6/12/07 Workshop
Suction Dredge Mining
Deadline: 6/22/07 Noon

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To: <commentletters@waterboards.ca.gov>
Date: Fri, Jun 8, 2007 9:48 AM
Subject: Comment Letter - Suction Dredge Mining

Hello,

I am a small business owner in the Eureka CA area. My family and I have been suction dredging for a few years now as a hobby that allows modern people to experience the thrill of finding gold. As an avid outdoors person that spends much time in the Trinity Alps Wilderness backpacking, I see the need to preserve sections of our public lands to no outside intervention. On the other hand use of public land in a non-damaging way is a way for our public lands to be used for generations as recreational opportunities. That is what makes this country so great. I have spent my time dredging the Klamath river and have experienced the effects of suction dredging. Also as a BIG supporter of fishing rights and protections of fish I believe that there is no long lasting effects of water quality during the dredging process.

Take the Klamath river basin for example. During the high flow months, the water turns to a brown color with all of the suspended solids carried all of the way out to the ocean, I have seen this for myself. Within any waterway, sediment is primarily carried in suspension during periods of rainfall and high flow. This is an important point, as it indicates that a dredging operation has less, or at least no greater effect on sediment mobilization and mobility than a rain storm." Suction dredging on the other hand only moves the existing alluvial deposits in the river bed and they precipitate out in a short time down river from the dredge. A report from the U.S. Forest Service, Siskiyou National Forest (Cooley, 1995) answered the frequently asked question, "How much material is moved by annual mining suction dredge activities and how much does this figure compare with the natural movement of such materials by surface erosion and mass movement?" The answer was that suction dredges moved a total of 2,413 cubic yards for the season. Cooley (1995) used the most conservative values and estimated that the Siskiyou National Forest would move 331,000 cubic yards of material each year from natural causes. Compared to the 2413 (in-stream) cubic yards re-located by suction mining operations the movement rate by suction dredge mining would equal about 0.7% of natural rates. By limiting the number of dredges per mile, as under our current club induced regulations, water quality can be kept at high level. It has been suggested that a single operating suction dredge may not pose a problem but the operation of multiple dredges would produce a cumulative effect that could cause harm to aquatic organisms. However, "No additive effects were detected on the Yuba River from 40 active dredges on a 6.8 mile (11 km) stretch. The area most impacted was from the dredge to about 98 feet (30 meters) downstream, for most turbidity and settelable solids (Harvey, B.C., K. McCleneghan, J.D. Linn, and C.L. Langley, 1982). In another study, "Six small dredges (<6 inch dredge nozzle) on a 1.2 mile (2 km) stretch had no additive effect (Harvey, B.C., 1986). Water quality was typically temporally and spatially restricted to the time and immediate vicinity of the dredge (North, P.A., 1993). I can understand the restrictions of water entering the river from mining above the waterline, since that introduces silt and other deposits that

have not been washed down river.

This is just my thoughts and feelings on this subject. Thank you for your time.

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