

Fall 2010

BRISTOL BAY CURRENTS

Newsletter of the Bristol Bay

Watershed & Fisheries Protection Campaign

Friends,

Bristol Bay delivered once again this season, with another tremendous run that will keep thousands of us fed and warm this winter. Over 40 million salmon returned and over 30 million salmon were commercially caught. The price paid for Bristol Bay sockeye was the highest we've seen this decade! Every species has been filleted, smoked, dried, salted, canned, and is packed in our shelves and freezers. Even sportsmen, from all over the world, are reminiscing on the trip of a lifetime where they fished the pristine waters of Bristol Bay hooking trophy rainbows and huge numbers of wild Alaskan salmon. Since our last newsletter in early 2010 the campaign to protect Bristol Bay has picked up incredible momentum. Efforts on both the State and Federal levels have become targeted, specific, and well organized.

Most notably in the Federal arena, a broad coalition of Alaska Native Tribes, Native Corporations, commercial fishermen, and sportsmen have petitioned the United States Environmental Protection agency to use authority granted by the Clean Water Act to protect Bristol Bay's fisheries. On the State level, the Alaska legislature, state agencies, and the Governor Parnell have been asked to fulfill the intent of the Bristol Bay Fisheries Reserve created by Governor Jay Hammond to protect Bristol Bay's fish habitat from not only onshore oil and gas development but also large-scale hardrock mining. On the international front, a group of Bristol Bay residents have travelled to London, home of Anglo American, for the third time to request that Anglo honor the promise of their CEO Cynthia Carroll: "I will not go where people don't want us. I just won't. We've got enough on our plate without having communities against us." After all, the latest polls show that the Pebble Mine is not wanted - 80% of Bristol Bay residents strongly oppose the mine.

Never before has the State of Alaska seen this broad group of commercial fishermen, Alaskan Native Tribes, sportsmen, and corporations, all working together towards a common goal. The passion and dedication of this unprecedented group of people are pushing us closer to securing permanent protection for Bristol Bay and safeguarding its economic and ecological riches for future generations. Thank you for staying involved, spreading the word, and helping to protect our most important resource

Katherine Carscallen
Dillingham, Alaska

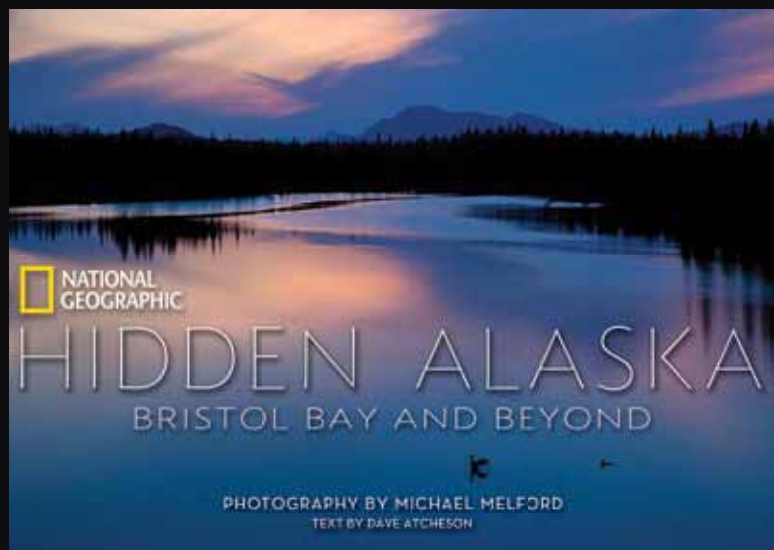
FISH & HYDROLOGY
CHEFS IN BRISTOL BAY
BB GUIDE ACADEMY
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UPDATE ON KATMAI
HUNTERS SPEAK UP
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MINES UP CLOSE & PERSONAL
WILD SALMON DAY

NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC FEATURES BRISTOL BAY

Michael Melford, National Geographic Photographer whose work will be featured in the magazine's December story on Pebble and Bristol Bay, has teamed with Alaskan writer Dave Atcheson, to produce a new book on Alaska and Bristol Bay.

