

# Meteorite hunters find first fragments of Michigan meteor

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Astronomer and executive director of the Sloan Museum and Longway Planetarium Todd Slisher speaks during a press conference, Friday, Jan. 19, 2018, at the Longway Planetarium in Flint, Mich. Longway Planetarium astronomers have located three meteorites, after a meteor broke apart about 20 miles over Earth Tuesday. Most of the meteorite's fragments landed in Hamburg Township, Mich. (Bronte Wittpenn/The Flint Journal-MLive.com via AP)

Meteorite hunters who flocked to Detroit from across the U.S. after a

meteor exploded are finding the fragments.

The 6-foot-wide meteor broke apart Tuesday about 20 miles over Earth, NASA scientists said. Most of the fragments landed in Hamburg Township.

The first fragments were located Thursday by professional hunters Larry Atkins and Robert Ward of Arizona, according to the American Meteor Society. Atkins owns Cosmic Connection Meteorites, while Ward operates Robert Ward Meteorites.

"It's a really spectacular specimen," Ward said while holding one of the meteorites. "Two days ago, this was hundreds of thousands of miles past the moon, and now I'm standing here holding it in my hand. It's been a real good day."

Ward said he used seismic data, Doppler radar and witness information to narrow down where to search. Meteorite hunters seek permission from landowners before searching on their property, Ward said.

Ward estimates he's collected about 600 meteorites from around the world over the years.

Longway Planetarium astronomers have also located three meteorites that'll be displayed Friday.

A meteoroid is a small chunk of asteroid or comet. When it enters Earth's atmosphere it becomes a meteor, fireball or shooting star. The pieces of rock that hit the ground are meteorites, and are valuable to collectors. The remnants must be analyzed by a lab to be accredited as meteorites.



Astronomer Todd Slisher looks through a magnifying glass to observe a piece of stony-iron meteorite during a press conference, Friday, Jan. 19, 2018, at the Longway Planetarium in Flint, Mich. Longway Planetarium astronomers have located three meteorites, after a meteor broke apart about 20 miles over Earth Tuesday. Most of the meteorite's fragments landed in Hamburg Township, Mich. The meteor will be sent to NASA for analysis. (Bronte Wittpenn/The Flint Journal-MLive.com via AP)

Darryl Pitt, a New York City resident and [meteorite](#) consultant to Christie's auction house, is offering \$20,000 for a recovered fragment weighing at least 1 kilogram.

"I want to motivate more people to look," Pitt said. "Meteorites are extraordinarily rare and the world is just coming to terms with how special they are."



Astronomer Todd Slisher unfolds tin-foil to reveal a piece of stony-iron meteorite during a press conference, Friday, Jan. 19, 2018, at the Longway Planetarium in Flint, Mich. Longway Planetarium astronomers have located three meteorites, after a meteor broke apart about 20 miles over Earth Tuesday. Most of the meteorite's fragments landed in Hamburg Township, Mich. The meteor will be sent to NASA for analysis. (Bronte Wittpenn/The Flint Journal-MLive.com via AP)



A piece of stony-iron meteorite sits on a display during a press conference, Friday, Jan. 19, 2018, at the Longway Planetarium in Flint, Mich. Longway Planetarium astronomers have located three meteorites, after a meteor broke apart about 20 miles over Earth Tuesday. Most of the meteorite's fragments landed in Hamburg Township, Mich. The meteor will be sent to NASA for analysis. (Bronte Wittpenn/The Flint Journal-MLive.com via AP)

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