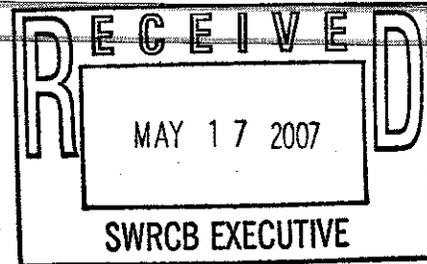


6/12/07 Workshop
Suction Dredge Mining
Deadline: 6/22/07 Noon



From: Patricia Heller <hellerpk@yahoo.com>
To: <commentletters@waterboards.ca.gov>
Date: Thu, May 17, 2007 12:12 PM
Subject: Comment Letters. Suction Dredge Mining

I want to address the issue of water quality in the California rivers and the effects that suction dredge mining has upon them. It has been my experience that natural and recurring storms cause a greater amount of turbidity in the water than any suction dredge could possibly cause. In addition, suction dredge mining has neither a positive nor a negative effect on the water quality as it does not take out or replace the river gravels. They are simply moved from one place to another along the river bed. In addition, heavy metals such as gold, lead, and mercury are removed from the water by suction dredging. Think of how many pounds of these toxic materials have been taken out of California rivers by each suction dredge operator at no expense to the State of California!

Most suction dredge miners, myself included, remove much of the toxic debris deposited into the rivers by hunters (lead bullets), fisherman (lead weights), general public (unbelievable amounts of plastics, cigarette butts, trash in general). Part of the dredging tradition and innate responsibility of miners is to remove trash when we find it, including our own. Our bodies are covered in wetsuits which prohibit depositing body oils or lotions into the water as swimmers do. Boaters add much to the toxicity of the water through the exhaust residue. I believe that we (suction dredge miners) perform a service which, if the State of California had to perform, would cost the California taxpayers millions of tax dollars. Suction dredge miners PAY the State of California a fee to perform this free service and add to the treasury of the State.

I believe that suction dredge mining is a contributing force to the good quality of our California rivers not a negative one and I urge you to allow this activity to continue in the future to the benefit of all Californians.

Patricia Heller
Suction Dredge Miner and Concerned Citizen for Good Water Quality