

Department of Natural Resources

Division of Mining, Land and Water



Fact Sheet: Caribou Creek Recreational Mining Area

In 1991, the Alaska State legislature created the Caribou Creek Recreational Mining Area (CCRM Area). The CCRM Area, which is located near the confluence of Caribou Creek and the Matanuska River, was established to provide a permanent recreational mining experience for the general public. The Department of Natural Resources (DNR), Division of Mining, Land & Water, is responsible for the management, use and development of the CCRM Area. The Department of Fish and Game is responsible for the management of the fish and game resources within the CCRM Area.

How do I get to the Caribou Creek Recreational Mining Area and what facilities are available?

The CCRM Area is located at approximately mile 104 of the Glenn Highway next to the Lion's Head rock formation. You will see a sign at the turnoff. The CCRM Area is relatively undeveloped. A steep trail leads down to the creek from the gravel parking lot. Only pedestrian traffic is permitted on the trail (sorry, **no all terrain vehicles-ATV's**). Physical fitness, health, and age should be considered due to the steepness of the trail. Private facilities offering gas, food and lodging are within 10 miles of the CCRM Area.

Are other activities available within the Area?

Yes. Hiking, picnicking, photography, wildflower viewing and other activities are permitted within the area, as long as they do not detract from the recreational mining experience. Dall sheep, black and grizzly bears, and gray wolves have been viewed in this area.

Can I mine anywhere within the Area?

No. First, you should be aware that the area only includes land and water within the active floodplain area of the creeks and rivers within the CCRM Area. Public recreational mining is allowed only within the CCRM area. Please refer to the map on the back of this sheet for details.

Can I stake a mining claim in the Caribou Creek Recreational Mining Area?

No. The CCRM Area is available to recreational mining only. No mining claims are allowed.

What methods of recreational mining are allowed in the Caribou Creek Recreational Mining Area?

Caribou Creek has been specified by the Alaska Department of Fish & Game as being important for the spawning, rearing, or migration of anadromous fish. Therefore, allowable methods vary depending on the time period. Gold pans and hand shovels are allowed in the recreational area year round.

Between May 15th and July 15th each year, the following equipment may be used:

- Metal detector
- Small sluice box less than 16" wide and 6' long fed by a hand shovel with 1" pump limit *
- High banker/rocker box fed by a hand shovel with 1" pump limit *
- Suction dredge with 6" nozzle or less powered by an engine of 18 horsepower or less and pumping no more than 30,000 gallons a water a day (ADF&G permit required) **

NOTE: ADF&G does NOT issue permits for the use of backpack power drills or augers therefore they cannot be used.

* If a sluice box, high banker or rocker box is used it must be set back far enough from the creek to assure that no water with sediment discharge flows into the creek. Additionally ADF&G requires a permit for the operation of a water pump for sluice box operation. ADF&G does not have a pump intake restriction on the water pump used for highbanking/power sluicing.

** Contact Department of Fish & Game for more specific permit information. The required permit is **free**.

For additional information on dredging permits, contact:

Department of Fish & Game, Habitat Section
1801 South Margaret Drive, Suite 6
Palmer, AK 99645-6736
Phone: 907-861-3200
Fax: 907-861-3232

For additional information on the Caribou Creek Recreational Mining Area contact:

Department of Natural Resources
Public Information Center
550 West 7th Avenue, Suite 1360
Anchorage, AK 99501-3561
Phone: 907-269-8400
Fax: 907-269-8901

Department of Natural Resources
Public Information Center
3700 Airport Way
Fairbanks, AK 99709-4699
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