

Glacial Landscaping

The Big Sugarbush Lake area, part of [Sugarbush Township](#), shares its geological history with the rest of [Becker County](#), and the upper two thirds of Minnesota. The landscaper was a glacier--a vast sheet of ice, miles thick, which periodically over the course of millions of years inched down from Canada and tore through the land like a gleaming white bulldozer. In front of its blade of ice, huge boulders, rock chips, and other debris were carried along. When warmer temperatures returned, the material, locked in ice for hundreds of years, was dropped in stages as the ice withdrew. These rocky moraines can still be observed around Sugarbush and Becker County. The smooth stones and large boulders piled in front of cottages for decoration, skirted by boaters in Big Sugarbush lake, or used as chairs by anglers and children, are glacial droppings, and may have originated thousands of miles away.

Most of the rock around Sugarbush is [granite](#), and one of it came originally from Minnesota. Granite is usually a combination of three minerals, feldspar, quartz and mica. Granite boulders look different from each other, however, because these three ingredients do not always appear in the same proportions, and one may be missing entirely.

Writers have speculated over the years in hopes of finding valuable natural resources like oil or gold in Becker County. In 1937, Ray A. Colton wrote in the [Detroit Lakes Tribune](#), "The theory that gold is here in western Minnesota is well substantiated." Other writers have noted that since Becker County's rocks have come from distant corners, it is possible to find a gold fleck here and there. But the gold was not formed here, and is a glacial intruder, so optimistic lakeshore owners apparently cannot count on a gold vein under a picnic table.

Digging operations in Becker County have uncovered remains of mammoths, prehistoric elephant-like animals, now extinct. But more important was the discovery in 1931 of the [Minnesota Man](#) three miles north of Pelican Rapids.