Hanksite -- $Na_{22}K(SO_4)_9(CO_3)_2Cl$
Hanksite is a sulfate mineral which formed in the lakebed of Searles Dry Lake during the last Ice Age. The lake was part of a chain which ended in Lake Manly, now Death Valley. This particular crystal was dug out of the mud by Searles Valley Minerals (parent company Nirma, Ahmedabad, India) during the Gem-O-Rama field trip. Hanksite, along with other minerals in the Lake, is mined by dissolving and collecting it with injection wells,

and is processed into various industrial chemicals used to make everything from fiberglass insulation to paper and glass. A natural depression in the landscape, Searles Lake acts as a collector: water pools, minerals accumulate, avian wildlife gather (to the detriment of their health), industrial capital and its associated infrastructures are deposited. As this candle slowly burns, consider the ebbs and the flows of the last 100,000 years of the Searles Valley, the desert holly, the salts.

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