

Recreational Mining Exemption

The Surface Mining Unit in EPD's Land Protection Branch regulates mining activity, which is defined in the Georgia Surface Mining Act of 1968, as amended, as "any activity constituting all or part of a process for the removal of minerals, ores, and other solid matter for sale or for processing or for consumption in the regular operation of a business."

A surface mining permit is not required for hobbyists who are interested in panning for rocks and minerals (including gold) as a recreational activity. Suction dredging, however, is not recommended in privately owned streams and is not allowed in national forests. The panning operation is to be kept within the channel with no disturbance to the stream banks.

Specific primary trout streams may be closed temporarily to protect the trout during spawning. For more information, or to find out the status of a particular stream, contact DNR's Wildlife Resources Division at 770-535-5498.

It is strongly recommended that hobbyists interested in panning for gold (or other minerals) receive permission from property owners of the streams; getting permission in writing is best.

Other Resources

- [Chattahoochee National Forest](#)
- [Georgia State Parks & Historic Sites](#) – Click on the name of the park or site to find the phone number.