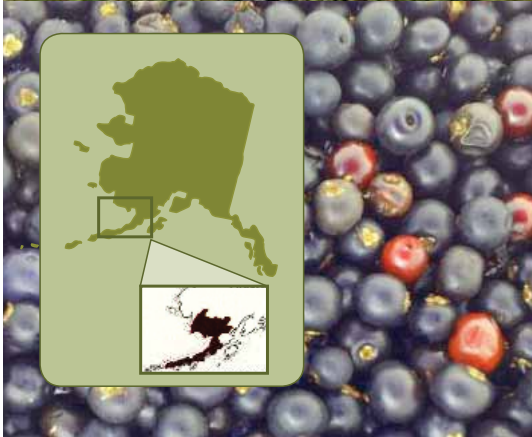


# Balance for Bristol Bay

*DNR's 2005 Bristol Bay Area Plan ignores subsistence, sport hunting and fishing, and protection of salmon habitat, while paving the way for a mining district. Now is the time to bring balanced management back to Bristol Bay.*



The Alaska Department of Natural Resources' 2005 Bristol Bay Area Plan replaced land designations making subsistence the priority with a plan opening millions of acres of the Bristol Bay watershed to industrial scale mining. In 2009, Bristol Bay tribes, commercial fishing groups and Trout Unlimited challenged the 2005 Area Plan in court. To address issues in the lawsuit, the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) has agreed to revise the 2005 Plan. The revision process will start in early 2013 and participation is vital if Bristol Bay resident's voices and concerns are to be included in a revised plan.

## What is DNR's Bristol Bay Area Plan & how does it relate to Pebble Mine?

Between 1984 and 2005, DNR managed the 12 million acres of state land in Bristol Bay with an area plan that focused on long-term conservation of natural resources by balancing resource development with habitat conservation.

In 2005, former mining executives hired into leadership positions by the DNR re-wrote the Bristol Bay Area Plan (BBAP) creating a drastically different plan that abandoned the balance achieved in the 1984 Plan and was clearly skewed toward international mining interests. The 2005 Plan generally favors mining over fish and game, and DNR clearly displays its bias towards mining when it states in the plan that mineral development "is expected to be authorized" at the Pebble project. Pebble Mine could end up as the largest open-pit copper and gold mine in North America and could generate up to 10 billion tons of waste including sulfuric acid and metals that are toxic to fish. Simply put, DNR has paved the way for mining development and is gambling with the future of the thousands of Bristol Bay residents who depend on wild salmon for food, jobs and their cultural survival.

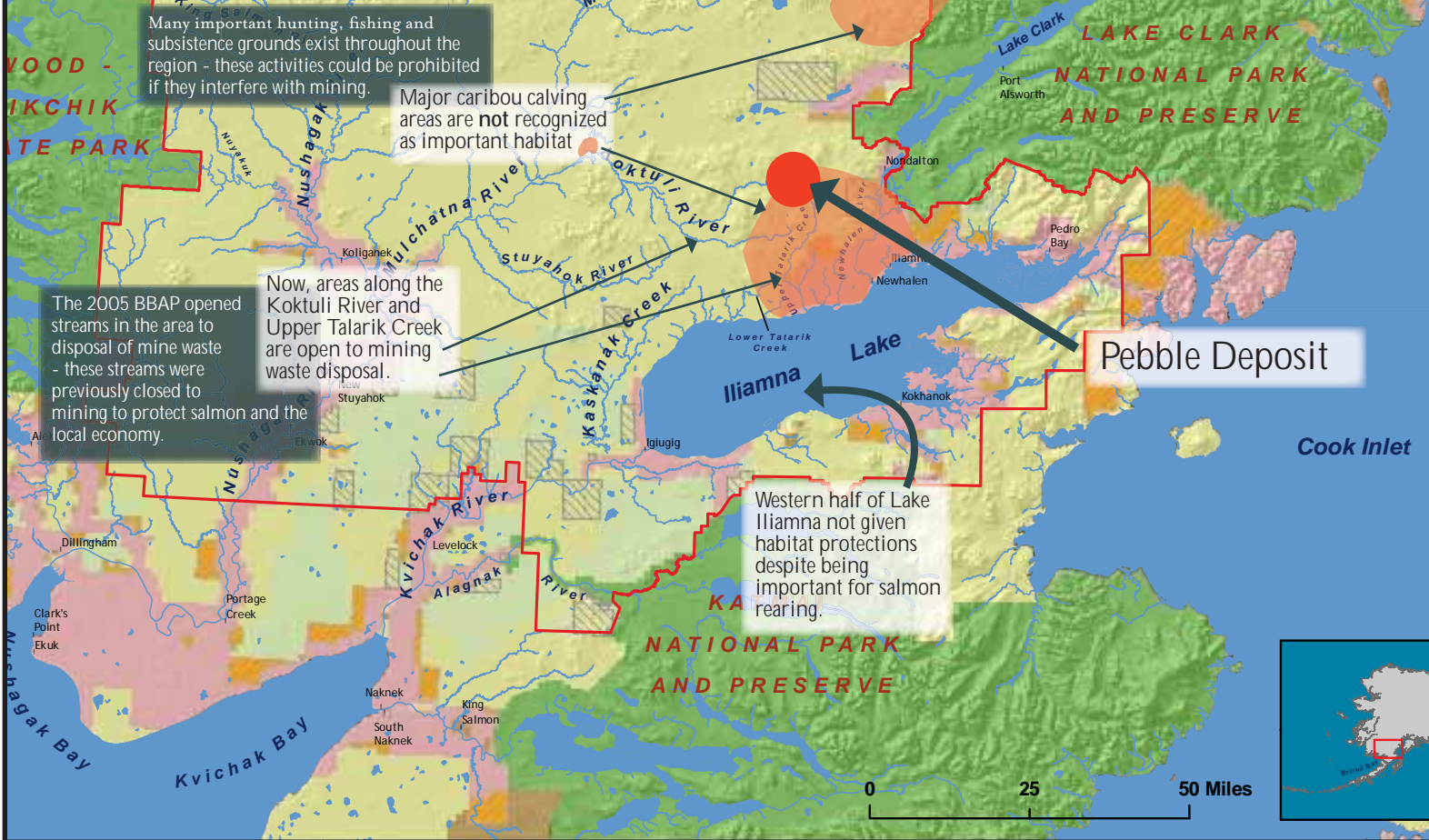
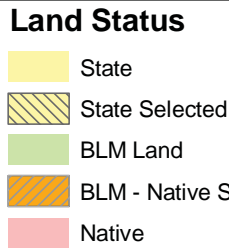
## What is An Area Plan?

