

**Oregon Chapter
American Fisheries
Society**

**P.O. Box 8062
Portland, OR 97207-8062**



April 3, 2013

Dear Honorable Legislator:

Aquatic and fishery resource issues are again prominent topics this legislative session with suction dredge mining issues taking a front seat. As you address the challenging task of balancing the health of these resources with other interests, we ask that you consider this white paper in which we review the literature that examines the potential impacts of suction dredge mining on fisheries and aquatic resources. The attached white paper is the product of considerable thought, effort, scientific insight and process among members of the Oregon Chapter of the American Fisheries Society (ORAFS).

Based on our review of the literature, we find 1) some current suction dredge mining mitigation efforts may be adequate, *if properly monitored and enforced*, to prevent many (but not all) substantial adverse effects to fish and their habitats, 2) potentially negative effects of suction dredge mining on stream morphology and spawning/reproductive success of some fishes (and bivalves), 3) current best management practices (BMPs) for suction dredge mining can be strengthened to further reduce risks, and 4) without a significant investment in permit monitoring and law enforcement of suction dredge mining permits, BMPs are likely to be inconsistently implemented or ineffective potentially harming fishes (and other aquatic species) and their habitats. Finally, we offer suggestions for minimizing potential negative effects on fishes and their habitats from suction dredge mining.

The ORAFS is comprised of over 450 fisheries and aquatic science professionals from federal, state, and tribal agencies, colleges and universities, diverse private employers, college students, and retirees. The Chapter was established in 1964 as part of the American Fisheries Society. Our mission is to improve the conservation and sustainability of Oregon fishery resources and their aquatic ecosystems for long-term public benefit by advancing science, education and public discourse concerning fisheries and aquatic science and by promoting the development of fisheries professionals.

Thank you for considering this ORAFS white paper as you craft and deliberate various pieces of suction dredge mining legislation that have the potential to affect the health of our State's important aquatic resources. Please let us know if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Jeffrey Yanke
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Attachments: 2013 ORAFS Suction Dredge Mining Impacts Final.pdf