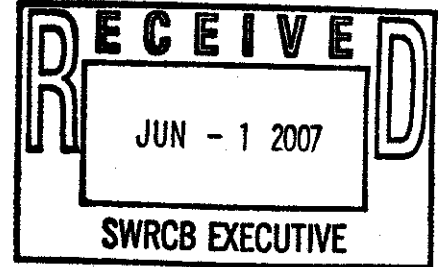


From: Steve Wandt <sjwandt@sbcglobal.net>
To: <commentletters@waterboards.ca.gov>
Date: Fri, Jun 1, 2007 10:02 AM
Subject: Comment letter-Suction Dredging



California Water Resources Board,

I am a small scale miner that depends on finding gold to supply my jewelry company with gold nuggets. I consider myself an expert witness in the field of suction dredging. I have been an active suction dredger in California for the last 25 years. My experience has shown the suction dredging does improve the habitat for local native trout populations. On a claim I worked in Screwauger Creek (Nevada County) starting in 1988 there were only a few trout present in the pools we were working. Almost all streambed gravels were cemented and provided poor spawn beds. After 5 years of continual dredging that provided much loosened spawning beds the trout and benthic insect population in this creek grew beyond belief. Fishermen that came for the wild trout, commented to me on many occasions that they had some of the best fishing in that creek ever! This is just one case of my personal observations out of many.

Please take note of the following video provided for your viewing. This video will show how the fish are attracted to our activities and are no way endangered by suction dredging.
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2IPYg5U4P6s>

This bill is an attempt by the CDFG to circumvent the CEQA process that it has been ordered to do by a court of law. This is CDFG way of singling out one group and pronouncing them guilty without do process of the law. The primary reason for this it seems is that the science proves that there is no significant disturbance of the environment caused by suction dredging and they still want the small scale suction dredge miners out of the water. Past scientific studies, that led to the current Suction Dredging regulations have proven with out a shadow of doubt that suction dredging has no negative effect on fish populations.

Another point that must be made is the fact that suction dredgers are the only ones that actively remove mercury and lead from our waterways.

Regards,

Steve Wandt
8526 Hayden Way
Fair Oaks, CA 95628
www.NaturalGoldJewelry.com

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