

A guide on how to locate Ancient Riverbeds and High Benches.

Ancient Riverbeds

Looking at the geological history of earth indicates that there is still a large quantity of placer deposits (GOLD) to be found. The best indicator of gold bearing deposits is any low spot or valley that cuts through any area of land. We usually concentrate our efforts in these low areas. This is easy gold, (if easy gold exist) this easily mined gold only represents a small portion of what is out there. Rivers (or streams) have changed course throughout time which leave ancient river beds high and dry (high benches).

What we should look for is one: an overgrown gravel area with trees growing on top. During dry periods (August) look for the trees with the greenest leaves.

The second indication is bedrock and large boulders that have been worn or smoothed by water. Look on the banks for large areas of bedrock that extends downwards at an angle into what was once the river. When you use the combination of trees and bedrock as indicators, you stand a very good chance of finding gold.

High Benches

A high bench is basically an ancient river or stream that has been left high up on the side of a valley or hill.

Something's to look for to identify high benches.

In gold bearing areas look for pockets of green growth, trees or bushes. This is the easy way to find placer gold in these elevated locations. If this is in a v notch up on the side of the mountain you might want to check it for placer gold. The way to do this is to look for bedrock (a massive flat rock), start at the location the bedrock meets the dirt and work your way down, test panning as you go. Also look for as you are digging a sudden change in soil density - clay or a bed rock bottom. Pan out these samples looking for black sand and fine gold. When you hit a rich spot it will be obvious. Your sample suddenly has gold pieces in it. Dig a little further and you soon could be into nuggets.

Once you have found this, clean out the spot with special attention on the bedrock cracks. These cracks will contain the richest gold deposits that cannot be easily washed away. Continue digging back into the bank until the gold plays out.

Other indicators:

- 1) Comprised or cemented gravels that when freshly exposed are blue in color. This blue cemented gravel turns a rusty reddish brown when left open to the elements. In this case, look for loose soils, gravels and sands surrounding a "blob" or outcropping that is, rusty in color and appears to be a

cemented mass. Take samples of this gravel "blob" at different locations. You are looking for black sand and fine gold. Use your gold pan to test these gravels.

2) These ancient river channels are often, but not always, located on bedrock. An example of what to look for:

- a shelf of rock or bedrock off the valley floor.
- the gravel or sand sitting on top of the bedrock will be:

- dark brown

- rusty brown

or

- blue (if freshly broken)

- A black color indicates magnetite and other oxides present in the lower layers of the ancient riverbed. You may have to crush or break apart a sample. Look for high concentrations of black sand and fine gold.

If you do not have the equipment to test pan or the time, take a strong magnet and run it over the cemented gravel near the bottom where the rock shelf or bedrock meet. If you have found a potentially good spot, the magnet will quickly be covered in black sand (magnetite).

This method also works well in desert areas, if you magnet gets covered in black sand, note the location and get your equipment to look for gold.

Another way to find Ancient Riverbeds and Channels

Using existing river or stream as a fixed starting point, work your way along the bank taking samples as you go. You will want to focus the samples on natural depressions and rock shelves. Work up the sides of the hill always sampling low natural depressions or any type of rock shelf. When you find a indication of an ancient waterway (black sand and fine gold), take samples in a wide pattern. If you plot your heavy concentrates (black sand and fine gold) on a map you will quickly get an idea of where the old river was.

Work up the hill taking samples approximately every 50 yards or so past where you think the ancient river might have been. Pan out the samples. What you are looking for is where the heavy black sand / fine gold thin out or stop. This will tell us the height or elevation where the river channel was then go downhill or the other direction as the ancient river could be located on flat land also to get the width of the ancient river.

Finally probing the gravels looking for a denser section. We might find bedrock or rock shelves, but we will find things that aren't supposed to be there.

Among natural broken mountain rock and associated debris you may suddenly find water smoothed gravels in different colors that don't match most of the mountain's decomposing rock. The reason you will tend to only find very small heavy concentrates while looking for the ancient riverbed is that most of the larger heavies quickly sink into the mountain's natural rock via fishers in the rock. Using a pry bar and a good shovel, work loose the concentrates on the lower section and check for gold nuggets.

Make sure to also break up and pan out other sections of this gravel mass. These hardened sections occur in bands and there may be some very rich gold finds suspended in the upper gravel mass.

If you find an area that meets the above and after sampling, testing, mapping you locate an ancient river bed, "MAKE SURE YOU STAKE A CLAIM!"

Remember gold is found where it has been found before and sometimes once in a while where no one has looked.

Good luck and find GOLD!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

Larry

This information was gathered through many areas. Internet sites, friends in the know and experts in the field of finding placer deposits. They include: National Geographic; "Ancient River Beds", Britannica Encyclopedia, Geology books, Scott, Mike and Glen and to many other sources to list.