



PROSPECTING & COLLECTING ON THE SALMON-CHALLIS NATIONAL FOREST

United States
Department of Agriculture
Forest Service
Salmon-Challis National Forest
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THERE'S GOLD IN THEM HILLS

Custer and Lemhi County and the Salmon-Challis National Forest share a rich history of historic mining activity with the remnants of flume lines, adits, mill structures and associated buildings still visible.

Each year the Salmon-Challis National Forest hosts a wide array of visitors involved in various minerals-related activities such as searching for collectable rock specimens, filing mining claims, purchasing mineral materials and even conducting exploration for potential mines. Whatever your interest, we hope the information in this paper will help answer your questions.

PROSPECTING

Prospecting activities described in this paper include "rock or mineral" collecting and placer mining activities such as "gold panning and suction dredging" and the use of "sluice boxes and trommels." Other activities, often associated with prospecting include the search for buried treasure or other artifacts. Although not strictly considered prospecting, these activities are discussed under "Treasure Troves - Metal Detecting".

The following sections on "Lands Open to Prospecting", "Mining Claims" and "Forest Service Locatable Mining Regulations" provide some basic legal information for these kinds of locatable mineral activities. Locatable minerals are those which are authorized for disposal under the Mining Law of 1872.

LANDS OPEN TO PROSPECTING & COLLECTING

Many areas on the Salmon-Challis National Forest are open to prospecting and mining. However, there are exceptions:

- 1) Private lands are not open to prospecting or mining without the landowner's permission. Maps are available at the Salmon-Challis Headquarters Office that show the general location of private land within the boundaries of the Forest.
- 2) Some areas are withdrawn from mineral entry under the 1872 Mining Law or have certain restrictions that apply to prospecting. For example, the Frank Church River of No Return Wilderness and the drainages of Main Salmon and Middle Fork of the Salmon Rivers. The best way to find out about restrictions that apply to these and other areas is

to stop in at a Salmon-Challis National Forest office in Salmon or Challis and ask to speak with a minerals management specialist.

3) Finally, many of the likely spots for mineral prospecting have been found and "claimed" by others (see section on "Mining Claims"). Any minerals found on these claims are legally the property of the claim owner and like private land; permission should be obtained before prospecting.

To determine if National Forest lands are "claimed" you can either check with the Lemhi or Custer County Courthouse or with the Bureau of Land Management.

MINING CLAIMS

Many people are interested in staking mining claims on the Forest and there are both state and federal requirements for doing so. Instructions for BLM filing requirements and fees are described in the BLM pamphlet, Idaho Information Guide: Locating Mining Claims http://www.blm.gov/pgdata/etc/medialib/blm/id/mining/download_documents.Par.83446.File.dat/Web%20Final%20bluebook%20rev%20_Jan%202010_.pdf State requirements for filing claims may be obtained from the Lemhi and Custer County Courthouses.

FOREST SERVICE LOCATABLE MINING REGULATIONS

Forest Service regulations for locatable or hardrock minerals are found in the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) at 36 CFR 228A.

Notice of Intent - Anyone proposing to prospect for hardrock or locatable minerals (gold/silver, gems, mineral specimens) which might cause a disturbance of surface resources **must file a Notice of Intent to Operate** (36 CFR 228.4(a)) with the local District Ranger. Any use of mechanized equipment, cutting of trees or occupancy of National Forest Lands would require that a Notice be filed. Activities which are limited to operation of vehicles on existing (open) forest roads; the occasional removal of small mineral specimens or marking and monumenting mining claims normally do not require a Notice.

Plan of Operation - The District Ranger will review the Notice of Intent to determine whether a more detailed Plan of Operation will be required. A Plan of Operation is required if the activities proposed will likely cause or are causing significant disturbance to surface resources. To avoid problems and delays, be sure and contact the local District Ranger or Forest headquarters well in advance if you have any questions about whether a Notice or Plan will be needed for your activities.

ROCK & MINERAL COLLECTING

Most rocks and mineral specimens of interest to collectors are considered locatable minerals. Collectors should follow the advice given above on "Lands Open to Prospecting" and "Mining Claims".

A minerals material permit should be obtained by collectors who want a slightly larger quantity, for example hand-loading a pickup truck with talus rock.

Removal of still greater amounts of mineral specimens, which might cause a disturbance of surface resources, is subject to the Notice of Intent and Plan of Operation requirements.

NOTE: The Forest does not permit the removal of large or unique boulder size material for landscaping or decorative purposes.

PLACER MINING - GOLD PANNING & SUCTION DREDGING

Panning & suction dredging is most typically done for gold. Gold is a locatable mineral and the advice given above on "Lands Open to Prospecting" and "Mining Claims" apply to these activities as well.

Panning - The Forest does not have a designated recreational gold panning area. Incidental recreational panning does occur but it is an activity that the Forest Service does not formally authorize. Generally, when the operation involves only short-term panning and no excavation is involved (including a pick and shovel), this is acceptable.

Suction Dredging – Due to the presence of Threatened, Endangered and Sensitive Fish Species the Salmon-Challis NF does not participate in the State of Idaho's Recreational Suction Dredging program. Any proposal to dredge on the Forest is subject to the Notice of Intent and Plan of Operation requirements.

