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## **DREDGING AND PANNING SPECIFICATIONS**

- Please have a copy of your “Letter of Intent” with you when operating on the Medicine Bow National Forest.
- Season of operation on the Medicine Bow National Forest is: July 01 to September 10 on all streams. This is to protect trout spawning habitat.
- Highbanking is defined as: Moving water from the stream channel via mechanical means to a location outside of the stream channel floor to process material for its gold content.” Highbanking IS NOT excavating into the stream bank.
- Excavating into the stream bank to obtain material for its gold content **IS PROHIBITED**. Please stay within the boundaries of the stream channel floor.....or.....when highbanking, at least 100 feet outside of the stream channel floor.
- If a hole is created while highbanking away from the stream channel, please fill in the hole before you leave the Medicine Bow National Forest.
- If stream levels are low late in the summer, gold dredgers and panners may be required to keep their operations 300 feet apart to minimize stream turbidity.
- Use small portable suction dredges with a suction hose intake of three (3) inches or less in diameter.
- Use small portable suction dredges powered by 10 horsepower or less engines.
- No activities, except hand panning, are allowed in any *Class I Water*.  
Class I Water within the Medicine Bow National Forest area are:
  1. The main stem of the North Platte River from the mouth of Sage Creek (approximately 15 stream miles below Saratoga, Wyoming) upstream to the Colorado state line. The North Platte River, above the confluence with Douglas Creek is within a wilderness area – NO mineral entry.
  2. The main stem of the Encampment River from the U.S. Forest Service boundary upstream to the Colorado state line. Most of this stream is within a wilderness area - NO mineral entry.
- No activities on any surface waters located within the boundaries of congressionally designated wilderness areas as of January 01, 1999. This includes Platte River Wilderness, Savage Run Wilderness, Encampment River Wilderness, and Huston Park Wilderness.

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## **Recreational Dredging**

A mining dredge is a device which "vacuums" up water and gravel from a stream or river and then directs the discharge through a riffle box where gold and other heavy objects are trapped. A recreational scale dredge setup commonly consists of a water pump driven by a small gasoline engine and a riffle box. This equipment is floated on inflated tire inner tubes or ridged fiberglass floats. The operator usually will wear a wet or dry type diving suit so that he may spend relatively long periods in the water and maintain a comfortable temperature. In deep water, the operator will be supplied air through a hose from an air pump, thus allowing for complete submersion of the operator.

Every year, we get requests from people wanting to use small dredges to search for valuable minerals on National Forest. All mineral exploration on National Forest land is regulated under 36 CFR 228. What we refer to as "recreational dredging" is considered prospecting, and is subject to the same laws and regulations applicable to large mining operations regarding mining laws and environmental laws.

The District Ranger is responsible for determining whether or not significant disturbance is likely to occur. If significant disturbance is expected, a mining plan of operations is required for evaluation and approval before operations may begin.

It is our experience that recreational dredging usually will not result in significant disturbance in most streams under the following circumstances:

1. The dredge has a 3 inch or smaller suction intake.
2. Streams are not "Blue Ribbon", "Wild Trout Water", or a stream regulated as "catch & release" only (see state fishing regulations for these streams).
3. Practices mentioned in the State of Wyoming DEQ "Guideline 19" are followed.
4. Camping does not exceed the 21 day stay limit that applies to all visitors.
5. Dredging is restricted to the July 1 through September 10 to avoid affecting fish spawning habitat and flushing flows from Rob Roy reservoir.
6. Care should be taken to completely clean dredges and clothing worn in the creeks to:
  - Minimize the potential spread of whirling disease.
  - Prevent introducing, non-native, invasive aquatic organisms into MBR waters; please thoroughly inspect your dredging equipment for plant and animal "hitchhikers" before using it. If you find suspicious organisms on your equipment

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- especially snails or mussels - please contact either the nearest FS or WG&FD office immediately.

If a prospector can't meet all of the above, then we must conclude that significant disturbance may occur, and that a Plan of Operations may be needed. Whether or not a dredger meets the above "rules of thumb" we request that they fill out the Letter of Intent form and return it to the Laramie office.

There are some areas that are not open to mineral exploration, and we can help you identify those beforehand.

## **Camping**

Camping in dispersed sites (outside a Developed Campground) is limited to 21 days. **Campers must leave the forest with camping equipment** for at least 3 consecutive days (*Forest Service Order No. 2008-34*).

Camping for more than 14 consecutive days in any developed campground is prohibited (*Forest Service Order No. 2008-34*).

Camping in designated dispersed areas is beginning to damage and reduce vegetation, which leads to exposed bare soil and increase erosion. Please camp within the footprint (i.e.; disturbed area) of the established campsite.

- Do not dig additional fire pits.
- Pack out all trash and empty holding tanks at established dump stations only.
- Do not camp within 100 feet of the streambank. Streambank vegetation is important for soil stability and for stream health.
- Control erosion outside the campsite – do not trample vegetation on streambanks, and limit foot trails around the campsite.

## **Riding Off Road Vehicles**

- Motorized use is restricted to designated roads and trails. Everyone should have a Motor Vehicle Use Map (MVUM - free from the Forest Service).
- Licenses are required for driving any vehicle, including ORVs or ATVs on Forest Service roads. A State Decal or License Plate is required on any road. A State Decal is required on trails. All riders and operators under 18 years of age are required to wear a helmet.
- There are currently no open, designated motorized trails on the Laramie District of the Medicine Bow National Forest. Consult your MVUM and State Trails map for those trails.

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**MEDICINE BOW-ROUTT NATIONAL FORESTS**

**LETTER OF INTENT**  
**Gold Panning and Dredging Activities**

**NAME:** \_\_\_\_\_  
(please print)

**ADDRESS:** \_\_\_\_\_

**CITY/STATE/ZIP** \_\_\_\_\_

**TELEPHONE** \_\_\_\_\_  
(including area code)

**CLAIM OR AREA TO BE WORKED** \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**TIME OF OPERATION** From \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_  
(when you will be there) (date) (date)

**Note:** Operating season on the Medicine Bow National Forest is between July 01 and September 10 - for protection of trout spawning habitat. Remember – there is a Camping Stay Limit on the Forest.  
The **Forest Order** (No. 2008-34) reads: "...the following acts are prohibited... Camping, including leaving of camping equipment or personal property, outside of Forest Service developed campgrounds for a period longer than 21 days without leaving the National Forest and/or National Grassland for a minimum of three (3) consecutive days."

**TYPE OF EQUIPMENT USED** \_\_\_\_\_

**Note:** State of Wyoming DEQ Guideline #19 is still applicable.

**WHERE WILL YOU BE STAYING OR CAMPING AT** \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**TYPE OF VEHICLE(s) And LICENSE NUMBER** \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**SIGNATURE** \_\_\_\_\_ **DATE** \_\_\_\_\_

**Submit to** Laramie Ranger District, 2468 Jackson Street, Laramie, WY 82070 ms-03/2/2010