

Glacial Erratics: Marker Rocks from Distant Places



Erratics are rock fragments, ranging in size from cobbles to massive boulders, that eroded from a bedrock outcrop and were transported by glacial ice. These rocks are

deposited some distance down-ice in an area of differing bedrock. They tend to be faceted with a characteristic “bullet” shape, indicating glacial transport. Erratics found in

the glacial sediment across northern Indiana can be granite, gneiss, marble, quartzite, and basalt, as well as other igneous and metamorphic rocks.

Erratics are generally considered to be a nuisance, especially by farmers who must clear fields. But some gravel pit operators have found a ready market for “fieldstone” cobbles and larger boulder erratics for landscaping, architectural, and specialty construction. Erratics also help geologists reconstruct the flow directions of glacial ice.

