

# Suction Dredging Overview

Washington Fish and Wildlife Commission

February 10, 2018

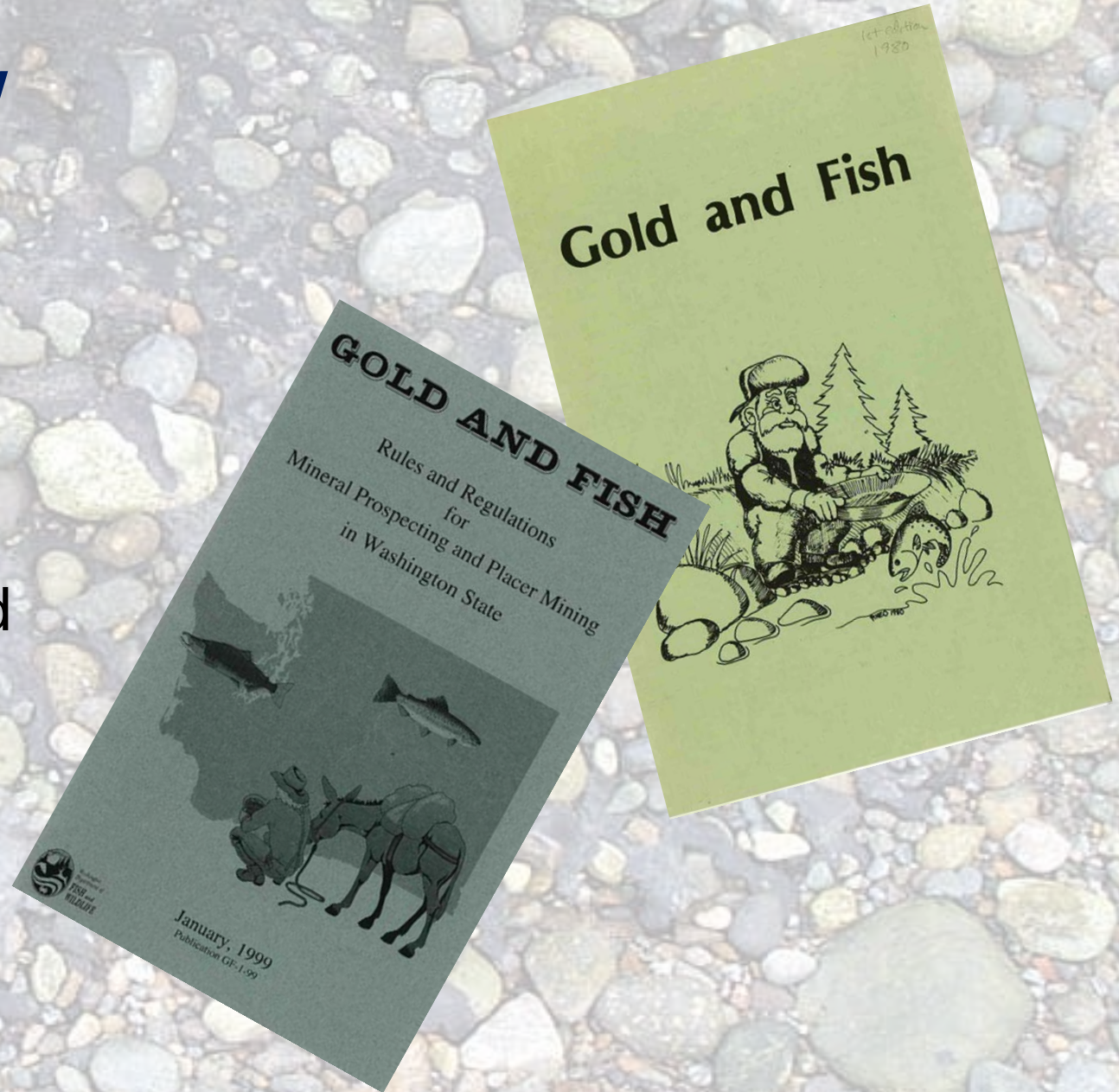
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Habitat Program





# Regulatory History

- Pre-1980 – Regulated by individual HPA
- 1980 - First G&F pamphlet covering panning, sluicing
- 1997 – Legislature required rulemaking and new G&F pamphlet
- 1999 – New G&F pamphlet covering most prospecting methods



