

General Information

Southwest Oregon has a rich history related to gold mining. In 1850, placer gold (free gold mixed in stream gravel) deposits were being mined and by the 1880s, lode (hard rock mining) operations began. But during World War II, War Production Board Order L-208 brought about a curtailment of gold mining and production virtually ceased. This was so men working in mines could turn their energy to the war.

There’s still some gold in the hills around here and it can be a great expedition for your family to experience some of the local history. The only tools you need are a gold pan, a container for your gold and a sense of adventure.

The Medford District Bureau of Land Management (BLM) has four areas that are open to recreational gold mining on public lands. The four areas are:

- Little Applegate
- Tunnel Ridge
- Gold Nugget
- Hellgate Recreation Area of the Rogue River (from the Applegate River to Grave Creek) on public lands, including tributaries ¼ of a mile up from the Rogue River

The property boundaries are not marked on the ground at these sites, so you need to be sure you are on public lands. The areas on the Little Applegate have mining claims adjacent to them, so you need to stay in the recreational gold panning area.

Rules for Gold Panning and Dredging

Panning is allowed at all four sites. The Gold Nugget, Little Applegate and Tunnel Ridge sites are open for suction dredges of four inches or less. The use of a suction dredge requires two permits from the state. No permit is needed from the BLM for recreational gold mining at any of these sites.

No mining activity is allowed when salmon are spawning or there are reds (fish eggs) present.

1. Panning and dredging are allowed only in the water channel below the current level of the water.
2. The use of shovels, high bankers, rockers, or sluices is not permitted.
3. Digging into or undermining the side bank of the water way is not permitted.
4. Dredges are not allowed at the Hellgate Recreation Area of the Rogue River or any of the tributaries.
5. Dredges may operate from 9:00 a.m. until 5:00 p.m. daily.
6. Dredges are limited to an intake diameter of four inches or less.

You may not:

- Dam or divert a waterway
- Obstruct fish passage
- Move boulders, logs, woody debris jams, or stumps
- Disturb rooted or embedded woody plants, including but not limited to trees and shrubs
- Excavate the stream bank
- Leave pits, piles or potholes
- Impede boating

To operate a four inch or less suction dredge, you will need

- a **700-PM Permit from the Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ)** The times dredges can operate at the Little Applegate and Tunnel Ridge Sites are typically July 1- September 15. At Gold Nugget Site, the times are typically June 15- August 31.
- an **Oregon Removal-Fill Authorization** from the Division of State Lands (DSL).

The Star Ranger Station, located south of Ruch, Oregon also manages sites for recreational dredging.

Camping

Camping is limited to 14 consecutive days in any 90 day period and is **not** permitted at the Gold Nugget or Tunnel Ridge sites or any other posted day-use site.



Little Applegate River site.

How to Pan for Gold

Because gold is heavier than most sediments and gravel in a stream, it can be collected in a gold pan when the right panning techniques are used. First, get a gold pan from a hardware store or a store that specializes in mining equipment. They are typically under \$10.00.

When you get to one of the recreational gold panning sites, all of which are located in known gold-bearing areas, look for a gold trap—a place along the stream where the current slows down enough for the gold to settle out. Good possibilities are the inside curves of streams and on the downstream sides of boulders or other obstructions in the water.

Always find a place that is safe and don’t leave children unattended near the water.

- Once you find a good place, follow these steps:
1. Fill the pan about half to two-thirds full of gravel, small rocks and sand from under the water of the stream channel.
 2. Put the pan under water, break up lumps of clay, and remove the stones.
 3. Still holding the pan level under water with your hands on opposite sides of it, rotate it halfway back and forth rapidly to wash out the clay and concentrate the heavy material at the bottom of the pan.
 4. Still holding the pan under water, tilt the pan forward, away from your body, and down slightly. Rotate and shake it to let the light gravel and sand dribble out the front. It is OK to use your hand to push out the rocks.
 5. Repeat Steps 3 and 4 several times until most of the material is out of the pan and you have less than one cup of material left. There should be a deposit of fine-grained dark material overlain by a thin layer of light material at the bottom of the pan (if not start over).
 6. Rotate the pan in a circular motion, and watch carefully what is happening. The water is separating lighter material from the heavier material—and gold, if it is present.
 7. Stop the rotation. If you are lucky, you will see a few flecks of gold in the dark material.

All the shiny gold-colored material in your gold pan may not be gold. Gold is always gold colored, soft, and malleable (or bendable). Pyrite, known as "fool’s gold," is a brassy color and is sometimes tarnished. Another mineral that looks a little like gold is mica. If you see gold-colored flecks that either float on the water or are so light in weight that they easily wash out of the pan, you probably have small pieces of mica.