Hidden Alaska: Bristol Bay and Beyond will be available in bookstores and from National Geographic Books starting February 15. For more information visit the Renewable Resources Foundation website at:

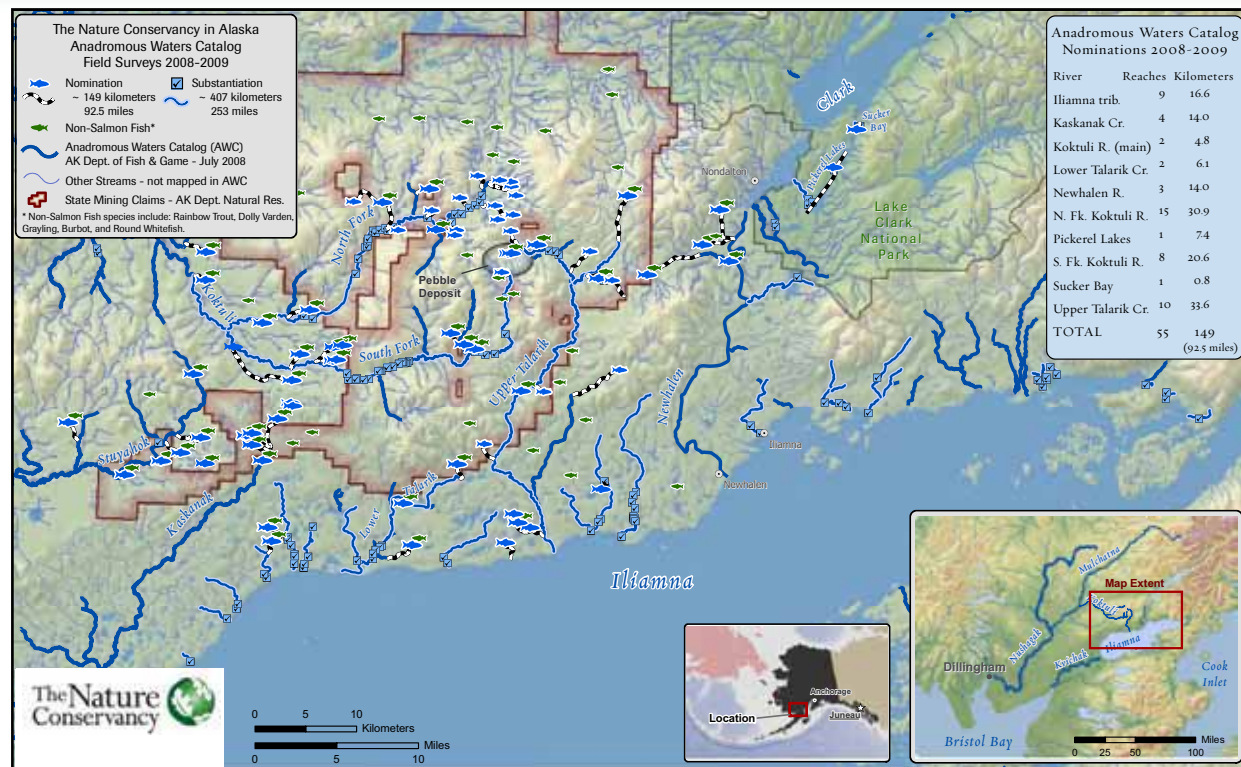
WWW.RENEWABLERESOURCESFOUNDATION.ORG



SCIENCE UPDATE

More salmon documented at Pebble deposit.

Independent scientific data collection in the Bristol Bay watershed continued for a third consecutive summer. Scientists have now documented salmon in over one hundred miles of stream where their presence had not been previously recorded. As a result, Alaska Department of Fish and Game has accepted these stream miles for inclusion in the Anadromous Waters Catalog.



In addition to collecting fish and essential habitat data, scientists continued a larger-scale inventory of more general baseline freshwater ecological conditions including water chemistry, algae, aquatic insects, and fish density. This data will be used to characterize natural levels of biodiversity and production in the Nushagak and Kvichak drainages and will provide useful baseline data for understanding the complexities of the Bristol Bay ecosystem.

CHEFS VISIT BRISTOL BAY AND VOW TO HELP PROTECT

A group of chefs from California, Oregon and Kodiak, Alaska, immersed themselves in the Bristol Bay salmon fishery, observing, harvesting and preparing freshly caught wild sockeye from Bristol Bay this summer.



Chefs Helene Kennan of Bon Appetit Management Co., Quentin Topping of Google, Lisa Schroeder of Mother's Bistro and Mama Mia Trattoria in Portland and Joel Chenet of Mill Bay Coffee in Kodiak gathered in King Salmon in late June. They took part in an "all things salmon" culinary adventure sponsored by Trout Unlimited Alaska. Trout Unlimited is the nation's oldest and largest fisheries conservation group dedicated to conserving, protecting and restoring coldwater fisheries and their habitats.

