



# Suction Dredge Mining in Idaho: Update

Natural Resources Interim Committee

September 17, 2014



# Suction Dredge Mining in Idaho

Regulated as a Stream Channel Alteration (SCA)  
pursuant to Stream Channel Protection Act & Rules

- SC Protection Act created in 1971
  - See Chapter 38, Title 42
  - Permits required for SCA, including dredges
- SCA Rules – IDAPA 37.03.07
  - Rule 64 - Minimum Standards for Suction Dredging & Non-Powered Sluice Equipment

# Recreational Mining

## SCA Rule 64 –Standards for Suction Dredges & Non-Powered Sluice Equipment

- engine/motor rated at 15 HP or less
- nozzle intake diameter of 5 inches or less
- non-powered sluice equip. moving more than  $\frac{1}{4}$  cubic yard per hour

# Recreational Mining – Letter Permit & Instructions

- Authorizes alteration of stream channel as defined by the Standards (Rule 64)
- Instructions establish guidelines for rec. mining
  - list of open and closed streams & seasons of use

<http://www.idwr.idaho.gov/RulesStatutesForms/StreamChannel/StreamChannelForms.htm>

# Recreational Mining – Letter Permit

## Letter Permit – Features

- Process in place since 2010
- Former process required IDWR review and signature approval (one to seven days)
- One Stop Permit for both IDWR & Lands  
(Lands - mining on navigable rivers)
- Implemented after Zero Based Budgeting  
- low program priority & reduced staffing

# Non-Recreational Mining

Use of dredges that exceed Rule 64 standards

- engine/motor > 15 HP
- nozzle intake diameter > 5 inches

Requires regular SCA permit application and review  
(long form - joint application)

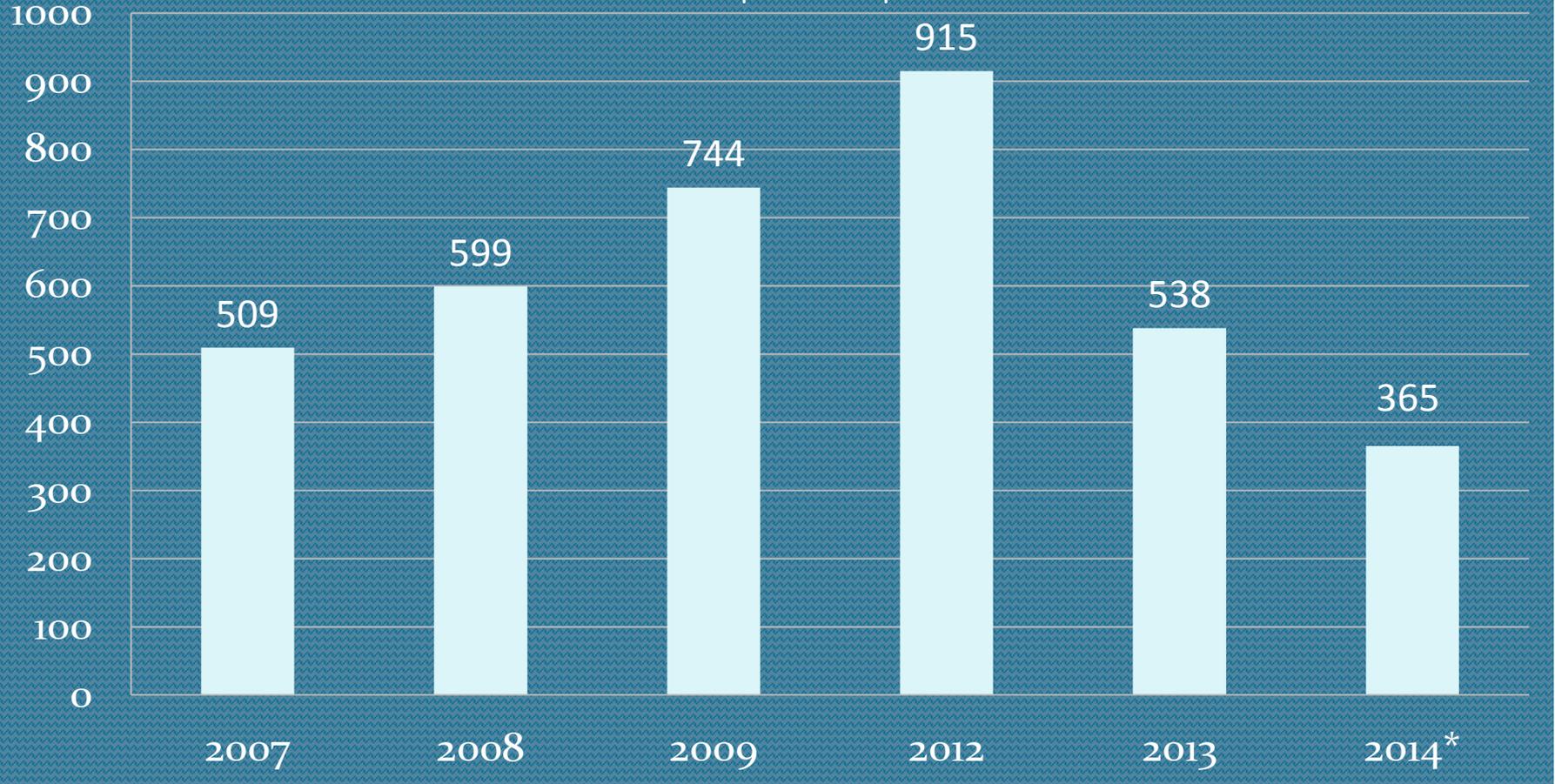
Long form application may be used for rec. mining  
in closed streams or when proposing extended  
season of operation

