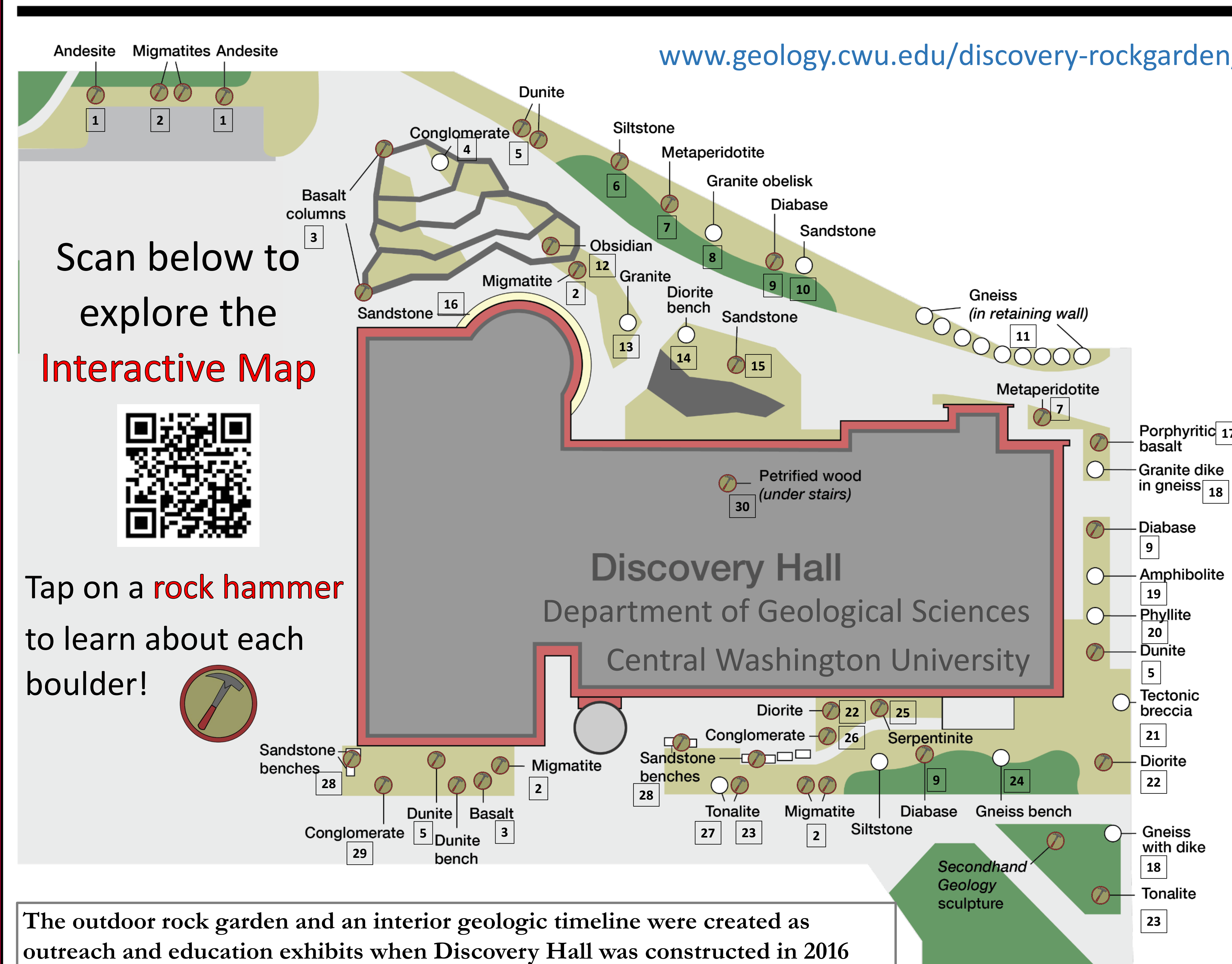
Featuring Rock Types of the Pacific Northwest

