



Recreational hand panning

Best practices

Fish and Wildlife

All human activity has the potential to impact fish and wildlife and their habitats. Riparian areas (stream sides and shorelines) provide critical habitat for fish, wildlife, amphibians, and birds. Plants growing along streams provide food, shelter and nesting sites and protect stream environments for fish.

Do:

- Observe wildlife from a distance
- Leave dead woody logs and material in place
- Use existing trails or paths
- Pack out your garbage – follow Leave No Trace practices
- Report any concerns about suspected violations of fisheries, wildlife, or environmental protection laws anonymously – RAPP 1-877-952-RAPP (7277) or [online](#)

Do Not:

- Disturb or remove vegetation
- Dig into stream banks slopes
- Feed wildlife
- Disturb beaver dams, nests or wildlife dens

Water | Fish Habitat

All British Columbians have a role to play in protecting water resources and fish habitat.

Do:

- Prevent the release of fine sediment or other substances into streams. (Studies have shown that the introduction of fine sediments directly from digging activity in the stream and indirectly from run-off from exposed soils has severe negative impacts on all life stages of fish and other aquatic life and their habitat.)
- When digging for material to pan, store the material and use the same material to fill in the hole before the end of day. ALWAYS fill in your holes after panning. Leaving holes can trap fish as water levels rise and fall and can create safety hazards for other users.

Do Not:

- Remove gravels from streambeds – spawning salmon scoop out a hollow, called a redd, in the gravel of a streambed to deposit their eggs.
- Introduce other material into streams such as human waste, garbage, wood/burned debris or any manmade substances.
- Divert water by making channels



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Invasive Plants

Invasive species threaten many of our social, cultural, environmental, and economic values. Invasive species cost the global economy billions of dollars every year. They are a top threat to biodiversity, impact culturally and socially important areas, and can threaten human health in various ways, including through stings, burns, or poisonings.

Do:

- Clean, drain, and dry all equipment after use when working or recreating around freshwater lakes, streams, and wetlands to prevent transport of invasive species. For more information see [PlayCleanGo](#)

Do Not:

- Remove gravels for processing at another location. Do not take gravel or other materials from one site to another.

Safety

Although many gold panning reserves are located near communities, there are safety hazards that you may encounter when enjoying the outdoors in BC. Below are a few to consider:

- Before heading out, know the location of current wildfire activity, fire bans or restrictions - <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/safety/wildfire-status>
- If you see a wildfire, report it as soon as possible. Call 1-800-663-5555, or *5555 on a cell.
- Check [DriveBC](#) to check for any travel restrictions.
- Avoid panning near streams and rivers during times of high-water flow (typically during spring freshet and early summer or when there is significant rainfall).