In the later part of June, when the sockeye started running hard, the four chefs and some national food writers flew to King Salmon and spent the next several days taking part in the fishery. They each bought crew licenses and rode along with local commercial fishermen, helped haul in nets, picked fish, and toured Leader Creek's plant in Naknek to see the next step in processing.

"It was a great experience to witness up close where the fish come from, how well they are handled and to prepare some that we literally pulled from the water a few hours earlier," said Bon Appetit Management Co. Chef Helene Kennan, a past president of Women Chefs and Restaurateurs.

After set netting and touring a processing plant, the chefs also watched elder Violette Wilson of Naknek fillet and smoke strips of sockeye in her backyard. The tour was capped with a four-course dinner at Bear Trail Lodge. The menu included appetizers of Salmon Rillet and Alaska Wild Salmon Salad Nicoise, followed by a main course of Grilled Bristol Bay Sockeye Salmon with Red Onion Compote and Red Wine Beurre Rouge and finished with a dessert of Salmonberry Mousse Cake.

Trout Unlimited Alaska works with chefs and restaurant owners, particularly on the West Coast, as part of its Savor Bristol Bay campaign. This grassroots effort seeks to educate the public about the risks facing the Bristol Bay salmon fishery and what seafood lovers can do to get involved and help protect this very special place. More information is available at www.savebristolbay.org and www.whywild.org. Read Salon.com food editor Frances Lam's heartfelt story on her experiences in Bristol Bay: www.salon.com/food/francis_lam/2010/09/17/bristol_bay_salmon_slideshow

A QUICK LOOK AT THE HYDROLOGY NEAR PEBBLE

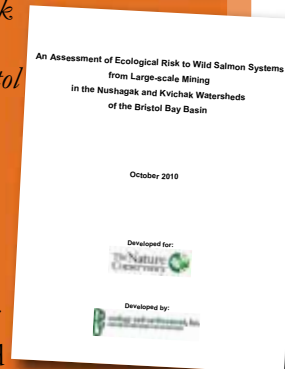
from BBC interview with Dr. Carol Ann Woody • Fisheries Research and Consulting, LLC • www.fish4thefuture.com

- Stretches of the South Fork Koktuli, and other essential salmon waters, sometimes go dry under very low flow conditions. However, salmon have adapted to these conditions over time., relying on annual spring and fall floods to migrate out to sea or seek feeding areas. In Fall, spawning salmon, especially coho, take advantage of rising waters to access upstream spawning habitat. Because of floods and water fluctuation, Alaska Department of Fish and Game biologists have documented salmon in and above periodically dry areas of the SFK.
- Last year, biologists amazingly noted the presence of fat and healthy salmon in a series of spring-fed pools with no surface water connection to salmon streams. How did they get there? They may have accessed the area by swimming through groundwater or they may have gotten there during annual flooding.
- By definition, tributaries are composed of flowing water. The tributaries that flow from and through the mine claims in the region support salmon and feed the aquatic ecosystem upon which the salmon depend. These tributaries depend upon extensive groundwater systems in the region, where water flows horizontally and vertically while upwelling into salmon supporting streams. Spawning salmon, especially sockeye, are attracted these springs of upwelling water because embryonic salmon will incubate over the harsh winter. The water is thermally stable and does not freeze, providing the perfect environment for growing and maturing salmon.
- These complex water systems make Bristol Bay the perfect salmon habitat and are the reason the region has the greatest diversity of salmon in the world. This ecological Gene Bank, however, depends on keeping rivers, tributaries, surface water and groundwater intact.

To listen to the full interview: www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p00bj0j9

RISKS TO SALMON

The Nature Conservancy recently completed their report titled: *An Assessment of Ecological Risk to Wild Salmon Systems from Large-scale Mining in the Nushagak and Kvichak Watersheds of the Bristol Bay Basin.* They are currently gathering feedback on the report. If you would like a copy or have questions, please contact Tim Troll at 907-276-3133 or ttroll@tnc.org



TRAINING THE NEXT GENERATION OF BRISTOL BAY FLY FISHING GUIDES

A group of young people from the Bristol Bay region gathered in Ekwok this past August to learn how to be fly fishing guides. The Nushagak-Mulchatna Wood-Tikchik Land Trust, Alaska Conservation Foundation, The Nature Conservancy, BBNC, and Trout Unlimited Alaska sponsored the weeklong academy which is designed to train local youth in the art of fly fishing so they can tap into a thriving and lucrative industry in their own backyards.