- very few long form permits received/issued

# Recreational Mining - Permits Issued

## Number of Recreational Mining Permits by Year Year = April 1 - March 1

\* 2014 April 1 to September 15

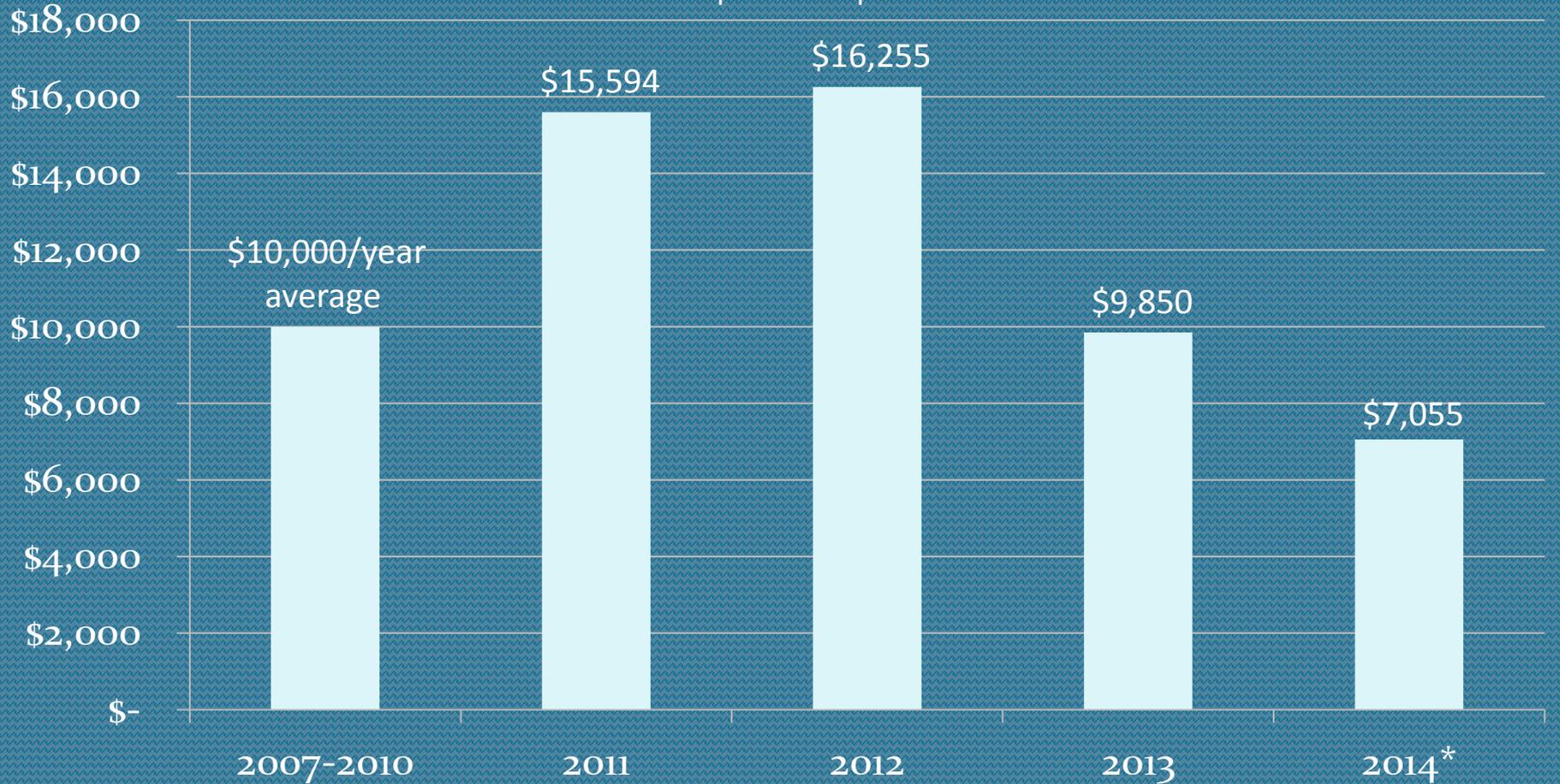


Data from 2010 – 2011 not available due to reduced staffing

# Recreational Mining - Revenue

## Recreational Mining Revenue

\* 2014: April 1 to September 15



# Recreational Mining

## In-state vs. Out-of State Permits

April 1 – September 15, 2014

In-State: 264

Out-of State: 101 (117 in 2013)

Total: 365

# Recreational Mining

## EPA NPDES Permit vs. IDWR Permit

- EPA has closed all waters with ESA listed species
- Several reaches of ESA listed waters popular to dredging are open under IDWR permit
  - IDWR open reaches in ESA waters based upon recommendations from IDFG
  - Miners may need to work with Fed agencies on consultation process for ESA waters

# Recreational Mining

## EPA NPDES Permit vs. IDWR Permit

- Some waters closed under IDWR instructions are open under EPA NPDES permit
  - this has not caused complaints or tension
- IDWR does not enforce EPA NPDES permit

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## Future Status of IDWR Permitting?

- IDWR field monitoring & enforcement very limited due to lack of resources

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## Future Status of IDWR Permitting?

- IDWR will continue program subject to statutory or rule changes
- No changes planned by IDWR

# Recreational Mining



Questions?