

Suction Dredge General Permit Application Information Updated April 2015

Owners and operators of portable suction dredges that discharge to state surface water must apply to the Water Protection Bureau at the Montana Department of Environmental Quality (MDEQ) for authorization of coverage under the Montana Pollution Discharge Elimination System (MPDES). Discharge of pollutants to state water without a permit is a violation of the Montana Water Quality Act in 75-5-605, Montana Code Annotated (MCA).

Suction dredges with intake diameters of four (4) inches or less can be authorized under the Suction Dredging General Permit (SDGP). Larger suction dredges do not qualify under the SDGP and require an individual MPDES discharge permit. The SDGP only covers the discharge of sediment. The presence of other pollutants in the effluent would require the applicant to obtain coverage for discharge under an individual MPDES permit.

The SDGP application (Form NOI37) must be submitted to the MDEQ at least 30 days before the suction dredge equipment is operated. A fee payable to the MDEQ is also required at the time of application. The current fee amounts are:

<u>NOI37 Status</u>	<u>Resident</u>	<u>Non-resident</u>
New	\$50.00	\$200.00
Resubmitted	\$25.00	\$100.00
Renewal	\$25.00	\$100.00
Modification	\$25.00	\$100.00

The authorization letter and a copy of the SDGP must be available on-site during all times of suction dredge operation. Dredges must not be used to cut into or undercut stream banks or used in any way that could cause bank caving, measurable erosion of banks, or loss of bank stabilizing vegetation. Chemical addition for enhancement of mineral recovery is prohibited. There must be no discharge that produces a visible oil or petroleum sheen in the receiving stream. No refueling of suction dredges is allowed over open water.

PLEASE NOTE: an authorization letter permitting dredging under the SDGP does not eliminate a permittee's obligation to obtain other permits that may be required. An authorization letter permitting suction dredging under the General Permit does not eliminate a permittee's obligation to obtain other necessary permits, including but not limited to:

- **Local Conservation Districts-** 310 permits are required for suction dredging under the Montana Natural Streambed and Land Preservation Act. Contact the conservation district with jurisdiction in the area where dredging is planned.
- **U.S. Corps of Engineers** - 404 permit coverage is required. In addition, dredging in sections of the Missouri, Yellowstone, or Kootenai Rivers may require a Section 10 permit. For more information about U.S Corps of Engineers requirements go to their website at <http://www.usace.army.mil> or call the Helena office at 406-441-1375.

- **Department of Natural Resources and Conservation (DNRC)** –
 - Local Conservation Districts; contact Laurie Zeller at 406-444-6669
 - *State of Montana Metalliferous Mineral or Gem Mining Lease* for mineral extraction that occurs on State Land, including navigable waters; contact Teresa Kinley at 406-444-2845 or Julie David at 406-444-4576.
 - Water use permit for mining use; contact the DNRC Water Rights Bureau at 406-444-6601.

- **United States Forest Service (USFS)** – may require a permit and plan of operations for suction dredging on Forest Service land; for more information go to their website at <http://www.fs.fed.us/geology/minerals.html> or contact the USFS Regional Minerals Office at 406-329-3523 (Ray Tesoro), or a Ranger District office.

- **Bureau of Land Management (BLM)** – may require a permit for dredging on BLM lands; for more information go to their website at <http://www.blm.gov/mt/st/en.html> or http://www.blm.gov/mt/st/en/info/browse/gold_panning.html or contact the BLM at 406-533-7600 (Butte Field Office) or 406-896-5086 (Billings Office).