In Alaska an area plan guides land managers' decisions on how state land can be used. For example, the area plan for Bristol Bay guides the decision on whether or not to allow a mining project like the proposed Pebble mine.

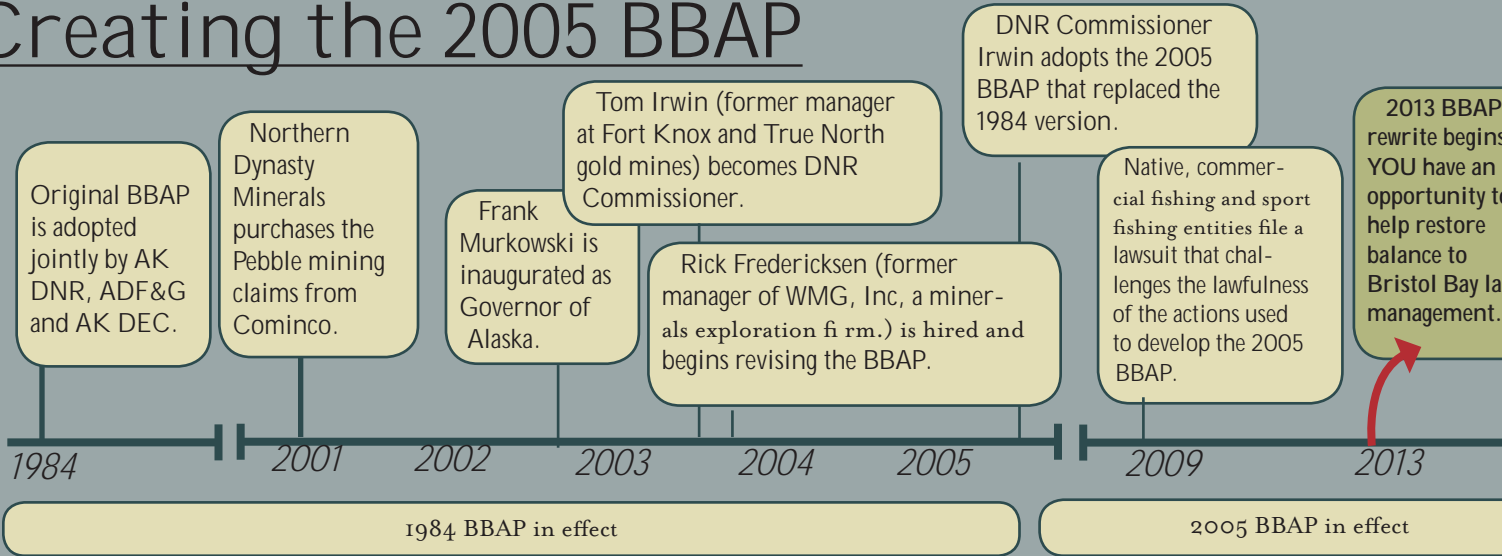
An area plan divides state land into units and classifies each unit based on what should be the primary use (or uses) of that land. Area plans were put in place to help ensure that State land management decisions achieve sustained use of renewable resources, balance between development and environmental concerns, and protect public access and use to state land and its resources.

