



## Fact Sheet: Nome Offshore Suction Dredging

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This sheet is designed to address frequently asked questions related to suction dredging activities in offshore waters in Norton Sound. For the purposes of this document, offshore waters consist of the East & West recreational mining areas, offshore lease tracts, and mining claims extending west to the Sinuk River and east to the Solomon River from Nome.

### **Who needs to submit an Application for Permits to Mine in Alaska (APMA)?**

Any person performing suction dredging activities in the East & West recreation areas in offshore Nome are required to submit an APMA regardless of suction dredge size (West Beach upper limit is a 6-inch intake & 23-horsepower motor, East Beach upper limit is an 8-inch intake & 46-horsepower motor.)

If a person is working in an offshore lease tract or mining claim and has a Generally Allowed Use (GAU) size suction dredge (6-inch or less intake with an 18-horsepower or smaller motor, and pumping no more than 30,000 gallons of water per day), then an APMA is not required. To work in the lease tracts or offshore mining claims an owner authorization from all the lease's or claim's owners is required regardless of dredge size. A person operating a dredge above the GAU size must submit an APMA (and owner authorization if they do not own the lease tract or mining claim) to work in offshore waters, or request an amendment to be included as an operator on an existing APMA.

### **When should I submit an APMA to ensure that I receive a permit in time to work during the summer (ice-free) months?**

To operate during the summer months, submit a complete application as soon as possible. DNR processes all Mining applications on a first come, first served basis. If you plan to operate in the offshore recreation areas, then your application must be submitted no later than May 31st. A complete application includes a sketch of the dredge that you intend to be operating including the nozzle size, motor horsepower & the locations (leases or claims) of where you plan to dredge.

### **If I do not need to submit an APMA do I still need to get permits to operate?**

Yes. Even if you are not working under an APMA number, you will still need to be covered under a Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation (ADEC) general permit (GP) (Small Suction Dredge GP #: AKG375000, Medium Dredge GP # AKG371000, and Large Dredge GP # AKG374000).

If you are working within ½ a mile of the mouth or estuary to an anadromous (fish bearing) river or stream, you will also be required to apply for a Fish Habitat Permit (FHP) with the Alaska Department of Fish & Game (ADF&G). In addition, you will need a Mining License from the Alaska Department of Revenue (ADOR).

You may require a U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) regional general permit (POA-2007-372-M1) for suction dredging. For operations in water depths greater than 20 feet, supplemental forms are required and must be submitted directly to USACE (applications are available at: <http://www.poa.usace.army.mil/Missions/Regulatory/Permits.aspx>).

### **What if I want to work during the winter when there is sea ice covering Norton Sound?**

The offshore recreation areas are NOT open to winter time dredge operations.

A person wanting to operate in the winter months must be operating on an offshore lease tract or mining claim, must have the tracts or claim owner's permission and must be operating with a 10-inch or smaller intake in a depth of 30 feet or less (per DEC GP AKG375000 or AKG37100). If you wish to operate with larger than a 10" intake, then you must contact ADEC about getting an individual permit to operate on sea ice.

### **Other useful information**

- There are no lines in the ocean that mark the boundaries between the claims or lease tracts that you are authorized to operate on and someone else's claims or lease tracts. In order to ensure that you are not in conflict with another person, it is recommended that you acquire the GPS coordinates of all the claims or lease tracts that you will be

working on and maintain a buffer between your dredge and the claim or tract boundaries. GPS coordinates for some Nome area lease tracts are available at: <http://dnr.alaska.gov/mlw/mining/nome/>. For traditional offshore mining claims it is the miners' responsibility to determine the GPS coordinates of their claim boundaries and properly locate mining activities within the claim boundaries.

- There are no public campgrounds in the immediate vicinity of Nome. Additionally, the land surrounding Nome is privately owned with the majority of it held by various Alaska Native Associations. You are not allowed to camp on private land without permission and must contact the appropriate association (listed below) or other private land owner to negotiate an agreement to use their land.
  - Sitnasuak Native Corporation at <http://www.snc.org>
  - Bering Straits Native Corporation at <http://www.beringstraits.com>
  - King Island Native Corporation (Kawerak) at <http://www.kawerak.org/index.html>
  - Nome Gold Alaska Corporation, P.O. Box 1718, Nome, AK 99762

The Bering Straits Native Corporation and the Nome Gold Alaska Corporation own surface and subsurface rights to their land. As such, you are not allowed to mine the beach or the uplands of this privately owned land.

- As a suction dredge operator, you need to keep copies of the following documents on your dredge during your operation: A copy of your APMA (ADEC Notice of Intent to Discharge) and Miscellaneous Land Use Permit (MLUP) from DNR if you are above GAU size, a copy of your Fish Habitat Permit if you are operating near an anadromous stream, a copy of your boat registration, a copy of any owner authorizations that you have received, and a daily turbidity log if you are operating with an 8-inch or larger suction dredge. It is strongly recommended that you keep your original documents in a safe, dry place.
- The Nome harbor has limited slip space available for boats and dredges. It is recommended that you modify your dredge so it can be hauled out of the water at the end of the day. If you have a boat that is supporting or hauling your dredge, it is recommended that you have a boat trailer that you can use to haul your equipment with.

#### **Where can I get answers to questions not covered in this fact sheet?**

General information and customer service can be obtained at the Department's Public Information Centers in Anchorage and Fairbanks.

#### **Anchorage Public Information Center**

Department of Natural Resources  
Public Information Center  
550 West 7<sup>th</sup> Avenue, Suite 1360  
Anchorage, Alaska 99501-3561  
Monday thru Friday / 8:00 AM to 5:30 PM  
(907) 269-8400  
[dnr.pic@alaska.gov](mailto:dnr.pic@alaska.gov)

Statewide TTY – 711 for Alaska Relay or 1-800-770-8973

#### **Fairbanks Public Information Center**

Department of Natural Resources  
Public Information Center  
3700 Airport Way  
Fairbanks Alaska 99709-4699  
Monday thru Friday / 8:00 AM to 5:30 PM  
(907) 451-2705  
[fbx-pic@alaska.gov](mailto:fbx-pic@alaska.gov)