

Sniping

The word sniping is used to describe the practice of working or reworking bedrock in order to recover gold. It is the act of prospecting and reworking old claims, rock dumps and other sites that have been abandoned. It also refers to cleaning out bedrock cracks and crevices.

1. Sniping on bedrock. Naturally the best returns by the sniper are from bedrock. There are snipers who work the same crevices on their favourite creek or rivers every season during low water and recover gold every year. This is a fascinating method of placer mining as some crevices and cracks will surrender a considerable amount of gold, especially if they have never been worked by a sniper before.
2. Sniping around boulders. Experienced snipers concentrate on large rocks and boulders especially when they lie directly on or just over bedrock. They mine under and around these boulders during low water in the spring and fall of each season, aware that these obstacles act like river riffles and tend to stop and trap the gold coming down the river. It is not unusual to obtain several ounces of gold which is extremely coarse and nugget from under a boulder. Experienced and observant placer men examine all large boulders, the larger boulders trap more gold than smaller ones, to determine whether they have been moved by previous generations of miners. Occasionally a large boulder can be levered out of position by using pry bars or a come-along. Be Careful!
3. Sniping crevices and cracks. All efficient and successful snipers carry several pieces of equipment necessary for cleaning out cracks and crevices in bedrock. A large pry bar is necessary for breaking and prying pieces of bedrock or for widening a crevice so that it can be cleaned with a smaller tool. A large and a small screwdriver invaluable in cleaning out narrow cracks. A small brush is also handy when a crack or crevice has to be cleaned out. A sniffer bottle will work fine to remove gold from a crack, or your pan.
4. Sniping should only be carried out during low water periods in the early spring and late fall. During high water the best paying sections of bedrock are covered with water and cannot be effectively sniped. Another tip is to be on the lookout for a rock generally called 'Ironstone'. Ironstone is invariably rounded, blackish in colour, sometimes with a reddish sheen, and is very, very heavy. Being so heavy it tends to go where the gold travels and is known as an **indicator** rock. Where you find Ironstone, the gold is not far away.