



Mineral Titles

Information Update

No. 38 – Acceptable Practices for Placer Hand Mining in British Columbia

Revision Date: March 29, 2017

Recorded holders of placer claims may conduct hand mining activity on their placer claims on dry and non-vegetated portions of gravel bars and outside the riparian setback without submitting a Notice of Work application or obtaining a *Mines Act* permit.

The provisions of Section 6(3) of the *Water Sustainability Act* that allow the use of unrecorded water to prospect for a mineral apply to placer hand mining practices as described in this information update.

DEFINITIONS

Gravel bar: an elevated area of sediment (such as sand or gravel) deposited above the water flow.

Placer Hand Mining: hand operations are defined as those using hand tools including: hand sluice, high banker and water pump (maximum 38 mm intake).

Riparian Setback: With the exception of the Fraser River, a riparian setback is defined as 10 horizontal metres out from the high water mark of any watercourse, wetland or waterbody. The riparian setback on a gravel bar within a watercourse is defined as 3 metres from the edge of the water. See figures 1 and 2. On the Fraser River, the riparian setback on a gravel bar within a watercourse is defined as 10 metres from the edge of the water, and all work and disturbance must remain at least 1 m in elevation above the current water level.

Watercourse: the area between the high water marks on the opposite banks; and includes the banks, the gravel bars and the stream at any running level.

The term “**operate in the dry**” applies to all aspects of hand mining except hand panning, and includes the excavation of gravel.

In the event of a discrepancy between this information and the provisions of the *Mineral Tenure Act*, the *Water Sustainability Act*, *Mines Act* and regulations under these Acts, the acts and regulations will apply.

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The following outlines acceptable practices for placer hand mining:

1. No pay dirt may be extracted from under the water of any watercourse or within a riparian setback. The exceptions to this restriction are hand panning and collecting silt samples which are permissible activities within the wetted perimeter of a watercourse and a riparian setback.
2. No placer hand mining, (including the removal of vegetation or gravel or other disturbance) may occur within the riparian setback, aside from a narrow foot path to access areas that are outside the riparian setback. Placer hand mining may only occur on areas outside of the riparian setback, whether on a gravel bar or above the high water mark of a watercourse. Placer hand mining is restricted to un-vegetated portions of the gravel bar and absolutely no vegetation is to be removed or disturbed.
3. Excavated material from a gravel bar must not be transported away from the gravel bar for processing. All excavations and any settling ponds must be leveled and contoured as gravel is processed in order to ensure that all depressions are filled to avoid the entrapment of fish should water levels fluctuate due to seasonal variation.
4. There must be no discharge of silt laden water into a watercourse. All water discharged from a sluice box or high banker must be discharged into a settling pond for exfiltration.
5. A sluice box, high banker, settling pond, tailings pile and any excavations of pay dirt shall not be located within a riparian setback. A sluice box must not be used within the flowing water of any watercourse.
6. The sluice box or high banker shall be readily moved by hand and cannot contain any moving parts driven by mechanical means, with the exception of a small portable water pump. Water intakes shall be screened in accordance with Federal Department of Fisheries and Oceans specifications (screen openings shall not exceed 2.5 mm). Size of pumps shall not exceed a 38 mm (1.5 inches) suction intake.
7. Fuel must not be stored within the high water mark or riparian setback and emergency spill kits shall be retained on site.
8. The use of suction dredging and hand or mechanically powered “sniping” equipment in any watercourse is not permitted.
9. Construction or occupation of cabins, sheds or other structures on Crown land is not permitted. Tents, trailers or campers are permitted outside of the riparian setback but must be removed when

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the claim is not occupied for the purpose of conducting placer mining activity. Placer claims must not be used for recreational camping or other recreational purposes and may only be occupied by the recorded holder while legitimate placer exploration activity is occurring. All waste shall be disposed of in a manner that provides full protection to the watercourse.

