

The Lure of Gold

Gold has a long history in Chugach National Forest. In fact, gold was discovered in Alaska on the Kenai Peninsula in 1848 by Russian mining engineer Peter Doroshin. In 1896 one of Alaska's earliest Gold Rushes occurred when gold was discovered in many of the creeks that now lie within the Chugach National Forest. Gold miners recover gold from some of these same streams to this very day.

Times have changed, and today there are many people who enjoy looking for gold as a recreational pursuit. Unlike professional gold seekers, these recreationalists benefit primarily from adventure in the great outdoors. The entire family can share in the excitement of looking for and finding gold.

This pamphlet seeks to aid you in your search for gold by giving you some easy rules to follow and a few good locations to search for your own golden adventure. These are areas with easy road access that are closed to mineral entry and that have no mining claims.

Prospecting Tools

The basic equipment used to look for gold is quite simple and requires only a minimum investment. A gold pan is all a person needs to get started. Metal pans were used by early prospectors; modern versions are plastic with built-in riffles. Other hand tools and light equipment that may be used in the recreational search for gold include sluice boxes, rocker boxes, metal detectors, power sluices, and suction dredges.

What You Can Do—And Not Do

Various types of mining occur in National Forests, but many mining activities require special permits. The goal here is to tell you some things you can go do today without getting any special paperwork. The activities that can take place without permits are of course of a more limited nature. If you wish to do something not described here, contact the nearest National Forest office for more information.

There is one basic rule to remember:

If material is to be washed into a stream or river, that material should only come from the active stream channel itself. Confining your activities to the parts of

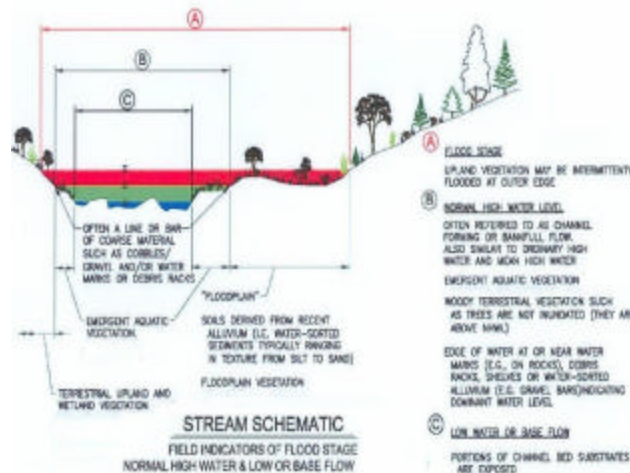


Successful gold panner!

a stream channel below the normal high water mark is the easiest way to avoid special permits. The intent is to not add material to a stream channel that would not normally end up there when the water is flowing naturally throughout the year.

Streams and rivers are very dynamic and recover rapidly from small excavations that occur in the active stream channel. Digging above the normal high water mark adds material to a stream that would not usually be there. This bank material also contains more silt than washed stream gravels.

REMEMBER - If material is being washed in a stream, whether with a gold pan, sluice box, or a suction dredge, that material should come only from below the normal high water mark and unvegetated gravel bars.



Ordinary High Water Mark is that physical break-point in vegetation where average high water events have resulted in vegetation below that point that can survive in wet conditions (willows, sedge, cottonwoods) and above that line, vegetation can not survive in wet conditions (alder, birch, white spruce).

Follow all National Forest rules such as camping limits, discharge of firearms, use of trails, etc. The recreational pursuit of gold does not allow you to build structures, cut trees or dig up archaeological or historical objects. Nor does it give you the right to obstruct others in their recreational pursuits.

Suction Dredging

Suction dredging is allowed in the Chugach National Forest. However, all suction dredges in Alaska require a free EPA permit. This permit may be obtained at the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), 222 West 7th Avenue, Anchorage, AK 99513 (800) 781-0983. All dredging on streams with anadromous (sea-going) fish also require a free State Office of Habitat Management & Permitting (OHMP) Habitat permit. Salmon are an anadromous fish. This permit may be obtained at the DNR Office of Habitat Management & Permitting, 550 W. 7th Ave, Anchorage, AK 99501 (907)269-8690. Finally, all suction dredges with a nozzle opening greater than four (4) inches must file a Notice of Intent with the Forest Service. Contact the nearest National Forest office for more information. The permits specify what conditions you must comply with to use a suction dredge.

Where Can I Look For Gold?

The 1872 Mining Law, although amended several times, remains essentially intact. The law allows a person to locate a mining claim on federal land and mine that claim if various permits are received. The claim owner has an exclusive right to mine their claim. You must have permission from the claimant to search for gold on their claim. However, when certain lands are withdrawn from mineral entry, no claims can be staked there (although there may be preexisting claims). The designated areas in this publication have no mining claims. You may search for gold on any other federal lands in the Chugach National Forest that are open to mineral entry, but stay in the areas listed here to avoid any conflicts unless you do more research first.