www.geology.cwu.edu/discovery-rockgarden/

Scan below to
explore the
Interactive Map

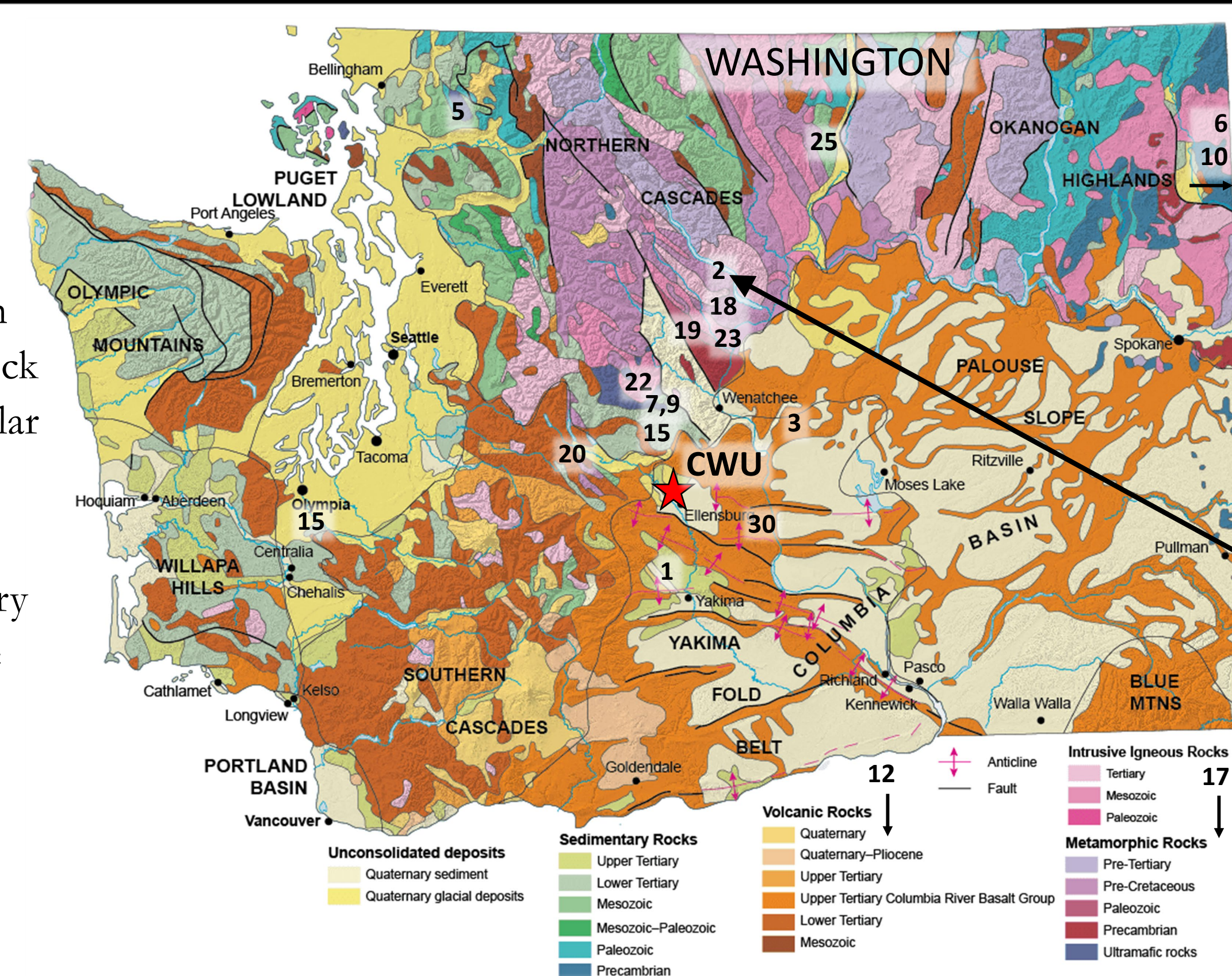


Tap on a **rock hammer**
to learn about each
boulder!



