

## Recreational Collection Of Minerals & Gold From The Tellico Ranger District

2013

*Recreational, non-commercial mineral collecting is a recognized use of National Forest System lands. Certain requirements and restrictions are in place to protect you and the environment.*

Recreational mineral collecting is not allowed in the following areas of the Tellico Ranger District: Bald River Gorge Wilderness, Citico Creek Wilderness, Joyce Kilmer/Slickrock Wilderness, Upper Bald River Wilderness Study Area, Joyce Kilmer/Slickrock Addition Wilderness Study Area, and Citico Creek and tributaries from Bark Camp Creek downstream (Bark Camp Creek is shown as Back Camp on some maps).

**Effective in 2013, registration is required for all forms of mineral and gold collection, including panning. You must register annually and in person at the Tellico Ranger Station.**

**Registration is not transferable and expires at the end of the calendar year in which it is issued. All adults (18 years old or older) must have individual proof of registration. Individuals younger than 18 must be accompanied by an adult with proof of registration.** You must have proof of registration available for inspection when panning, dredging, or conducting any other form of mineral collecting on National Forest System lands in the Tellico Ranger District.

**All mineral collecting, including gold panning, is subject to the following requirements and restrictions.**

Streamside vegetation must not be damaged or removed. Stream banks must be left undisturbed.

**With the exception of crevassing in exposed bedrock, disturbance from gold collecting including digging, excavating, or dredging may only occur in the stream bed below the water line and 12 inches from the edge of the water.**

No digging, excavation, or dredging within 20 feet of Forest Service Trail 117, the Unicoi Mountain Trail, or the powerline access crossing Doc Rogers Fields.

Digging, excavation, or dredging shall not affect or interfere with any existing habitat improvement structures, stream channel improvements, gauging stations, or stream diversions.

Moving boulders or large woody debris is prohibited. The use of pry bars, chisels, wedges, shovels, etc. to remove, or break layers of bedrock is prohibited.

Reject material (sands, gravels, cobbles) must be used to fill excavated holes in the stream; any left-over material should be reshaped and smoothed to appear natural. It must not be left in piles in the

stream bed or along the stream bank. It must not be placed to redirect stream currents.

Sluice dams must be dismantled daily and the materials returned to as close to their original location as possible.

No chemical processing of gold-bearing materials shall be done within 200 feet of a stream. Mercury shall not be used on National Forest System lands.

All operations shall take place during daylight hours.

Collection or removal of historical and pre-historical objects or artifacts, such as arrowheads or pottery shards, is prohibited.

No litter or refuse can be left in collection or camping areas. You bring it in; you take it out.

Camping is limited to 14 consecutive days at one location. After the 14th day, the camp must be moved at least 1 mile for a minimum of 7 days before returning (Supervisor's Order 334).

Metal detectors are allowed only at Indian Boundary Recreation Area Beach (Supervisor's Order 344).

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**Motorized or mechanized equipment subject to the following additional requirements and restrictions includes** any type of motorized equipment, such as dredges or pumps and some types of sluice boxes or other equipment with moving parts. It does not include hand tools, gold pans, classifiers or sieves, and some sluice boxes, or hand-operated sucker tubes.

**Use of motorized or mechanized equipment is allowed in the following areas only:**

- Tellico River - the river and its tributaries from the junction of Turkey Creek and the Tellico River downstream to the National Forest Boundary. This does not include any portion of Turkey Creek
- Coker Creek – between Unicoi Lakes Road and Joe Brown Highway (locally known as Doc Rogers Fields) from January 1 to February 29 and from September 1 to December 31.

**Use of motorized or mechanized equipment is also subject to the following requirements and restrictions:**

Hydraulic mining operations of any type, such as highbanking, which washes material from the stream bank into the water is prohibited.

The use of winches to move boulders or large woody debris is prohibited.

The use of highbankers to process materials on the stream bank or floodplain is prohibited.

The dredge/vacuum/pump engine may not exceed 10 H.P. (2 to 4 cycle).

Dredge/vacuum opening may not exceed 4 inches.

All engines must be equipped with a muffler and spark arrestor.

Motorized equipment must be removed from the stream and moved at least 50 feet from the

stream or to an established parking area to be refueled and/or serviced. Extra fuel must be stored at a parked vehicle when not in use.

No petroleum products or chemicals shall enter the stream at any time.

Operating dredges must be at least 200 feet apart as measured along the stream.

All equipment must be removed from the stream overnight.

No dredging within 50 feet of a bridge support or culverted road crossing.

Dredge anchorage systems shall not restrict water-based recreation; free, unobstructed access across the stream channel and downstream must be maintained at all times.

These requirements apply only to National Forest System lands. There are private lands within the boundaries of the District. **Please respect private property!**

It is your responsibility to know where you are relative to private lands, wilderness or wilderness study areas, and areas where use of mechanized equipment is allowed. Maps and additional information are available at [http://www.fs.usda.gov/Internet/FSE\\_DOCUMENTS/stelprdb5274403.pdf](http://www.fs.usda.gov/Internet/FSE_DOCUMENTS/stelprdb5274403.pdf).

Your use of an area is not exclusive and you may find other individuals collecting gold and other water-based recreational activities, such as kayaking or fishing, occurring in the same locations.

*For additional information contact the Tellico Ranger Station at 423-253-8400 or 250 Ranger Station Road, Tellico Plains, TN 37385.*

*Business hours are 8 am to 4:30 pm Monday through Friday.*

*The office is closed on all federal holidays.*

