WHERE DO I GO FOR MORE INFORMATION?

You can contact one of the Idaho Panhandle National Forests (IPNF) Minerals Contacts listed below for more information.

IPNF MINERALS CONTACTS:

IPNF Minerals and Geology Program Leader
Kevin Knesek, Email: ksknesek@fs.fed.us
3815 Schreiber Way
Coeur d’Alene, ID 83815
(208) 765-7442

IPNF Geologist
Josh Sadler, Email: tjsadler@fs.fed.us
3815 Schreiber Way
Coeur d’Alene, ID 83815
(208) 765-7206

IPNF Geologist
Courtney Priddy, Email: cpriddy@fs.fed.us
3815 Schreiber Way
Coeur d’Alene, ID 83815
(208) 765-7207

WHAT IS PROSPECTING AND ROCKHOUNDING?

Rockhounding involves the discovery and collection of small quantities of rocks, gems, or other geologic materials for personal use.

The 2.5 million acres of the Idaho Panhandle National Forests are a great place to experience a wide range of recreational opportunities including rock-hounding, gold prospecting, and garnet digging.

General Guidelines for Prospecting, Rockhounding, and Mining on Lands of the Idaho Panhandle National Forests *

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>If your operation:</th>
<th>You will need:</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Will cause little or no surface disturbance (e.g., gold panning and rockhounding)</td>
<td>No permit – although some restrictions may apply depending on area.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Will involve collecting up to 1 ton of flagstone, rubble, sand, gravel, or similar material by hand for personal use (non-commercial)</td>
<td>A Free Personal Use Mineral Material Permit. Available at Ranger Districts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uses a small sluice or rocker box</td>
<td>Submit a Notice of Intent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uses a suction dredge with up to a 5 inch intake nozzle and/or with an engine rating up to 15 horsepower</td>
<td>Submit a Notice of Intent AND provide a current copy of approved IDWR Recreational Dredging Permit and approved NPDES permit from EPA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uses a suction dredge with greater than a 5 inch intake nozzle and/or with an engine rating above 15 horsepower</td>
<td>Submit a Plan of Operation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uses motorized equipment and/or will cause significant surface disturbance</td>
<td>Submit a Plan of Operation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Depending on location and scope of your operations, USFS environmental analysis may be required and/or additional agencies may be involved and require additional permits.

IDEQ: Idaho Department of Environmental Quality – Cd’A Office (208-769-1422)
IDWR: Idaho Department of Water Resources - Cd’A Office (208-769-1450)
IDL: Idaho Department of Lands - Cd’A Office (208-769-1525)
BLM: U.S. Bureau of Land Management - Cd’A Office (208-769-5000)
EPA: Environmental Protection Agency (800-424-4372)
Prospecting is searching for valuable minerals. This can include collecting hand samples of mineralized rock, gold panning, using metal detectors, and operating small sluices or dredges.


Be advised that it is illegal to collect historic cultural artifacts, such as arrowheads, old bottles, etc. on state and federal lands.

DO I NEED A PERMIT?

Prospecting and rockhounding usually do not require a permit when there is little or no disturbance to the environment. However, a Notice of Intent (NOI) must be submitted to the District Ranger if there will be obvious disturbance to the environment. Based on the information provided in the NOI, a Plan of Operation (Plan) may be needed. Some examples of when a Plan is required include:

- Use explosives
- Use power equipment for excavation
- Drive vehicles off open roads or trails
- Clear or remove vegetation
- Store petroleum products or hazardous or flammable material on site
- Camp in one place more than 14 days

See this website for further Plan and NOI information: http://www.fs.fed.us/geology/mgm_locatable.html. Also see the General Guidelines table in this brochure.

Forest users should be sensitive to how their activities impact the environment. Rockhounds and prospectors need to refill and revegetate any excavation, no matter how small. Consideration should also be given to possible cumulative damage when you do the same thing year after year in the same place.

Water quality and fish habitat are critical concerns on national forests, so activities in or near streams must be conducted with care.

Any sale or commercial use of mineral materials collected on National Forest System Lands requires a permit.

ARE THERE ANY SPECIAL RESTRICTIONS THAT APPLY TO SUCTION DREDGING?

YES. The IPNF recognizes the Idaho Department of Water Resources (IDWR) Recreational Dredge Permit and the EPA National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) general Permit for Suction Dredging. These permits allow for use of suction dredges with up to a 5 inch intake nozzle and/or with an engine rating up to 15 horsepower in designated areas at designated times throughout the State of Idaho. If submitting an NOI for suction dredging activities, the NOI must be accompanied by a current copy of your approved IDWR Recreational Dredging Permit (Form 3804-A) and the approved EPA NPDES Permit.

WHERE CAN I GO TO PROSPECT & ROCKHOUND ON THE IPNF?

Many possibilities exist! The IPNF Emerald Creek garnet dig is very unique and a popular recreational site. More information on the dig is available at our St. Maries office (208) 245-2531 or at: http://www.fs.fed.us/ipnf/rec/activities/garnets/index.html.

Additional prospecting and rockhounding information can be found through local gem and mineral clubs as well as rock shops.

Fossils are not abundant on IPNF because most of the rocks exposed at the surface are too old to have abundant life forms.

ABANDONED MINES

Over 1000 abandoned mines exist on the IPNF. These mine sites and workings are extremely hazardous and underground entry is prohibited unless authorized by permit.

Stay Out & Stay Alive!!!