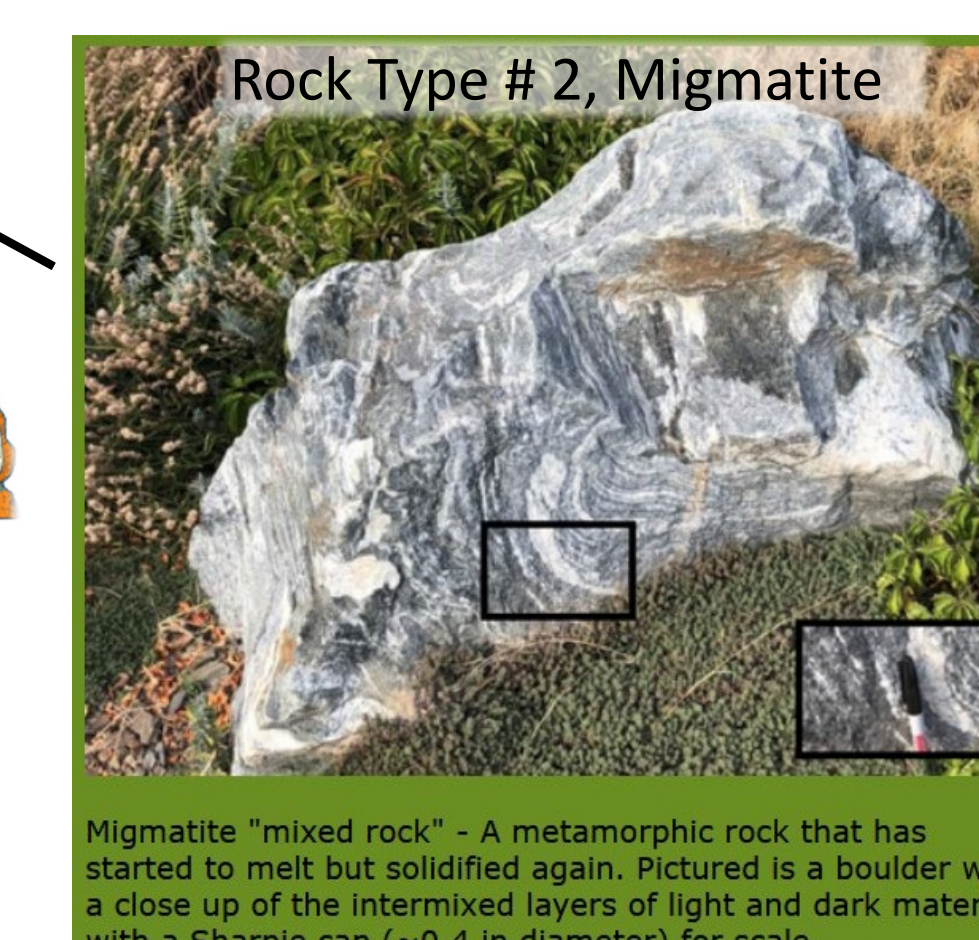
The outdoor rock garden and an interior geologic timeline were created as outreach and education exhibits when Discovery Hall was constructed in 2016

Where Are these Rocks Found?



Why these Rocks?

