

Recreational Mineral Collection at Auburn State Recreation Area

Fact Sheet

June 2018

Recreational mineral collection at ASRA is only permitted along lake shorelines and the beaches and gravel bars of streams and rivers, outside of designated swim beaches and boat launch areas, with the use of hands and goldpans only.

Auburn State Recreation Area (ASRA) contains both State and Federal lands, though the vast majority of the ASRA land is Federal land either owned or administered by the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation) and managed by California State Parks (CSP).

This fact sheet pertains to recreational mineral collection. Commercial mining on Federal lands is governed by the Federal Mining Act. The Federal lands within ASRA have been withdrawn from commercial mining claims. Commercial mining is prohibited on CSP lands. Suction dredging in streams and rivers is governed through the CA Fish and Game Code (5653) and is currently prohibited throughout California, including ASRA.

CSP operates and manages recreation use and resource protection on the federal lands at ASRA through a Management Partner Agreement (MPA) with Reclamation. ASRA is also governed by the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR), the CA Public Resources Code, the California Code of Regulations (CCR) and the ASRA Interim Resource Management Plan (IRMP, 1992). The MPA directs the State to ensure that land use and administration of the federal lands at ASRA conforms to all applicable Federal laws, rules, regulations, policies, and orders and indicates that where State policy, law and/or regulations are more stringent, but do not conflict with Federal policy, law and/or regulations, the State's will be the required standard.

The CFR prohibits the destruction, damage, disturbance or removal of natural resources and cultural resources on or in Reclamation facilities, lands, or waterbodies (43 CFR § 423.29 [a]). The CFR does not specifically permit recreational mineral collection therefore applicable State regulations regarding recreational mineral collection apply.

The CCR permits recreational mineral collection, or rockhounding, which is defined as the recreational gathering of stones and minerals found occurring naturally on the undisturbed surface of the land, including panning for gold in the natural water-washed gravel of streams (14 CCR § 4301). The CCR further limits rockhounding in state recreation areas to beaches within the wave action zone on lakes, bays, reservoirs, or on the ocean, and to the beaches or gravel bars which are subject to annual flooding on streams and is prohibited in areas designated for swimming or boat launching (14 CCR § 4611). Rock or mineral collection is limited to 15 pounds per day and cannot be sold for profit. The collection of artifacts, such as arrow heads or other archaeological or historic specimens is prohibited. The CCR is clear that except for the use of goldpans, no other tools may be used for rockhounding (14 CCR § 4611).

The ASRA IRMP acknowledged and permitted recreational mineral collection within the limitations of Federal and State laws, and subsequent Federal and State laws and regulations have superseded portions of the IRMP, such as the State prohibition on suction dredging and current Reclamation regulations prohibiting metal detectors (43 CFR § 423.29 [f]).