

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

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

*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)

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:

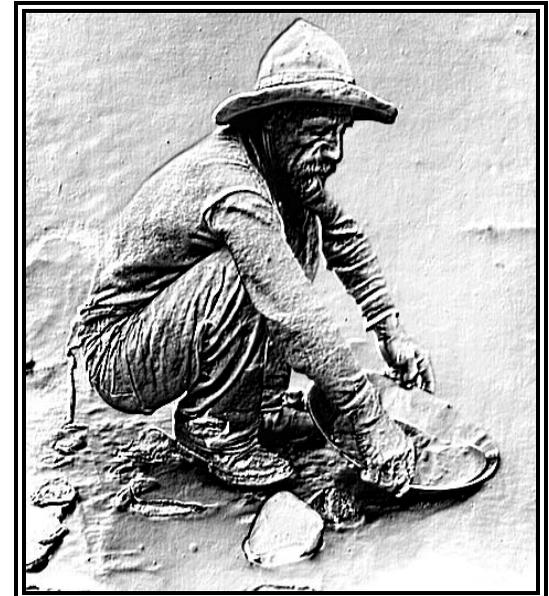
IPNF Minerals and Geology Program Leader
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IPNF Geologist
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**Rockhounding
 on the
 Idaho Panhandle
 National Forests**

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.



WHAT IS PROSPECTING AND ROCKHOUDING?

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



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.

Forest Service mining regulations listed in the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) 228 govern rockhounding and prospecting activities. A good CFR website is: <http://www.gpoaccess.gov/cfr/index.html>.

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.

IS ALL NATIONAL FOREST LAND AVAILABLE FOR PROSPECTING?

NO. Some areas may be excluded, even from non-commercial activities. Examples include:

- Wild and Scenic River corridors
- Historical or archeological sites
- Campgrounds
- Wilderness Areas

- Administrative sites
- Environmentally sensitive areas
- Areas "withdrawn" from mineral use

It is always a good idea to check with the local Ranger District to identify closed areas before you start. In addition, you may not work on someone else's mining claim without their permission. Mining claimants have exclusive rights to all minerals on those sites. Mining claim location information can be found through your local BLM office or at: www.blm.gov/lr2000.

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?



(Polished Star Garnet)

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!!!