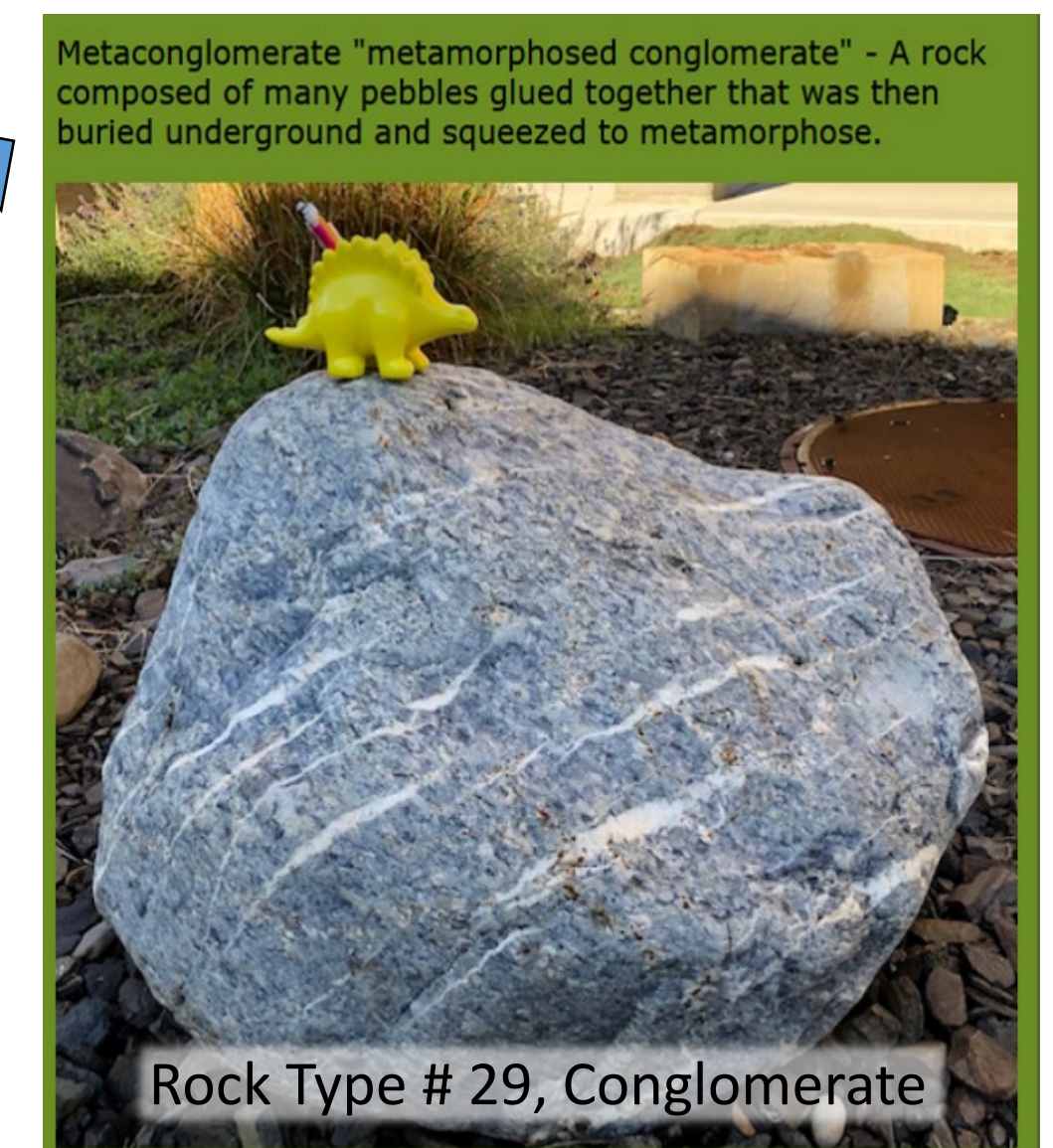
- The boulders represent rock types found in the Pacific Northwest
- Rocks have regional significance for integration into Geology courses
- The selection of rocks introduces map users to the regional geology



Outreach and Educational Experiences

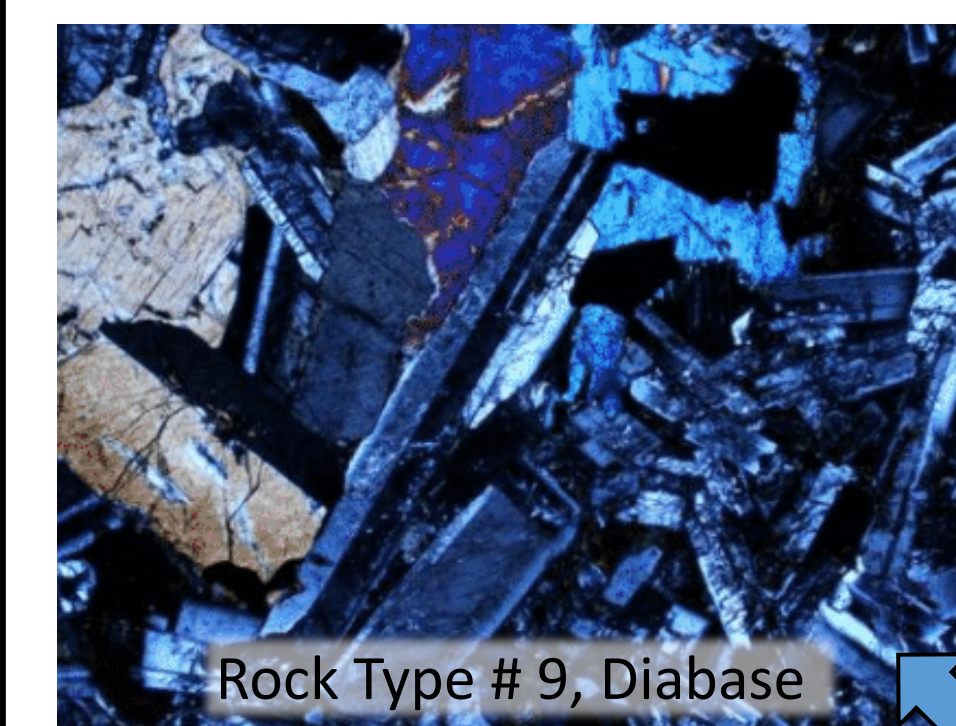
Geology Students

- Research their adopted rock
- Learn to convey technical concepts to a general audience
- Entries can be expanded with new student contributions, e.g. undergraduate research projects



