

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

**From:** <Bthornn@aol.com>  
**To:** <commentletters@waterboards.ca.gov>  
**Date:** Fri, Jun 8, 2007 2:32 AM  
**Subject:** Comments on Suction Dredging mining

State Water Resources Control Board  
Division of Water Quality  
P.O. Box 100 Sacramento, California 95812-0100

June, 7, 2007

Dear Board Members,

I am sure that you have seen the many studies that show both that Suction Dredging does not negatively impact streams and rivers and that it helps the fish and other creatures in those streams. I am also sure you know that our own California Fish and Game dept. stated in a 1997

"An individual suction dredge operation affects a relatively small portion of a stream or river. A recreational suction dredger (representing 90-percent of all dredgers) may spend a total of four to eight hours per day in the water dredging an area of 1 to 10 square meters. The average number of hours is 5.6 hours per day. The remaining time is spent working on equipment and processing dredged material. The area or length of river or streambed worked by a single suction dredger, as compared to total river length, is relatively small compared to the total available area." (1)

and that other studies have found that

"The results from water quality sampling do not indicate any strong cumulative effects from multiple placer mining operations within the sampled drainages." "Several suction dredges probably operated simultaneously on the same drainage, but did not affect water quality as evidenced by above and below water sample results. In the recreational mining area of Resurrection Creek, five and six dredges would be operating and not produce any water quality changes (Huber and Blanchet, 1992). (2)

As to water pollution the Cal. Fish and Game study found that

"Suction dredges, powered by internal combustion engines of various sizes, operate while floating on the surface of streams and rivers. As such, oil and gas may leak or spill onto the water's surface. There have not been any observed or reported cases of harm to plant or wildlife as a result of oil or gas spills associated with suction dredging" (CDFG, 1997). Op. Cit. CDFG study

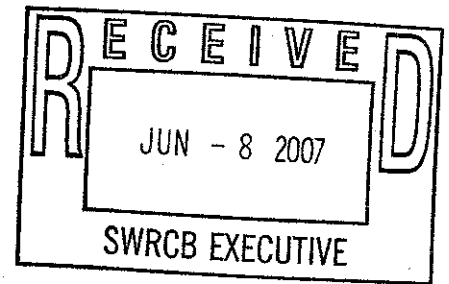
As to how suction dredging helps the fish and other creatures in our water ways one only has to look at what the U.S. Forest Service said in 2001 when they reported,

"if excavated pools reduce pool temperatures, they could provide important coldwater habitats for salmonids living in streams with elevated temperatures" (SNF, 2001).

We can also thank those prospecting using suction dredges for removing toxic mercury and lead from the water ways. In some cases they have removed hundreds of pounds of mercury.

In conclusion besides having little impact on waterways compared to the avg. storm the miners using dredges benefit the water quality by their actions and by their presence as observers and reporters of conditions on our public lands to state and federal agencies.

Yours,



Scott Albert  
694 Coldbrook Ave.  
Simi Valley, CA 93065

1)CDFG, 1997. draft Environmental Impact Report: Adoption of Amended Regulations for Suction Dredge Mining. State of California, The Resource Agency, Department of Fish and Game

2)Huber and Blanchet, 1992. Water quality cumulative effects of placer mining on the Chugach National Forest, Kenai Peninsula, 1988-1990. Chugach National Forest, U.S. Forest Service, Alaska Region, U.S. Department of Agriculture.

3) SNF, 2001. Siskiyou National Forest, Draft Environmental Impact Statement: Suction Dredging Activities. U.S. Department of Agriculture, U.S. Forest Service, Siskiyou National Forest, Medford, OR.

\*\*\*\*\* See what's free at <http://www.aol.com>.