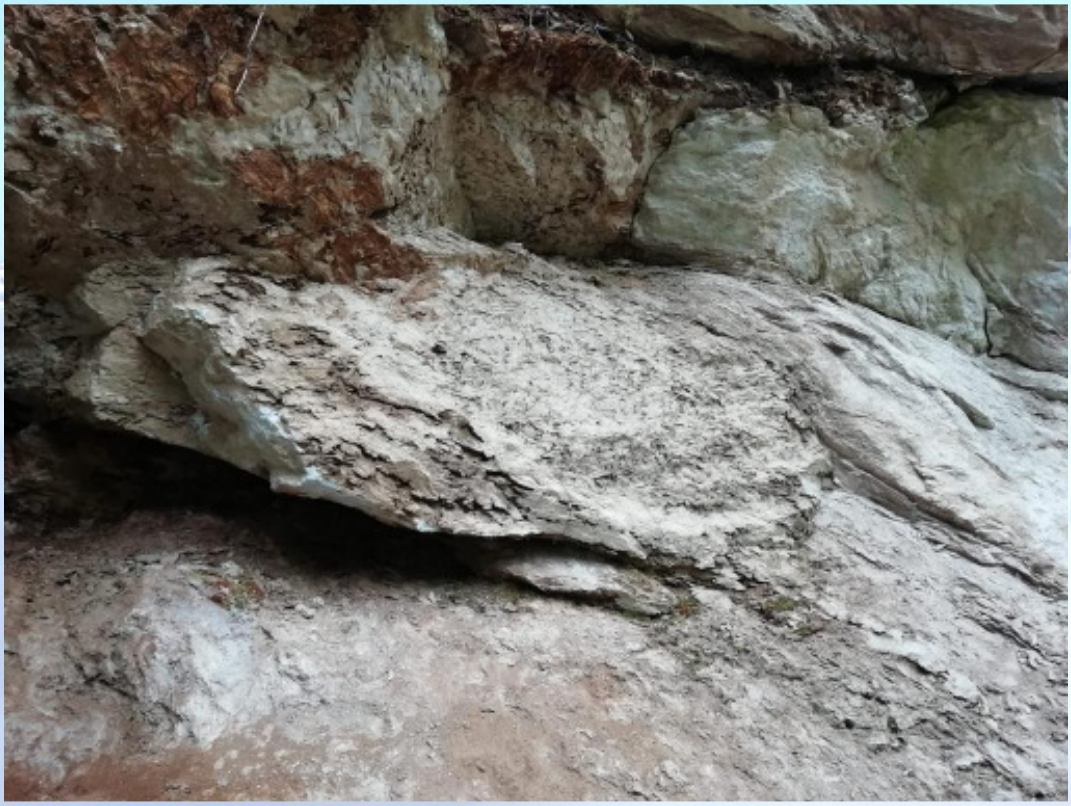
Murtal, May, 2019, Tremolite

This story begins in late autumn 2018 when heavy rain resulted in several very large mudslides carrying rocks and boulders in the far end of Mur Valley. In May 2019, while Hans Lasshofer was in this area searching for minerals, he examined some of these new outcrops. On the edge of one mudslide, Hans recognized fuchsite, due to the strong green color. Since he is a fan of this mineral, he started to search the area more closely. He eventually came across a fresh, large fractured rock. At the bottom of the rubble, he saw elongated crystals that had grown radially in the rock. He immediately shifted his attention from the fuchsite to this mineral, which was unknown to him. He found more beautiful pieces of this mineral in the boulders that were broken off and carried by the landslide

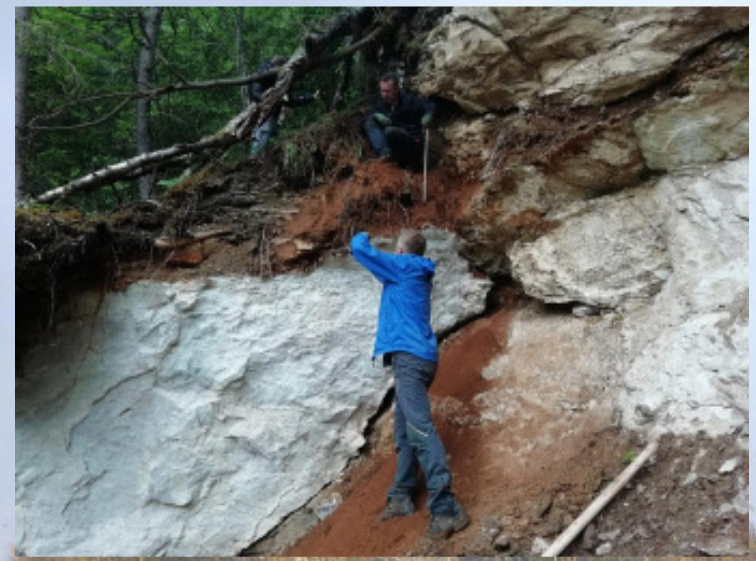


The site with fresh rubble from the mudslide (Photo: Hans Lasshofer)

