



## Gold Panning and Dredging Information

### *Dredging and Panning Specifications*

- Please have a copy of your "Letter of Intent" with you when operating on the Medicine Bow-Routt National Forests and Thunder Basin National Grassland (MBRTB).
- Mechanized season of operation on the MBRTB is July 1 to Sept 10 on all streams. This is to protect trout spawning habitat.
- Hand panning is allowed outside of those dates.
- High-banking 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." High-banking is **not** excavating into the streambank.
- Excavating into the streambank to obtain material for its gold content is **prohibited**. Please stay within the boundaries of the stream channel floor or when high-banking, at least 100 feet outside the stream channel floor.
- If a hole is created when high-banking away from the stream channel, please fill in the hole before you leave the MBRTB.
- 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 dredgers 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.
- Only hand panning is allowed in any Class I water.
- No activities on any surface waters located within the boundaries of congressionally designated wilderness areas as of January 1, 1999. This includes the Platte River Wilderness, Savage Run Wilderness, Encampment River Wilderness, and Huston Park Wilderness.

### *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 ripple box. This equipment is floated on an inflated tire inner tubes or ridged fiberglass floats. The operator usually will wear a wet or dry type diving suit so they may spend relatively long periods in the water comfortably. 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 receive requests from people wanting to use small dredges to search for valuable minerals on National Forest lands. All mineral exploration on National Forest land is regulated under 36 CFR 228. What we referred 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 and 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 16 day state limit that applies to all visitors.
5. Dredging is restricted to July 1 through September 10 to avoid affecting fish spawning habitat.
6. Care should be taken to thoroughly clean dredges and clothing used in the creeks to minimize the potential spread of whirling disease and to 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, especially snails or mussels, please contact either the nearest Forest Service or Wyoming Game and Fish Department office immediately.

If a prospector can't meet the six requirements, then we must conclude that significant disturbance may occur, and a Plan of Operations may be needed. Whether or not a dredger meets the listed rules, request that they fill out the letter of intent form and return it to the Brush Creek Hayden Ranger district office in Saratoga, Wyoming. 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 16 days. Camping for more than 14 consecutive days in any developed campground is prohibited.

Camping in dispersed areas may negatively impact the health of a watershed by increasing erosion and decreasing vegetation. Please camp within the footprint of the established campsite. Additionally, the following notes should be considered to reduce impact on the landscape:

- Do not dig additional fire pits.
- Pack out all trash.
- Only empty holding tanks at established dump stations outside the National Forest.
- Do not camp within 100 feet of the stream bank. Streambank vegetation is important for stream health.
- Control erosion outside the campsite.
- Do not trample vegetation on streambanks. Limit foot trails around the campsite.

### **Off Road Vehicle Use**

All motorized use must stay on designated routes. Motorized use is not allowed off designated, numbered routes. Everyone should have a current Motor Vehicle Use Map. If a route is not shown on this map, it is not open to motorized travel.

All riders must comply with state ORV regulations.

# Notice of Intent for Mining Activities

Pursuant to 36 CFR §228

(Use of this form is optional)

I/We, \_\_\_\_\_,  
declare my/our intent to conduct mining operations on unpatented National Forest System Lands within the  
\_\_\_\_\_ Ranger District of the Routt National Forest. This mining activity will be in the form(s) of:

(Prospecting, Exploration, Development, or Production)

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_ PHONE: \_\_\_\_\_

MAILING ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_ CITY/STATE/ZIP: \_\_\_\_\_

EMAIL: \_\_\_\_\_

<i>Claim #</i>	<i>Claim Name</i>	<i>Township (North or South)</i>	<i>Range (East or West)</i>	<i>Section(s)</i>	<i>Quarter Section (NE, SE, SW, NW)</i>

Surface disturbance resulting from this mining activity will be in the form of: \_\_\_\_\_

cuts, pits, trenches, shafts, tunneling, tree cutting, road/trail construction, tailings deposit, etc.

RECLAMATION PLAN: \_\_\_\_\_

ESTIMATED ACRES OF DISTURBANCE: \_\_\_\_\_

WORK WILL BE IMPLEMENTED BY: \_\_\_\_\_  
(Specify handwork, type of tool, and/or machinery, etc.)

TRAVEL TO THE OPERATION(S) WILL BE BY: \_\_\_\_\_  
(List type of vehicle, foot travel, animal, etc.)

OWNERS OF CLAIMS OTHER THAN OPERATOR: \_\_\_\_\_

(List names and addresses of individuals, companies, etc.)

PROPOSED START DATE OF MINING ACTIVITIES (MM/DD/YY): \_\_\_\_\_

OPERATOR SIGNATURE: \_\_\_\_\_ DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

ATTACH MAP AND SUBMIT TO:

For Medicine Bow National Forest Excluding Laramie Peak: Brush Creek/Hayden Ranger District PO Box 249; 2171 Highway 130 Saratoga, WY 82331	For Laramie Peak and Thunder Basin National Grassland: Douglas Ranger District 2250 East Richards Street Douglas, WY 82633-8922	For Routt National Forest: Hahns Peak/Bears Ears Ranger District 925 Weiss Drive Steamboat Springs, CO 80487-9315
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APPROVED BY: \_\_\_\_\_ DATE: \_\_\_\_\_  
(Authorized Officer)

**Notice of Intent Instructions**  
**36 CFR 228.4(a) - Locatable Minerals**

If you have a question about the NOI process or mining regulations, contact the Forest Service office that administers the lands involved with your proposed mining operation.

The purpose of submitting a Notice of Intent (NOI) for a proposed mining operation is to provide the Forest Service District Ranger with sufficient information to determine if the level of proposed disturbance will require a Plan of Operations and a detailed environmental analysis. The District Ranger will, within 15 days of receipt of the NOI, evaluate the NOI and notify the operator whether a Plan of Operations is required.

A NOI is required from any person proposing to conduct operations which might cause a significant disturbance of surface resources. If you are uncertain whether your operation falls within this category, we recommend you file a NOI. It can be included as part of a letter to the District Ranger and should address the five items listed below.

1. The name, address, and telephone number of the operator. The NOI should be signed and dated by the operator.
2. The area involved. The description should include the township, range, and ¼ section of where your proposal will occur and with enough detail to locate the area on the ground. We recommend you enclose a map of suitable scale (U.S. Geological Survey map scale 1: 24,000) with your NOI and indicate on the map where your operations would be located on the ground.
3. The nature of the proposed operations. Describe what you plan to do. Include when and how you will be operating, the proposed start-up date, and the expected duration of the activities. List other details such as the number of people involved in the operation, equipment you intend to use (sizes, capacity, frequency of use), depth of proposed suction dredging or excavation, how waste material will be handled, what vegetation will be removed, the size of area to be disturbed, quantity of material to be removed, housing or camping facilities to be used, and the method for sewage and waste disposal.
4. The route of access to the area of operations. Describe the route of access or display it on your enclosed map and identify individual roads and trails you intend to use.
5. The method of transport. Describe the vehicles or other transport used to carry people, equipment, supplies, and living quarters to and from the work site. Describe if transport will be by foot, stock (horses, mules, etc.), trucks, helicopters, motorcycles, cars, etc.