

Gold Panning in Coker Creek

Materials Needed

- **Permit (always check to see if a permit is required)**
- **Gold pan**
- **Shovel, pick, and trowel**
- **Small bottle**
- **Crevice/sniping tools**
- **Optional: Bucket, screen, sniffer bottle & suction tweezers**

Important to Know:

- **The use of mechanized or motorized equipment is prohibited for gold collecting.**
- **Class 2 prospecting is NOT PERMITTED in the Cherokee National Forest.**
- **For questions, contact the Tellico Ranger District at (423) 253-8400**

Panning Locations:

Class 1 prospecting (hand panning) is permitted in designated streams, on the Cherokee National Forest. The following streams are currently designated as Class 1 hand collecting sites on the Cherokee National Forest:

- **Lyons Creek**
- **Wildcat Creek**

Safety:

- **Have the right equipment**
- **Be aware of wildlife**
- **Carry water, food, and supplies**
- **Let other people know your location**
- **Do not gold pan at night**
- **Watch for sharp objects in water**
- **Be cautious of slips, trips, or falls**
- **Have a first aid kit available**

Don't forget to visit the Coker Creek Welcome Center to get permits.

We recommend gold panning at the Coker Creek Gold Camp, just a minute down Highway 68 from the Coker Creek Welcome Center. Call (850) 354-2279 to check when Gold Camp is open and for more information.

Tips:

- **Gold is usually found near water, so panning near creeks or streams are great locations.**
- It helps to know the history of the land you will be panning since water movements can change over time.
- The diversions or tributaries of the main channel of the stream are ideal places to begin gold panning due to the potential erosion that may have taken place in the area.
- There are 3 important rock types worth noting.
- Granite, schist, and gneiss are often the types of rock that are present in areas where gold is found.
- Very dark or reddish colored soils are usually high in iron content and are often great places to start gold panning.
- In the average river or stream, the gold will be the heaviest object in the sediment. Be prepared to get wet!
- If you prefer not to get wet, bring a pair of thick water boots or waders with you.
- Never discount the shoreline of a stream.
- Be sure to also search along the edges of a stream for possible hidden gold.
- Be patient. Gold panning takes time and practice.

Early Gold Mining

Placer gold was discovered along Coker Creek in 1831. For a time there was feverish digging; \$80,000 of Coker Creek gold was mined between 1831 and 1854. Since then there has been sporadic mining here.