They stayed at Ekwok Lodge and received fly fishing and guiding instruction from some of the country's top guides. They also explored how to incorporate their own local knowledge into guiding. Assistant instructor this summer was Reuben Hastings of New Stuyahok. Hastings completed the first academy held in 2008.

"Seeing a newbie catch their first fish is one of the most fun things of all," Hastings told the Anchorage Daily News. "You may get somebody who's never caught a fish over 20 inches, and see them catch a 30-pounder. That's a treat. I remember catching my first fish as a little munchkin and what a big deal it was for me. Their jaw kinds of drops, and there's lots hooting and hollering." Watch an audio slideshow: www.youtube.com/watch?v=e10Ghlykwc

NOMINATE OR SPONSOR A YOUNG PERSON FOR THE 2011 ACADEMY!

May 22nd - 29th



MORE INFO: ttroll@tnc.org or nwilliams@tu.org

PEOPLE OF BRISTOL BAY SEEK HELP TO PROTECT FISHERIES & LOCAL RESOURCES

The Bristol Bay Native Association full board of directors, which represents all 31 villages in the region, recently passed a resolution that called on the Environmental Protection Agency to protect Bristol Bay wild salmon. Six tribes initially turned to EPA in May requesting that the agency use its authority under the Clean Water Act to protect Bristol Bay from large-scale mining proposals like Pebble, which could kill our fish, jobs and way of life. Since May, the Bristol Bay Native Corp. has also passed a resolution backing the tribes' effort.

With the tribes and the largest regional corporation in the area in opposition, why isn't the Pebble Partnership listening to us and abandoning this risky mine project? If neither the Pebble Partnership nor the state can protect our salmon, it's time to call on an agency that can, like the Environmental Protection Agency.

The people of Bristol Bay ask all Alaskans to stand together and help protect their clean water and healthy salmon runs for current and future generations.

-- Thomas Tilden, Curyung Tribal Chief, Dillingham Oct. 3, 2010 Anchorage Daily News

Q&A WITH WAYNE NASTRI former EPA Regional Administrator

Wayne Nastri, a former EPA Regional Administrator recently toured the Bristol Bay region to help educate residents on the EPA's role in protecting Bristol Bay. Prior to joining Dutko Worldwide, a government relations firm based in Washington D.C., Wayne served nearly eight years as the Region 9 Administrator for the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency which has jurisdiction over California, Arizona, Nevada, Hawaii, the U.S. Territories in the Pacific and 147 tribal nations. As EPA Region 9 Regional Administrator from



2001 through January 2009, Wayne was responsible for policy development and operations in EPA's Pacific Southwest Region, and worked closely with other federal agencies, state and local governments, and Indian tribes to develop and enforce regulations under existing environmental laws.

Wayne's trip throughout the region gave him the chance to answer many outstanding questions about the recent request to the EPA to get involved in Bristol Bay. Here's what he had to say to local's questions.

Who is the EPA, and what is the Clean Water Act?

The Environmental Protection Agency is the federal entity created by the Nixon Administration to address the nations environmental issues. The Clean Water Act was developed to protect and restore our nations waters. In late 1969, the Cuyahoga River caught fire due to pollutants in water coming from industrial dischargers. The publication of this event

and the attention it garnered on the state of our nations waters' spurred Congress to pass the Clean Water Act in 1972. The mandate of the CWA Act is: To restore and maintain chemical, physical and biological integrity of the nations waters.

So, why would the EPA get involved with the protection of Bristol Bay and its headwaters?

In May of this year six federally recognized tribes, with government-to-government relations with the United States,

asked the EPA to initiate a Clean Water Act 404(c) process to protect waters and wetlands in and around Bristol Bay. In short order these tribes were joined by the region and the State's largest fishing groups, the Bristol Bay Native Association, and the Bristol Bay Native Corporation among many others.

Still, the Pebble claim is on State land, how does the Federal Government get any say?

The CWA gives the EPA jurisdiction over "navigable waters of the US," this can also extend to cover the tributaries and wetlands that feed these waters should a "nexus" be able to be demonstrated. The area in and around the Pebble deposit has connectivity to nearby navigable river systems and waters, and so, the EPA has the authority to ensure their protection.