# DEFICIENCIES IN THE 2005 BBAP

The Nushagak and Kvichak rivers and the uplands they drain support the world's largest salmon fishery and rich populations of moose, caribou, water fowl, bear, and many other species. The 2005 BBAP reduced habitat protections on state-owned land by 94%. Now, over 9.4 million acres make mining a "protected" use, while only 768,000 acres are designated for habitat. DNR's 2005 Bristol Bay Area Plan does not support the needs of working Alaskans, the local economy, and existing fish and game resources in the region.



## Creating the 2005 BBAP



# DNR's 2005 Bristol Bay Area Plan – A Gift to Mining

## A CLOSE LOOK AT THE BRISTOL BAY AREA PLAN

In the 2005 BBAP, DNR divided the 12 million acres of Bristol Bay state lands into nearly 200 units. The DNR then determined what kind of activities can take place in each of these units and what the land should be used for. Uses include fish and wildlife habitat management, public recreation, mineral development and many other uses. Each unit can have up to three co-classifications. For instance, if DNR wants to balance mining with habitat conservation and fishing, the land can be co-classified for these uses to ensure balanced management.

The original 1984 BBAP co-classified almost all of the state-owned land in the region as fish and wildlife habitat - including the Pebble deposit area - because of the importance of fish and game to resource users. This classification required mining to be compatible with habitat if it was done at all. In contrast, DNR's 2005 BBAP reclassifies the entire 12 million acres, reduces habitat protections by 94 percent and opens the door for mining on almost the entire 12 million acres. Clearly DNR favors mining over protecting Bristol Bay's renewable resources and communities and businesses that depend on those resources.

### DNR'S PLAN IGNORES SUBSISTENCE.



DNR claims that its habitat category covers subsistence hunting and fishing but the 2005 BBAP reduces habitat classifications by 94 percent, opens all 12 million acres to mining and does nothing to protect areas specifically for subsistence uses.

### DNR GUTS PROTECTIONS FOR FISH AND GAME ON MILLIONS OF ACRES OF LAND.

DNR's 2005 BBAP makes mining and mineral exploration the only designated use on 9.4 million acres in the Bristol Bay drainages - that's nearly 80% of the state owned land in the region. This transforms habitat, subsistence and recreation into "prohibited uses" whenever they conflict with mining or mineral exploration on these 9.4 million acres.

### DNR REDEFINES "HABITAT" TO ALLOW PEBBLE MINE.

DNR's 2005 BBAP uses predominantly marine criteria, such as whether land is a walrus haulout, to identify habitat on the 12 million acres in the Bristol Bay drainages. This includes the site of the proposed Pebble project, which is over one hundred miles from marine waters. In other words, the land at Pebble lost its habitat classification because it produces salmon, moose and caribou, but not walrus.

### DNR ALLOWS WASTE DUMPING IN AN AREA CLOSED TO MINING

The 1984 BBAP included a Mineral Closing Order that closed 64 streams to new mining claims in the Bristol Bay drainages, including Upper Talarik Creek and the headwaters of the Kuktuli River, where the Pebble Mine would be located. The 1984 BBAP determined that mining would be incompatible with salmon production and could jeopardize the local economy.

DNR intentionally uses a technicality in the 2005 version to sidestep the Mineral Closing Order and specifically allow mine disposal facilities (like dams and impoundments) in rivers which remain closed to mining. This includes the Kuktuli River and Upper Talarik Creek.



# Restoring Balance in 2013

Out of concern that the 2005 plan did not strike a balance that protects subsistence and fish and wildlife resources, six Bristol Bay Tribes and commercial and sport fishing organizations sued the Alaska Department of Natural Resources over the changes made in the 2005 Bristol Bay Area Plan.

To address points in the lawsuit, the State agreed to revise the 2005 Plan. The State's review has started and we must ensure a balanced vision for the future of Bristol Bay is included in the 2013 Bristol Bay Area Plan.

DNR is required to consider public input in its 2013 Bristol Bay Area Plan revision process. To facilitate public discussion regarding DNR's upcoming Bristol Bay Area Plan process, tribes and other regional interest groups are reaching out to people in Bristol Bay to help define the key issues for DNR to consider in its process.

**This public process is an opportunity for Alaskans to tell DNR to make the right choices for Bristol Bay. Land management decisions should reflect the needs and desires of local residents and their communities and should be not dealt away to international corporations.**



The following groups are working to overturn DNR's 2005 Bristol Bay Area Plan and restore balance to Bristol Bay land management.

*Nondalton Tribal Council  
Koliganek Village Council  
Ekwook Village Council*

*Curyung Tribal Council  
Levelock Village Council  
New Stuyahok Traditional Council*



*Comment deadline for the 2013 Bristol Bay Area Plan is April 4th. Make sure you weigh in on this important process affecting our future.*