

In what started off as an opportunity to combine a love for geology and a passion to learn more about civics, the Bottineau Rockhounds are excited to support and promote Knife River Flint as their candidate for the North Dakota State Rock.

The Bottineau Rockhounds, a group of 2nd – 9th grade geology enthusiasts, with the assistance on their advisors and instructors (History/Science teacher David Cauley, 5<sup>th</sup> grade teacher Carrie Reimche, and Dakota College at Bottineau Natural Resources Instructor Michelle Cauley) explored the idea of a different type of “Rock the Vote” activity this past November.

Students completed research on rocks commonly found in North Dakota and filled out a “Candidate Nomination Form” for a rock they wanted to enter as a final candidate back in September 2024. These candidate forms included requirements for their rock – including the identification of the stone being either Igneous, Sedimentary, or Metamorphic, a shaded in map to indicate the location of the candidate and where it is commonly found in North Dakota, and basic facts about the stone. The club advisors read and analyzed the candidate forms entered, and 5 viable candidates were selected in October: Chalcedony, Aventurine, Prairie Agate, Moss Agate, and Knife River Flint.

For over a month, the Bottineau Rockhounds campaigned with posters, flags, stickers and even speeches for their chosen candidate. The election frenzy even crept over to the Dakota College at Bottineau into science labs, as students learned about the geologic formations of North Dakota and the unique rocks found here. In November, North Dakota “Rocked the Vote,” with the Bottineau Public School students voting, along with students, faculty, and staff at the Dakota College of Bottineau. Local schools and two other rock clubs in the state (Grand Forks and Bismarck) were invited to vote as well and when the dust cleared and the votes were tallied - 56% of the hundreds of votes collected went to Knife River Flint.

While most stories might end there, our Bottineau Rockhounds were feeling inspired and took their efforts another step forward by writing letters of support and sending their work off to our state representatives. Our group was honored and surprised with a visit by our district representatives in early December and after a short meeting with our club, District 6 Representatives excitedly proclaimed they would be drafting a bill to put into legislative session for a state rock – Knife River Flint – for North Dakota.

It’s no surprise why Knife River Flint would be a perfect rock selection for our state, which already can claim Teredo Wood as its state fossil. Knife River Flint has been utilized as a tool by civilizations for thousands of years and has been so widely used and traded, that pieces have ended up around the nation, thousands of miles away. Knife River Flint is

unique in that it is fluorescent, an effect that doesn't exist in all other flints. The Knife River Flint quarries in North Dakota are considered some of the most actively used flint quarries in the country. Knife River Flint holds cultural importance to many peoples of our incredible state and it's time to recognize its importance. There are already historic sites in our state that honor of the importance of this rock ([Crowley Flint Quarry State Historic Site - State Historical Society of North Dakota](#) ).

As you all know, in January 2025, House Bill 1186 was born – a bill to put forth Knife River Flint as North Dakota's official state rock. Several students and their rock club advisors traveled down to the state capital to speak at the House Committee hearing the bill and it not only passed the committee but the house itself, with a vote of 89 to 1.

We're incredibly proud of our junior rockhounds and their energy and passion for learning, not only about geology, but also about the civic process and how to have your voices heard by the people who can really make a difference. We are excited to continue to see this bill through and encourage the Committee Members to pass HB 1186 so others in our state can be inspired and learn more about North Dakota's incredible history.

Our Bottineau Rockhounds Club looks forward to sharing this testimony with the Senate Committee in person on Friday, March 14<sup>th</sup>.

Sincerely,

Michelle Cauley

David Cauley

Carrie Reimche

And the 35 Bottineau Rockhounds club members