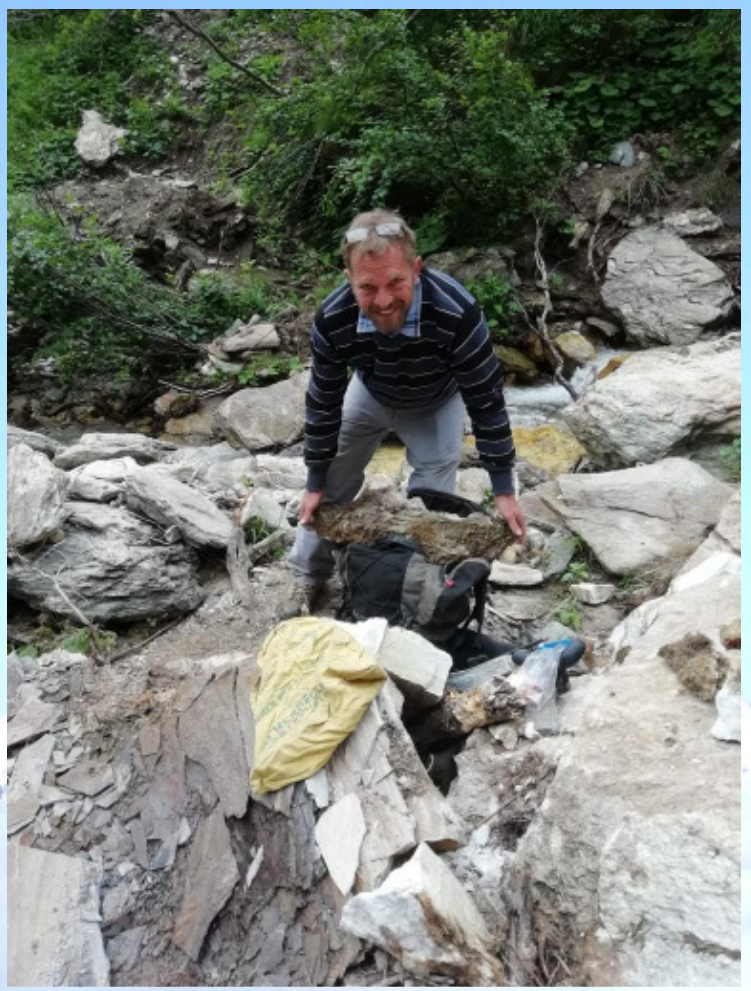
Hans carefully collected some pieces, put them in his backpack, and made his way home. He was intent to clean these pieces immediately and hopefully then could figure out their identity. Once cleaned, the crystal sheaves became clearer. Suspecting that the matrix was soluble, he put a larger piece in diluted hydrochloric acid. When he looked the next day, Hans was amazed as he held in his hand a nicely crystallized specimen. Even if the acid had not completed its work, he could see needle-like crystals with a hedgehog-shaped structure on the sample. He suspected tremolite , but was not entirely sure. He took a picture and showed it to me. My immediate reaction was “Wow” and I too suspected tremolite. In the very early morning, a few days later, we scampering around the site of the mudslide. I curiously examined the boulders in the overburden and the rock. Together we started to chisel the rock. It was good that we were traveling in pairs, because the last two meters in this area are very steep and slippery. So one collector could always help the other. After about two hours of work and a cozy snack, we made our way home with a heavily packed backpack.

Hans invited other Lungau collectors to the site to work together. A few days later Hans Lasshofer, Anton Baier, Werner Hintringer, Michael Loidl and I worked together on the tough dolomite rock. We were able to recover some large pieces of the greenish tremolite. After cleaning, some particularly beautiful specimen of this rarity emerged.

Hans Lasshofer at his site



Anton Baier and I work in the upper area of the site; Werner Hintringer assists in the background (Photo: Hans Lasshofer)



Werner Hintringer in the lower block field (Photo: Hans Lasshofer)

Radial-jet aggregates (completely crystallized as floater specimen) with a diameter of up to approx. 5 cm could be found. Connected radial-jet units also reach crystallized sizes of over 40 cm as floater specimen. The crystals are very shiny throughout and show a light gray to greenish color. Pieces that have already been exposed to weathering show a darker green color. Individual crystals in schistose rock reached a length of up to approx. 10 cm.

Particularly nice specimen, found on the 2nd tour, 16 x 11.5 x 7.5 cm (Collection: Hans Lasshofer)

Through these ingrown tremolites, Hans Lasshofer appreciated the potential richness of the site
(14.5 x 9.2 x 2.4 cm, Collection: Hans Lasshofer)

Tremolite was already detected in the Mur Valley (Die Minerale Salzburgs, A. Strasser 1989). But this find represents a special feature and is a beautiful, extraordinary enrichment to our Lungau mineral collection due to the free-standing crystals and beautiful, high-quality radial, centimeter-long aggregates.

Radial tremolite specimen as a floater, 13 x 9.5 x 6.4 cm (Collection: Reinhold Bacher)

Radial tremolite specimen as a floater, 5.5 x 5.2 x 2.4 cm (Collection: Reinhold Bacher)

Radial tremolite specimen as a floater, 3.4 x 3.4 x 1.8 cm (Collection: Reinhold Bacher)