Geology Courses

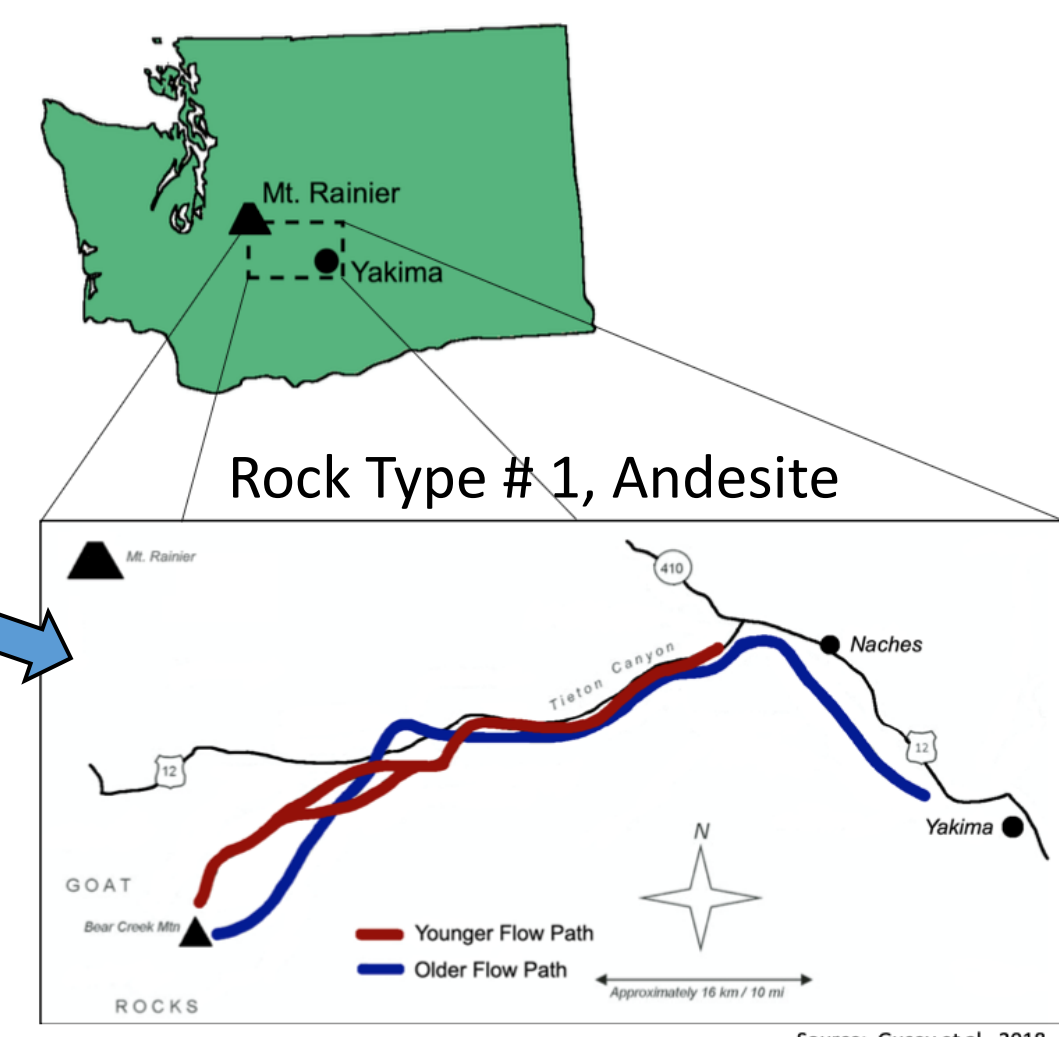
- Easy access to hands-on or virtual exploration of regional rock types
- Launching pad for course activities
- Dig deeper into geology topics



Thin section of Camas Diabase under cross-polarized light. Color minerals are pyroxenes; striped minerals are plagioclase.

Public Outreach

- Expand access to broad audience
- Entice visitors to learn about geology of the Pacific Northwest



Map of the Tieton Andesite lava flows near Yakima, Washington; ~ 750,000 – 1 million years old.