# Regulatory History

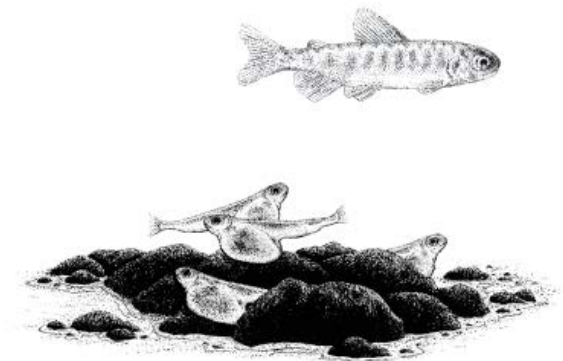
- 2009 – New G&F pamphlet following prospector petition
- 2015 – New G&F pamphlet following overhaul of Hydraulic Code rules



Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife

## Gold and Fish

Rules for  
Mineral Prospecting  
and Placer Mining



July 2015  
4<sup>th</sup> Edition

# Measures to Protect Against Potential Dredging Impacts



# Excavation/Entrainment

## Protection Measures

- Authorized work times
- Do not disturb redds
- Avoid areas containing freshwater mussels
- Equipment size limitations
- Fish guard on pump intake



# Substrate Modification/Channel Hydraulics

## Protection Measures

- Equipment size limitations
- Fill excavation sites
- Use pressurized water only for crevicing or moving tailings
- Don't disturb
  - Habitat improvement structures
  - Toe of bank
  - Embedded wood



# Water Quality Degradation

## Protection Measures

- 200 feet separation between equipment
- Fueling best practices
- Don't disturb
  - Habitat improvement structures
  - Toe of bank
  - Embedded wood

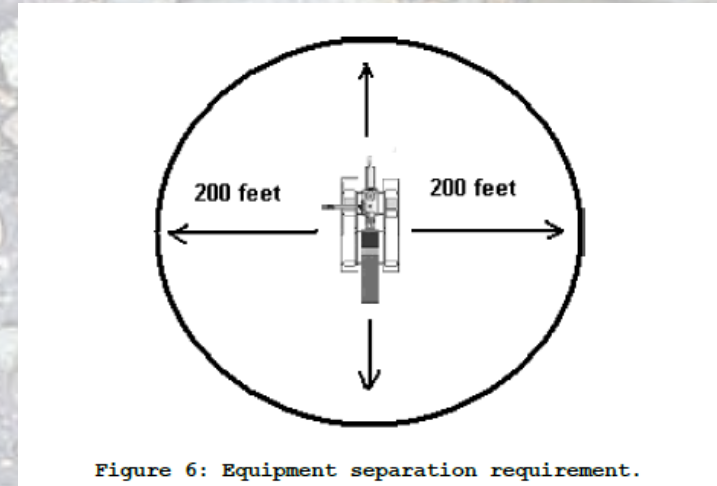


Photo captured from KCTS



# Channel Dewatering/Obstruction to Passage

## Protection Measures

- Authorized work times
- Daytime work only
- Diversion structure cannot be greater than 50% of the wetted stream width
- Remove the diversion structure before leaving the site



# Regulations in Other States

- California
  - Legislature implemented litigation settlement by prohibiting suction dredging in 2009 pending rule development
  - CDFW updated Suction Dredge Permit rules (2012, 2016)
  - State water quality rules under development
- Oregon
  - Legislative Ban (2016)
    - Limited permit numbers (850 in ESH)
    - Prohibited in State Scenic Waterways
  - Legislature (2018) prohibits in ESH
  - Water quality permit coverage required
- Idaho
  - Federal Endangered Species Act listings of steelhead in 1997 and bull trout in 1998 triggered federal review of impacts from federally-authorized actions (USFS, BLM)
  - State permit limited to specific times & locations
  - Federal water quality permit started 2010, finalized 2013
  - Federal consultations in 2010, 2013, 2016 allowed restricted access in some systems formerly closed.



# Similarities Among States

- Limit the time of year dredges can operate to when fish and eggs are unlikely to be present
- Require avoidance of redds, spawning fish, freshwater shellfish
- Require screened pump intake
- Restrictions that limit volume of material processed (nozzle size, hp, SqFt)
- Similar habitat structure protections
  - e.g., require excavation sites to be filled and tailing piles leveled
- Similar BMPs and fueling requirements

# Differences Among States

- California & Oregon require 500 feet of separation between active suction dredges
  - Washington is 200 feet of separation
  - Idaho requires a 100-foot distance (800 feet under water quality permit)
- California considers 68 fish & amphibian species
- Oregon prohibits removal or disturbance of vegetation within 100 yards of most waterways; other states don't specify distance.
- Oregon & Idaho require water quality permit before state suction dredging permit can be issued
  - California water quality protections under development
- Washington pamphlet rules (no application required)
  - Oregon, California, Idaho require reporting before issue next year's permit

# Questions?



Photo by William Meyers