

Stream reclassification ends

Recent changes in federal Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) regulations may sharply limit the Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation's (ADEC) flexibility to "reclassify" streams to ease pollution standards.

"Reclassification" is a legal procedure by which pollution standards for specific streams may be relaxed if the stream is not used for purposes such as drinking water, boating, or fishing. According to state water quality staff, the process of reclassification has been suspended by ADEC, awaiting details from the federal government.

The action will affect some placer miners hoping to have streams reclassified. ADEC staff told those applying for stream reclassifications that their applications would be held until

further information is available, noting it may be several months before the issue is completely resolved.

The federal Clean Water Act names EPA as overseer of state water pollution programs. EPA sets minimum requirements for state programs and approves Alaska's water pollution standards.

ADEC has asked EPA to re-

view current Alaska state regulations and point out specific problems, explained staff members. With this information ADEC will explore alternatives to the existing reclassification process.

For further information, contact Randy Bayliss, Chief, Water Quality Management, Pouch O, Juneau, AK 99811, (907) 465-2653.