Increased Accessibility with Alt Text

- **Alt text** provides brief written or audible text description of figures or photos to enhance the accessibility of website visual images.
- **Figure captions** include more details and interpretation.
- Student designers learn to create appropriate alt text

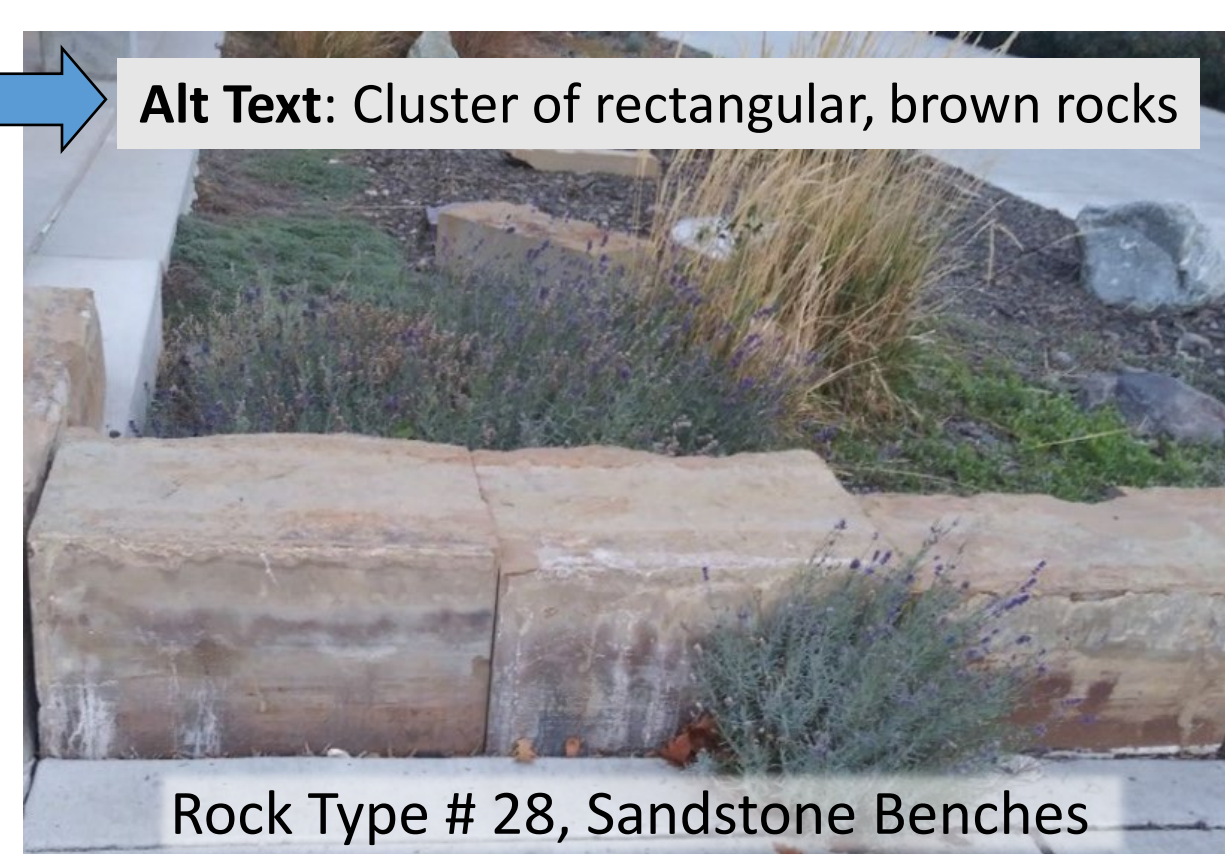


Figure Caption: These blocks of rock are sandstones. Can you see layers on the sides of each block? These layers are ancient deposits of sand made by a river, lake or ocean.

Acknowledgements

- This work was supported by Central Washington University Department of Geological Sciences, College of the Sciences and School of Graduate Studies
- Rock descriptions by students in GEOL 502 Regional Field Geology of the Pacific Northwest course in 2020 and 2021 (2022 coming soon!)
- Original map by Lindsay Henning, with 2021 updates by Mandy Abel-Zurstadt and Emily Polizzi; website by Craig Scrivner; outdoor signs by Anne Egger

Title banners = blueschist-eclogite from Franciscan Complex, CA; Chris Mattinson