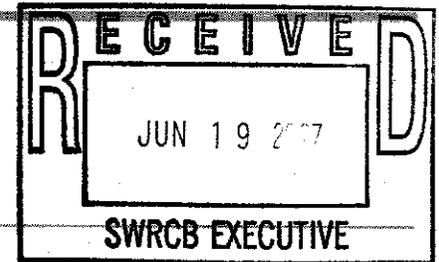


commentletters - Comment Letter - Suction Dredge Mining."



From: "Rick" <modoc.raider@wildblue.net>
To: <commentletters@waterboards.ca.gov>
Date: 6/19/2007 12:14 AM
Subject: Comment Letter - Suction Dredge Mining."

Ladies and Gentlemen:

I could dazzle you with all kinds of numbers and graphs. I could use all kind of scientific words about the water quality and the impact of suction dredging on fish. But I'm not going to do that!

What I'm going to do is tell you a story about a young boy who grew up on Beale AFB in the 1960's where my father took me fishing on the American, Yuba, and the Klamath. When we weren't fishing my father and I were prospecting by using a pan or a high banker.

My father had to leave me alone to go to a place I didn't know about. He rarely wrote to me about the horrors of Vietnam but when he returned he was a changed man. We no longer return to their places we once fished or prospect.

Years past and my father eventually told me about the horrors of war, about arriving at Oakland airport and having urine throw at him, people scream at him that he was a baby killer, and he never forgot.

Now I have retired from 30 years of military service. I suffer from Post Traumatic Stress Syndrome and have flashbacks of the mass graves from Bosnia and Kosovo.

Why am I telling you this? For 30 years I said to myself that I would finally get to retire and do the two things I love in Northern California, fish and prospect. I'm an a suction dredger who takes so much care that you would think I was in an operating room. Besides having BLM, USFS, EPA, F&G, and club rules, dredgers are one of the most self-discipline groups I have ever met. We ensure dredge areas are kept clean; we pack it in, and take it out. We carry spill kits for our fuel and oils.

Dredging and prospecting is my therapy for me. It has a calming effect just as fishing does. But dredging allows me to do something that was done by men from the past but without the impact on the environment.

I have never seen a fish hurt from dredging. I have seen numerous species behind my dredge taking in particulate matter that I assume is food. I have gone back and seen fish using the gravel we have loosen as bedding areas.

Finally, in my dredging actions I have removed lead weights from fishing, fish hooks, fishing line, soda cans, and trash.

Thank you for your time

Rick Kelley