Recreational Gold Locations

Stay within in listed areas as mining claims are likely to exist in the immediate area of these location. No prospecting is allowed on a mining claim without the owners permission.

Tincan Creek - Good chance of gold with nearby parking. Less than 100 oz. total production. Stay within 1/4 mile of highway centerline.

Lyon & Spokane Creeks - Minor gold production. Stay within 1/4 mile of highway centerline.

Bertha Creek - Good chance of gold with nearby parking and campground. Total production over 750 ozs. Stay within 1/4 mile of highway centerline.

Silvertip Creek - Possible dredging potential. Stay within 1/8 mile upstream of highway.

Sixmile Creek - Large area from Mile 1.5 to Mile 5.5 of the Hope Road. Stay in area from centerline of road to center of creek. Very good chance of gold with total production over 1750 ozs. Dredging from May 15 to July 15 only with proper permits.

Resurrection Creek - Very good chance of gold with total production over 20,000 ozs. The area begins at the Resurrection Pass Trail footbridge 4.5 miles from Hope. The area extends from the bridge upstream for 0.48 miles. Dredging from May 15 to July 15 only with proper permits.

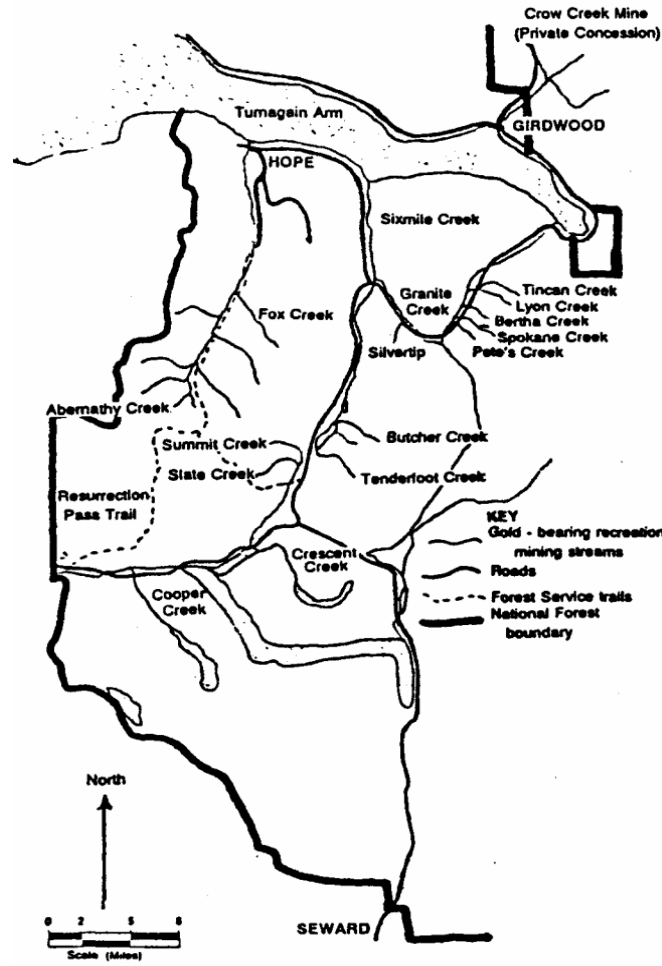
Slate & Summit Creeks - Small chance of gold. Stay within 1/4 mile of highway centerline.

Crescent Creek - Chance of gold with nearby parking and campground. Total production over 450 ozs. Area downstream from bridge on old Sterling Highway. No motorized equipment.

Cooper Creek - Chance of gold with nearby parking and campground. Total production over 1100 ozs. Stay within 1/4 mile of highway centerline. No motorized equipment.

Crow Creek Mine - Private concession. This historical site was one of the most productive mines in the area. Open mining is permitted for a fee.

For more information on these and other recreational mining sites visit the Recreational Miners Association at www.recminer.com



Recreational Mining

In Chugach National Forest



For further information, please contact:

Chugach National Forest
3301 C Street, Suite 300
Anchorage AK 99503
(907) 743-9500
FAX: (907) 743-9476

Cordova Ranger District
P.O. Box 280
612 Second Street
Cordova, AK 99574
(907) 424-7661

Glacier Ranger District
P.O. Box 129
Forest Station Road
Girdwood, AK 99587
(907) 783-3242

Seward Ranger District
P.O. Box 390
334 4th Avenue
Seward, AK 99664
(907) 224-3374
(907) 783-3242

Please visit the Chugach National Forest website at <http://www.fs.fed.us/r10/chugach/> for the latest contact information

Alaska Miners Association

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