Q&A CONTINUED

So, back to this 404c request. it's a technical sounding name, but what does it really mean?

Section 404 of the CWA regulates placement of fill and dredge material into waters of the US. The EPA and US Army Corps of Engineers implement Section 404 of the Clean Water Act. EPA, however, has ultimate authority to restrict fill and dredge activities when it determines that the activities:

"have an unacceptable adverse effect on municipal water supplies, shellfish beds and fishery areas (including spawning and breeding areas), wildlife, or recreational areas."

EPA, using sound science and public input, can use its authority when it determines there would be unacceptable and adverse impacts. Further, EPA may prohibit [such discharges]....before a permit application has been submitted.

But Pebble doesn't even have a mine plan, what kind of "sound science" will the EPA use?

The EPA will gather and utilize the best available information; collecting data from all federal and state agencies, as well as independent sources and local residents. Secondly, regarding the mine plan; EPA will scrutinize the facts that are already known - the size of the deposit and the ground that it covers. The Pebble Limited Partnership estimates over 11 billion tons of low grade mineral resource. If mined, we know that this resource would produce over 10

billion tons of reactive waste, leftover from this huge, low grade, sulfide deposit. We know where they have to put that waste - in the highly hydrologically connected drainage that supports the worlds largest sockeye salmon runs.

Still, isn't this pre-emptive? Why not let the permitting process play out?

For a potential project like Pebble to go forward, it would normally pursue a CWA 404 permit. This is administrated through the US Army Corps of Engineers with participation from the EPA. Traditionally, if the EPA and the Corps cannot come to agreement on a permit, they would pursue the matter through the CWA 404q process. EPA, however, retains the ultimate authority and can "veto" a project through 404(c) authority. Additionally, EPA the authority to consider the 404 permit, before it's issuance, in the unique circumstance where they deem a permit should not be granted.

So, EPA has the authority, but what would motivate them to weigh in now?

The United States Federal Government has a Trust Obligation with Tribal Nations. Because of this Government-to-Government status, the request made by the Tribes of Bristol Bay to initiate a 404c process now, must be addressed. President Obama, and EPA Administrator, Lisa Jackson have made it clear that their Trust Obligation to Tribes is a top priority in this administration.

CALL TO ACTION

While the EPA is considering this request, contact your Senators and ask them to send the message to the EPA that Bristol Bay is too important to put at risk. Let them know that you support the initiation of a 404(c) process in Bristol Bay to protect the fishery that we all depend on.

ALASKANS CONTACT:

Senator Mark Begich: (202) 224-3004
144 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Senator Lisa Murkowski: (202)-224-6665
709 Hart Senate Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

WASHINGTON RESIDENTS CONTACT:

Senator Maria Cantwell: (202)-224-3441
511 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510-4704

Senator Patty Murray: (202) 224-2621
173 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510



NEW STUDY HIGHLIGHTS ECONOMIC BENEFITS OF KATMAI NATIONAL PARK

Visitor Expenditures More than Double Previous Estimates!

Katmai National Park's visitors play a larger than expected role in supporting the economy of Bristol Bay, according to a new report released by National Parks Conservation Association and Katmai National Park and Preserve.

According to the study, Katmai's visitors spend about three times more per trip than average Alaskan tourists.

Most of the \$50 million in expenditures by Katmai's 25,000 visitors in 2007 was spent inside the park and in neighboring communities. Plus, visitor spending was found to support 647 jobs, 60% of which are in the five boroughs surrounding the park.

"We've known for a long time that Alaska's national parks provide tremendous economic advantage to local gateway communities," said Jim Stratton, NPCA's Alaska regional director. "This new study highlights the exceptional benefits of sustainable tourism in southwest Alaska."

Katmai National Park was established in 1918 and covers about 4 million acres in southwest Alaska. It is an American icon cherished for its brown bear viewing, fishing, hunting, and hiking opportunities.

