



# Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife Comparison of Suction Dredge Permitting Regulations in California, Oregon, Idaho, and Washington State

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PROVISION	WASHINGTON	OREGON	IDAHO	CALIFORNIA
<b>Primary permitting agency</b>	WDFW: Hydraulic Project Approval Program	Oregon Department of State Lands: Removal-Fill Program	Idaho Department of Water Resources: Stream Channel Protection Program	California Department of Fish and Wildlife: Suction Dredge permit program
<b>Secondary permits</b>	n/a	Oregon Department of Environmental Quality NPDES; Oregon Department of Geology and Mineral Industries letter of exemption	Federal EPA NPDES or exemption	Pending: California Water Resources Control Board and Regional Water Quality Control Boards for NPDES
<b>Allowed work periods</b>	Allowed work periods determined stream-by-stream based on when salmonids unlikely to be building redds or incubating in gravels; Exceptions possible via individual permit. Daylight hours only.	Seasonal work windows, motorized suction dredging prohibited in Essential Salmon Habitats (ESH); Daylight hours only.	Open areas identified on web map; Seasonal work periods identified; Prohibitions in some waters with ESA-listed fish; Special restrictions and work periods required in special waters (5 stream systems).	Work period restrictions per table provided in rules, determined on a stream-by-stream basis. Area closures around specified thermal refugia. Some streams or stream reaches are closed year-round. Daylight hours only.
<b>Dredge suction intake diameter</b>	4.25 inches generally; Some larger streams allow 5.25-inch nozzle; larger nozzle than listed for stream requires individual HPA	Intake nozzle with inside diameter not to exceed 4 inches in ESH; Not to exceed 6 inches otherwise	Intake diameter no greater than 5 inches	Normally limited to 4 inches; may be increased to 6 or 8 inches in certain areas under special CDFW conditions
<b>Horsepower or throughput</b>	Limit throughput using nozzle size; Limit sluice surface area to 3 square feet without timing restrictions, 10 square feet with timing restrictions	Not to exceed 16 HP in ESH, 30 HP otherwise	Not to exceed 15 HP	Limit throughput using nozzle size
<b>Linear distance between dredges</b>	200 feet	500 feet	100 feet (except NPDES requires 800 feet)	500 feet

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<b>Disturbance of woody vegetation</b>	May not undermine, cut, or disturb live, rooted vegetation of any kind. Boulders and large woody material within the frequent scour zone must stay within that zone.	Streambank disturbance prohibited, including rooted or embedded woody plants below OHWL	Alterations, modifications, or changes to the natural existing shape of the stream channel within or below MHWM requires a stream channel alteration permit	No woody streamside vegetation shall be removed or damaged
<b>Large scale habitat disturbance</b>	May not use vehicle-mounted winches; OK to move boulders and large woody materials that are not embedded; must replace to essentially same location; Fill and level upland tailings and piles; No excavation from toe of slope.	Movement of large scale non-embedded habitat features allowed by hand and non-motorized equipment only	Undercutting of a stream bank or dislodging of stream bank vegetation is prohibited.	Motorized winching to move boulders, logs, or other objects is prohibited.
<b>Water quality protections</b>	Not allow visible sediment plumes to enter areas where redds or fish life are located. Fuel storage and refueling requirements.	Oregon DEQ NPDES permit coverage required for mining permit - must operate per NPDES permit provisions. Plume longer than 300 feet downstream prohibited.	Idaho NPDES Recreational Placer Mining General Permit coverage or exemption required; More restrictive with respect to impaired waters and streams with ESA-listed fish/shellfish.	California state water quality permitting requirements for suction dredging are under development.

**For further information:**

Teresa Scott  
 Protection Division Special Projects Coordinator  
 Habitat Program  
 360-902-2713 [teresa.scott@dfw.wa.gov](mailto:teresa.scott@dfw.wa.gov)

Randi Thurston  
 Protection Division Manager  
 Habitat Program  
 360-902-2602 [randi.thurston@dfw.wa.gov](mailto:randi.thurston@dfw.wa.gov)