



RECREATIONAL PROSPECTING IN THE COMMONWEALTH'S WATERWAYS

BACKGROUND

Recreational prospecting is the search for precious metals, gemstones and semi-precious minerals. In Pennsylvania, hunting for gold is the most common form of recreational prospecting. Prospecting enthusiasts often hunt for gold at public rights of way where bridges cross gold-bearing streams using a shovel and gold pan. Prospecting equipment can be found at hobby stores, rock shops, metal detector retailers and hardware stores in areas where gold hunting is popular.

METHODS AND EQUIPMENT NOT REQUIRING PERMITS

- Non-motorized pans, shovels, pan or dish-type hand classifiers and picks.
- Non-motorized sluice boxes, sieves, concentrators and mini-rocker boxes.

METHODS AND EQUIPMENT REQUIRING PERMITS

- Suction dredges with a nozzle no larger than four inches in diameter.
- High-bankers or suction dredge/high-banker combinations with a water intake no larger than two and one-half inches (inside) diameter, which are operated entirely below the ordinary high water line.

PERMITTING

If you are planning to use a suction dredge or high-banker, you must first apply for a permit from the appropriate Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) regional office. Applicants are encouraged to have a pre-application meeting with DEP to discuss the nature and scope of their proposed activities before applying for this permit. To ensure that the pre-application meeting is as productive as possible for both parties, applicants must be prepared to discuss the following issues:

- The location of the proposed dredging.
- The type of dredging equipment.
- An estimate of the amount of material that will be dredged.
- A plan for disposing of any excess material.
- The proximity of any public drinking water sources.

When applying for a permit, applicants should also consider:

- Stocked or wild trout streams with the following seasonal restrictions:

Stocked trout streams	March 1 – June 15
Wild trout streams	Oct. 1 – Dec. 31
Lake Erie tributaries	Sept. 1 – April 30

The use of chemicals or other contaminants is prohibited.

OTHER THINGS TO CONSIDER

The removal of precious metals, gemstones or minerals from submerged lands of this commonwealth in quantities which are commercially usable or marketable in conjunction with any permitted dredging activity is subject to the royalty and agreement provisions of the Dam Safety and Encroachments Act. DEP's regional offices can help determine if you are prospecting on submerged lands.

If you plan to prospect on state game land, state forestland or in a state park, please contact the appropriate agencies before prospecting to ensure that you are familiar with their rules and regulations.

PROPERTY RIGHTS

DEP permits do not convey any property rights. You must obtain permission from the property owner before prospecting on private property or public lands.

For more information, visit www.depweb.state.pa.us, keyword: Prospecting or contact:

PERMITTING AND TECHNICAL SERVICES SECTION	COUNTY RESPONSIBILITY	PERMITTING AND TECHNICAL SERVICES SECTION	COUNTY RESPONSIBILITY
Northcentral Regional Office 208 W. Third St., Suite 101 Williamsport, PA 17701 570-327-3574	Bradford, Cameron, Centre, Clearfield, Clinton, Columbia, Lycoming, Montour, Northumberland, Potter, Snyder, Sullivan, Tioga and Union	Southcentral Regional Office 909 Elmerton Ave. Harrisburg, PA 17110 717-705-4707	Adams, Bedford, Berks, Blair, Cumberland, Dauphin, Franklin, Fulton, Huntingdon, Juniata, Lancaster, Lebanon, Mifflin, Perry and York
Northeast Regional Office 2 Public Square Wilkes-Barre, PA 18711-0790 570-826-2511	Carbon, Lackawanna, Lehigh, Luzerne, Monroe, Northampton, Pike, Schuylkill, Susquehanna, Wayne and Wyoming	Southeast Regional Office 2 East Main Street Norristown, PA 19401 484-250-5970	Bucks, Chester, Delaware, Montgomery and Philadelphia
Northwest Regional Office 230 Chestnut St. Meadville, PA 16335 814-332-6984	Butler, Clarion, Crawford, Elk, Erie, Forest, Jefferson, Lawrence, McKean, Mercer, Venango and Warren	Southwest Regional Office 400 Waterfront Dr. Pittsburgh, PA 15222-4745 412-442-4000	Allegheny, Armstrong, Beaver, Cambria, Fayette, Greene, Indiana, Somerset, Washington and Westmoreland

DEP CENTRAL OFFICE

Bureau of Watershed Management
Division of Waterways, Wetlands and Stormwater Management
P.O. Box 8775
Harrisburg, PA 17105-8775
717-787-6827
Fax 717-772-5986

OTHER RESOURCE AGENCIES

Department of Conservation and Natural Resources
Rachel Carson State Office Building
400 Market Street
P.O. Box 8767
Harrisburg, PA 17105-8767
717-787-2869

Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission
Bureau of Fisheries
450 Robinson Lane
Bellefonte, PA 16823-9620
814-359-5110

Pennsylvania Game Commission
Bureau of Wildlife Protection
2001 Elmerton Avenue
Harrisburg, PA 17110-9797
717-787-5740