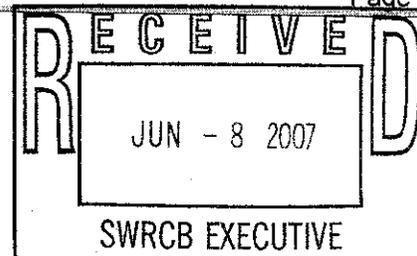


6/12/07 Workshop
Suction Dredge Mining
Deadline: 6/22/07 Noon

From: "John Whitaker" <j.whitaker2@verizon.net>
To: <commentletters@waterboards.ca.gov>
Date: Fri, Jun 8, 2007 10:18 AM
Subject: comment letter suction dredge mining



I am a recreational prospector who is concerned about suction dredge mining in California. Most recreational miners, like myself manage to get out into the countryside only a few days out of the year. It is a good clean family oriented outing. The people I meet along the creeks and rivers are very environmentally minded. No one wants to see our rivers and streams destroyed. I, and my fellow prospectors, leave as small a footprint as is possible. Many times leaving things cleaner than we found them. We all see the trash left behind by the many visitors but this is not left behind by the prospectors.

I operate a three inch suction dredge. I use this only a few days a year. I am very conscious of the environment. We take great care in fueling the dredge to make sure gasoline does not find its way into the water. As far as the operation of the dredge is concerned we simply move gravel a few feet downstream. All our activities are relegated to the waterways themselves. we do not dredge into the banks. This would erode them and would cause damage to the waters. Any silt stirred up by the dredge returns to the stream bed quickly and turbidity of the water is a a minimum. As far as warming of the water behind a dredge. It just is not so. What we do emulates a good spring runoff condition and helps keep the waterways clean. This helps create new spawning beds for the fish. As we move the dredge upstream our holes are generally filled behind us and any that are not are filled during the next run off period. To say this is a threat to the environment is just not true.

The environmentalist behind banning suction dredging are extremest and do not necessarily have the best interests of the public in mind. They would like to see the public banned from public lands. I for one do not want to see our waterways trashed. A walk along the streams and rivers will clearly reveal fisherman leave more trash and hurt the environment more than prospectors do. I want my grand children to be able to enjoy the great outdoors as I do.

In conclusion I hope a fair resolution will be forthcoming on this issue. I would say, If you have not seen a dredging operation. Get a hold of one of the groups such as The New 49ers, Gold Prospectors of America , or The Lost Dutchman Mining Association. They would be more than willing to help.

Thank You,
John Whitaker