If you are lucky enough to find gold in your pan, it can come in many shapes: small lumps or nuggets, wires, feather-shaped crystals, or flat flecks. Pieces can range in size from almost microscopic "colors" (very small pieces) up to fist-sized nuggets, but your chances of finding the latter are pretty remote. However, gold panners are optimistic and you never know what you’ll find. And the best part is, you can keep all the gold you find!

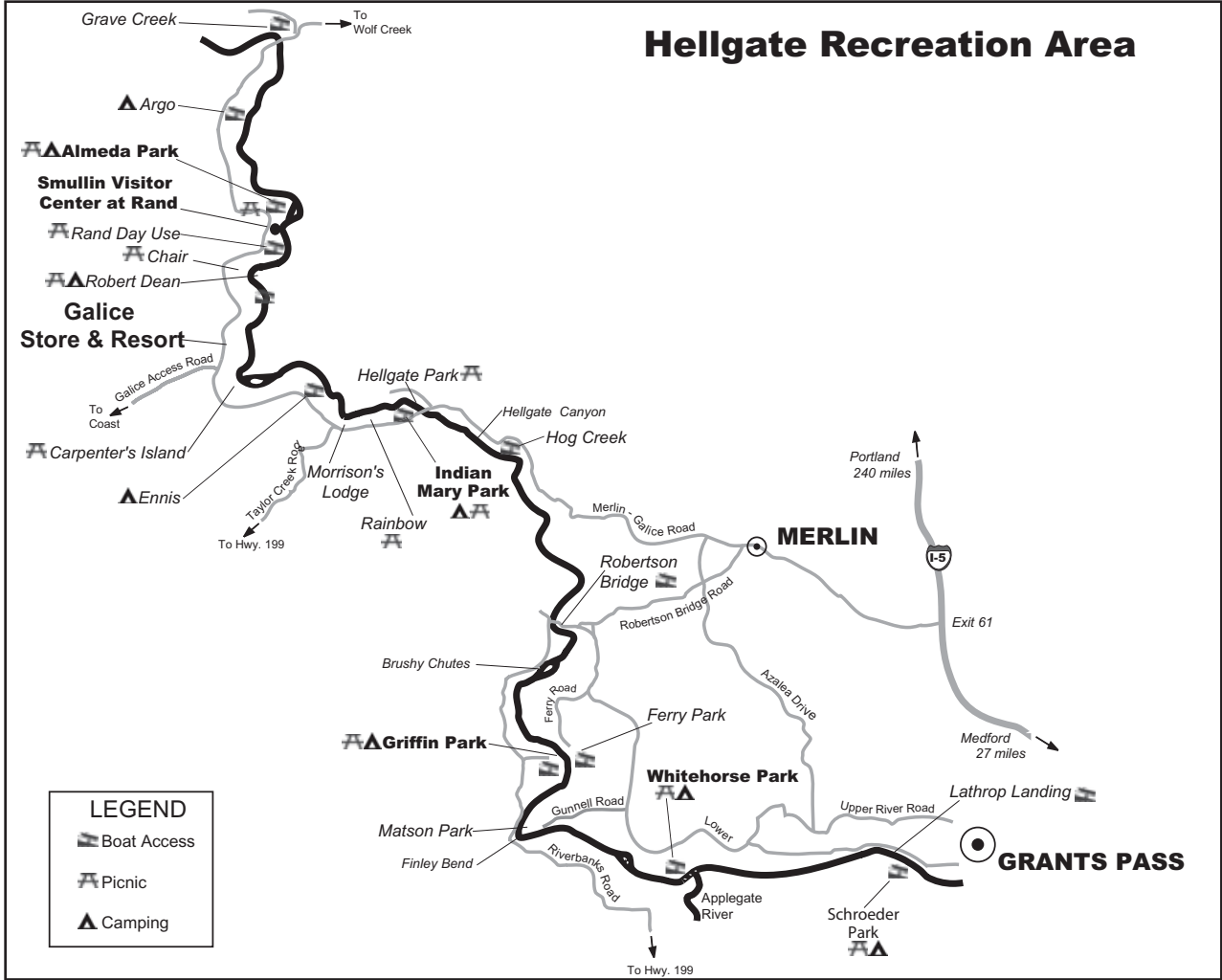
For additional information:

Bureau of Land Management 3040 Biddle Road Medford, OR 97504 541-618-2200 or 2164 NE Spalding Ave Grants Pass, OR 97526 (541) 471-6500 Rogue -Siskiyou National Forest Star Ranger Station 6941 Upper Applegate Road Jacksonville, OR 97530 541-899-1812	Department of Environmental Quality 1-800-452-4011 or 811 SW 6th Ave., Portland OR 97204. Division of State Lands 775 Summer St. NE, Suite 100 Salem, OR 97301 503-378-3805 BLM/OR/WA/GI-07/063+1792
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Recreational Gold Panning & Dredging in the Medford District

