

### **Recreational Gold Dredging Guidelines**

These guidelines have been developed by the Wyoming Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) and the Wyoming Game and Fish Department to minimize the impacts of recreational gold dredging on water quality and fish habitat:

1. In order to be considered recreational activity, the dredge must be a small, portable unit with a suction hose diameter no larger than 3 inches. Larger equipment will generally require a permit and bond from the Land Quality Division (LQD) and possibly a Discharge Permit from the Water Quality Division (WQD).
2. Dredging will be restricted to a time period, July 1 to September 1 annually, to minimize disruption of spawning trout. This seasonal restriction may be modified or waived after consultation with the Wyoming Game and Fish Department.
3. There shall be no use of mechanized equipment below the high water mark of the channel except for the dredge itself.
4. Dredging of materials such as silt and clay will cause an unacceptable degradation of water quality downstream. In addition, this material will blanket the gravel spawning beds for trout, suffocating eggs and fry.
5. No dredging of beaver ponds is permitted. The ponds accumulate sediments which cannot be dredged without impacting fish populations within the ponds and degrading water quality.
6. Dredging operations should be confined to the channel bottom to avoid undercutting of stream banks and disturbances to shoreline vegetation. These disturbances can contribute to excessive erosion, destruction of riparian vegetation, reduced stream bank stability, and destruction of fish habitat.
7. Spilling of oil, gas, or grease must be avoided. All fueling and equipment servicing should be conducted away from streams. Storage areas for equipment and fuel should be as far away from the stream as possible.
8. In Wyoming, the stream bottom belongs to the landowner. Permission for access must always be obtained before you begin operations.
9. The best areas for locating gold are around boulders near the upstream end of pools where the current first starts to slow, in seams and pockets in exposed bedrock, and around midstream boulders or on the inside of a riverbed at or near the head of a gravel bar where the larger materials have accumulated. These are also the areas which cause least damage to fish and other aquatic animals and create the least instability in the stream channel.