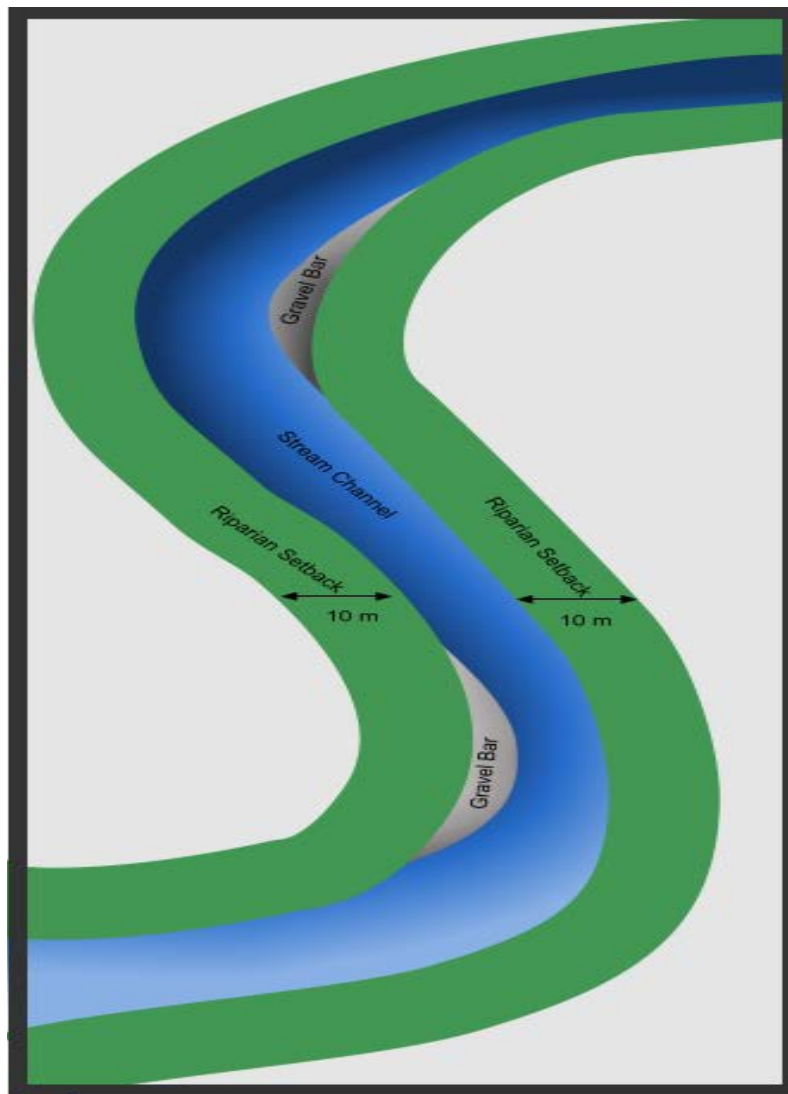


Figure 1: Depiction of the 10 metre riparian setback from a watercourse. The 10 metres is measured from the high water mark.

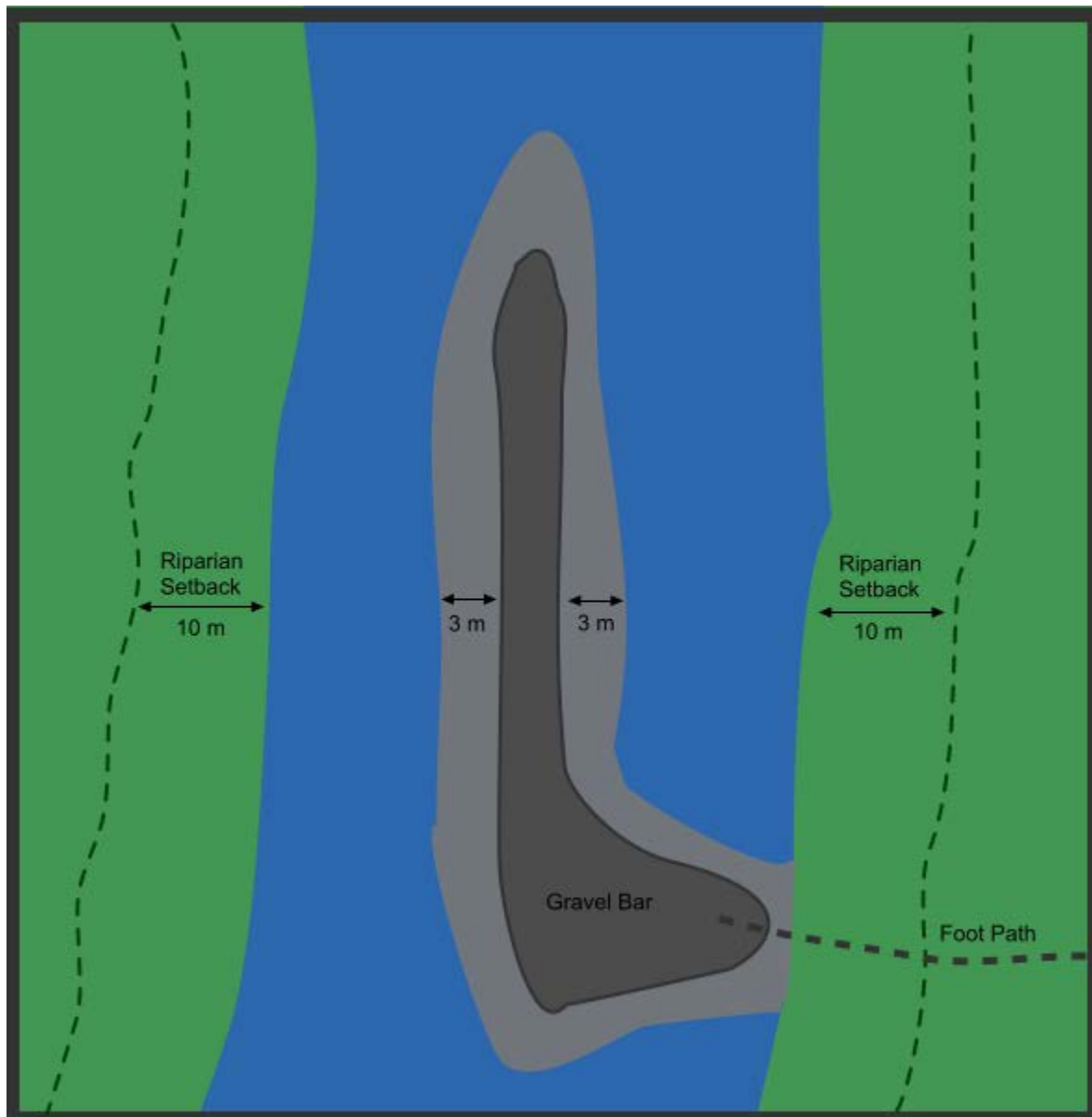


Figure 2: Depiction of the 3 metre riparian setback on a dry un-vegetated gravel bar and the foot path across the 10 metre riparian setback along the watercourse.