PLACER MINING - SLUICE BOX and TROMMEL

Sluice box or trommel operations excavate a portion of a stream bank and utilize the water from the stream to rinse the materials in the sluice box leaving gold.

Sluice box or trommel operations that involve operation in or near stream banks will normally require a Plan of Operations. If you have any questions about whether your sluice box or trommel activities require a Notice of Intent or Plan of Operation, you should contact the nearest District Ranger or Forest Headquarters for advice.

TREASURE TROVES & METAL DETECTING

Many people hunt for buried "treasure" using metal detectors or other means. Determining whether these kinds of activities are regulated depends on the kind and location of the "treasure" being sought, and the amount of surface disturbance involved.

Metal detectors can be used without a permit to search for recent (non-historic) coins and lost metal objects only in campgrounds and other such recreation sites. However, digging or other disturbance of surface resources to recover such objects is forbidden without prior authorization.

a special use permit. Such permits are usually only issued to educational or research organizations.

Use of a metal detector to locate mineral deposits such as gold and silver is considered prospecting and is subject to the Notice of Intent and Plan of Operation requirements (see description of requirements under "Lands Open to Prospecting and Collecting", "FS Locatable Mining Regulations", and "Mining Claims").

MINERAL MATERIALS

Many individuals, business' and organizations obtain mineral materials from the Salmon-Challis NF and Bureau of Land Management. Materials available include common varieties of sand and gravel; fill material, rip-rap, and building stone. Both the Forest and

BLM have a number of sites in from which to choose these types of materials. The listing below provides the name, locations, material type and cost per unit.

SALMON MINERAL MATERIAL SITES

NZ Site Name & Number	Status of Site	Location	Material Type	Unit	Total Price & Minimum *
12-Mile Creek 041301A	Active	Salmon-Cobalt RD T19N, R22E, Sec 4	Rip-Rap	Cubic Yards	\$0.80 per CY 25 CY or \$20.00
Wallace Creek 041301B	Active	Salmon-Cobalt RD T22N, R21E, Sec 1	Rip-Rap	Cubic Yards	\$0.80 per CY 25 CY or \$20.00
Perreau Creek 041301C	Active	Salmon-Cobalt RD T21N, R21E, Sec 34	Rip-Rap	Cubic Yards	\$0.80/CY 25 CY or \$20.00
Haynes Creek 041301D	Active	Salmon-Cobalt RD T19N, R23E, Sec 4	Rip-Rap	Cubic Yards	\$0.80 per CY 25 CY or \$20.00
NZ Misc Hand- Picked Rock (Landscape) 041301E	Active	Salmon-Cobalt RD Various locations on District	Hand-Picked Rock (Specialty)	Cubic Yards	\$20.00 minimum fee
Votler Creek 041307A	Active	North Fork RD T26N, R21E, Sec 36	Sand & Gravel	Cubic Yards	\$0.90 per CY 22 CY or \$20.00
NZ Squaw Creek 041307B	Active	North Fork RD T24N,R19E, Sec 10	Rip-Rap	Cubic Yards	\$0.80/CY 25 CY or \$20.00
NZ Misc Material** 041307C (Landslide Material)	Active**	North Fork RD** Down-river Landslide Material	Sand & Gravel (Landslide Material)	Cubic Yards	\$0.90 per CY 22 CY or \$20.00

CHALLIS MINERAL MATERIAL SITES

SZ Site Name & Number	Status of Site	Location	Material Type	Unit	Total Price & Minimum *
Blind Summit 041303A	Active	Yankee Fork RD T12N, R11E, Sec 31	Sand & Gravel	Cubic Yards	\$1.60 per CY 12 CY or \$20.00
Fir Creek 041303B	Active	Yankee Fork RD T12N, R10E, Sec 23	Rip-Rap	Tons	\$1.60 per Ton 12 Tons or \$20.00
			Building Stone (Dimension Stone)	Tons	\$5.35 per Ton 4 Tons or \$20.00
SZ Squaw Creek 041303C	Active	Yankee Fork RD T12N, R17E, Sec 33	Rip-Rap	Tons	\$1.60 per Ton 12 Tons or \$20.00
			Building Stone (Dimension Stone)	Tons	\$5.35 per Ton 4 Tons or \$20.00
Yankee Fork ** Dredge Piles 041303F	Active**	Yankee Fork RD T11N, R15E, Sec 5	Dredge Rock** (Specialty)	Tons	\$5.60 per Ton 4 Tons or \$20.00
SZ Misc Hand- Picked Rock (Landscape) 041303H	Active	Challis & Yankee Fork RD Various locations on Districts	Hand-Picked Rock (Specialty)	Cubic Yards	\$20.00 minimum fee

For specific information related to minerals activities in the Salmon area we recommend that you contact one of our Mineral Specialists: Russ Bjorklund or Julie Hopkins. They may be reached by calling 208-756-5100. For the Challis area, please contact either Piper Goessel or Amanda Kriwox. They may be reached by calling 208-879-4100.