

**WAC 332-16-255 Recreational prospecting areas.** The department may consider and evaluate written requests to designate specific areas as recreational prospecting areas. The criteria for the evaluation of such proposals shall include, but not be limited to, use conflicts, the presence of minerals in noncommercial quantities, public access and environmental sensitivity.

The department shall establish the amount of collecting, type of equipment and method(s) of collecting and/or prospecting to be allowed in each designated recreational prospecting area. Such rules will be based on the character of each area, the mineral or minerals sought, and regulations imposed by other state agencies.

Following the determination by the department a site may be suitable for designation as a recreational prospecting area, the department shall hold a public hearing in the county where the lands are located. At least fifteen days but not more than thirty days before the hearing, the department shall publish a public notice setting forth the date, time, and place of the hearing, at least once in one or more daily newspapers of general circulation in the county and at least once in one or more weekly newspapers circulated in the area.

After a recreational prospecting area has been designated by the department, the boundaries of the area will be marked.

A recreational prospecting permit issued by the department of natural resources is required by all persons sixteen years of age and older for the use of designated recreational prospecting areas for prospecting and mineral collecting. The term of the permit shall be a calendar year.

[Statutory Authority: RCW 79.01.618. WSR 87-21-007 (Order 528), § 332-16-255, filed 10/9/87.]