Medford District

BLM

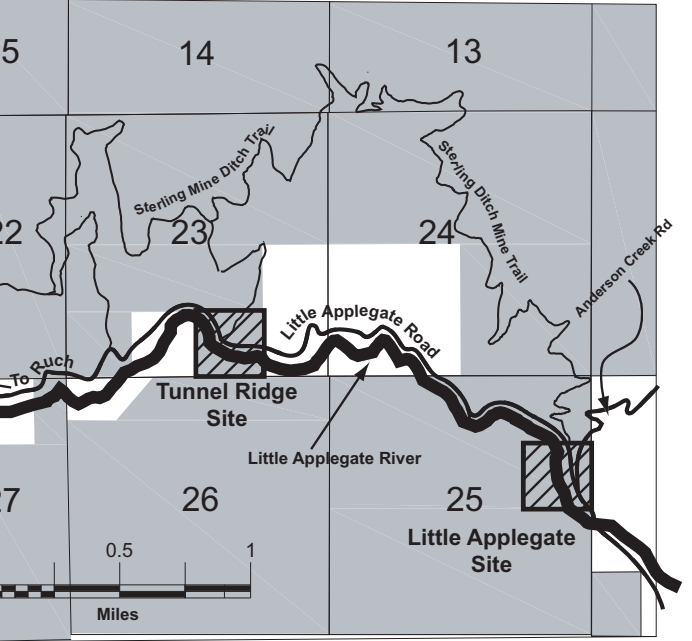


Sign for the Gold Nugget Wayside.

Directions to Gold Nugget Mining Sites:

Mileage	Cumulative	Description
0.0	0.0	From the railroad tracks in Gold Hill, turn right (north) on Fourth Ave. (Hwy 234) toward Crater Lake
2.3	2.3	Gold Nugget Wayside
0.3	2.6	Gold Nugget Recreation Site

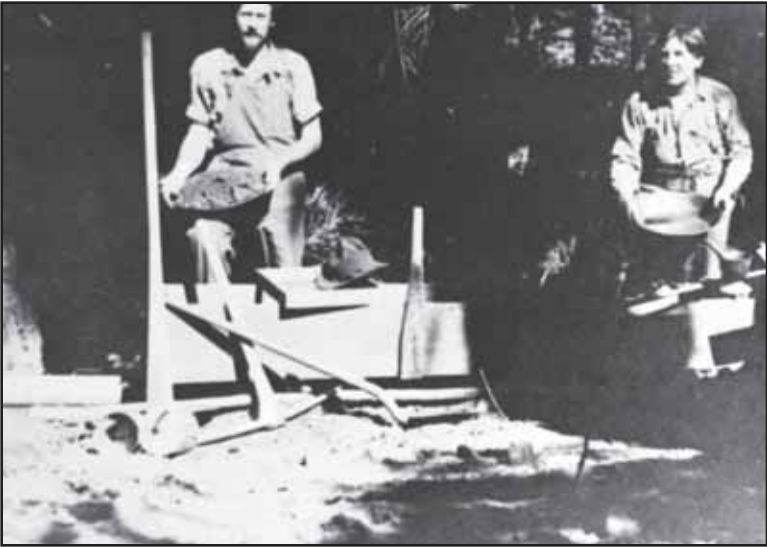
Tunnel Ridge and Little Applegate Sites.
(BLM lands shaded, private lands white)



Early miners in the area (right) spent many hard hours in the cold Rogue River trying to eke out a living panning gold.



One of the trailheads for the Sterling Mine Ditch Trail (left), a popular hiking area, begins just across the road from the parking area for the Tunnel Ridge Site.



Parking area for Little Applegate mining site (right). Note big logs that mark area.



Parking area for Tunnel Ridge Recreational Mining Site (right). Steep primitive trail to the Little Applegate River leads from the parking area.

Directions to Tunnel Ridge & Little Applegate Recreational Mining Sites:

Mileage	Cumulative	Description
0.0	0.0	Intersection Hwy 238 and Applegate Rd, Ruch. Drive south on Applegate Rd.
2.7	2.7	Little Applegate Rd. Turn left.
2.9	5.6	Historic Buncom at Sterling Creek Rd (on left). Continue straight ahead on Little Applegate Rd.
3.2	8.8	Paved road ends at Yale Creek Rd. Continue straight ahead on variable width gravel portion of Little Applegate Rd.
3.3	12.1	Parking area for Tunnel Ridge Site right side of road (across from Sterling Mine Ditch Trail sign). Parking area not marked. Steep, primitive footpath to river at center of parking area.
1.9	14.0	Little Applegate Site. Parallel park on right side of road adjacent to large logs. Primitive camping ok at this site; 14-day limit. Little Applegate Site marked with strip sign attached to tree.
0.1	14.1	Anderson Creek Rd at left (not maintained). One-lane bridge ahead. YOU'VE GONE TOO FAR.