Download the study at: www.npca.org/alaska/reports



\$37 million = Value Added to Alaska's Economy by Katmai's visitors

\$15 million = previous estimate (Stynes, 2008)

\$50 million = Katmai Visitor Expenditures in Alaska

\$17 million = previous estimate (Stynes, 2008)

MINES UP CLOSE & PERSONAL

On July 19, 2010, eleven individuals from around Bristol Bay boarded plans headed into Anchorage to travel with Nunamta Aulukestai on a mine tour that would bring them into Utah and Nevada to see first hand the impacts of large-scale mining on the lands and tribal communities of those regions. Many of the communities represented on the trip were those that were either supportive of the Pebble Partnership or were neutral. On the trip, they met with former environmental managers from Bingham Canyon Mine, learning about its issues with underground water contamination, dust problems and associated metals casing children to have respiratory problem. The group viewed contaminated ground water from waste rock tailings in a pile that was huge and mirrored the size of Warehouse Mountain. Most striking was the growth of the pit over time as the company reached deeper and deeper to extract the ore. This mine tour changed the minds of some of our guests. The size alone of Bingham Canyon Mine, which is smaller than the proposed Pebble Project, led all participants to the realization that the proposed Pebble project would forever change the landscape of Iliamna and Bristol Bay. Another group took a trip to Bingham Canyon and mines of Utah on November 14, 2010. The leadership of Nunamta have learned that these tours offer a powerful educational experience for residents of Bristol Bay to understand the potential impacts of large scale mining upon the environment and local communities.



PAUL GREENBERG, AUTHOR OF FOUR FISH: *The Future of the Last Wild Food, Speaks Up About Bristol Bay.*



As you may know, the Food and Drug Administration this fall debated whether to approve genetically modified salmon and allow it to enter the U.S. marketplace.

In an interview on the nationally broadcast public radio show, Living on Earth, author Paul Greenberg recently weighed in; here's an excerpt from the interview:

"While the government seeks to boost farmed salmon supplies through transgenics, it is simultaneously letting wild salmon go to pot. At the headwaters of Bristol Bay, Alaska, the spawning grounds of perhaps the most productive wild salmon runs left on earth, the international mining giant, Anglo American plans to construct Pebble mine. The largest open pit copper and gold mine in the US. Mines of this nature are notoriously bad for fish. Just this summer, a copper mine failure in China's Ting River killed millions of fish. A similar disaster in the Bristol Bay fishery could mean the destruction of around a quarter of a billion pounds of fish. Precariously, about the same amount of salmon that Aquabounty hopes to produce with its transgenic fish.

US Environmental Protection Agency has the power to stop Pebble Mine through the Clean Water Act, but has so far failed to act. More transgenic fish, less wild fish. You have to scratch your head at a government that's planning that kind of seafood menu for it's citizens. Instead of endorsing a risky experiment in genetic salmon modification, wouldn't it be better if our leaders protected wild salmon habitat? In the end, we'd have just as much fish on our plates, and a safer environment to boot. Personally, I'd hate to go into a restaurant and have a transgenic fish be the only salmon option on the menu. If that ends up being the case, I might just order the chicken."

Access the full interview here: www.loe.org/shows/segments.htm?programID=10-P13-00038&segmentID=4

PEBBLE ON BBC WORLD NEWS

Naknek fisherman Everett Thompson stars in British Broadcasting Corps. documentary feature series on Bristol Bay and its world famous salmon runs. Check out the story at:

www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p00bj0j9

Loulare A. Moore of Twin Hills presented the following statement at EPA's Region 10 Tribal Leaders conference this fall in Juneau

AGYATSIAM QANERRKAA / QANELLRA

I'd like to make a statement from my heart if I may;
Thank you for allowing me time to humbly have my say.

We've heard some views that are technical, educational and even scientific;
Now from the depth of my heart I want to express what is to me so terrific.

It's what one would consider as coming from ground zero;
Having been born and raised as a native, I'm my own hero.

I love living life as being one with the land, the water and the air;
It's living in peace and harmony with my environment--to some that's totally rare.

I might seem uncultured, unsophisticated and unrefined;
Truly a savage, I eat just about anything, I'm really one of a kind.

I'm part of a people who really are so blissfully rich*;
It may be hard to imagine how it is to seem so poor, yet be so rich*.

We have abundant resources, resources galore!
Look around, there's so much bounty to adore!

There is another resource that needs attention;
One that I must take the time to mention.

It is simply "The People of the Land"
They are making an effort to take a stand.

To protect themselves from being destroyed;
For they see the Pebble Mine as a pit so ugly and void.

An open pit mine poisons the land, water and air;
The very things They're united with, will be so bare.

To destroy the environment is to destroy these people;
They're one with their environment--They are "The People".

"The People of the Land" from generation to generation;
The indigenous people are making a proclamation.

To put a stop to what is called the Pebble Mine;
So they'd be allowed to live their lifestyle and shine.

To shine, shine, shine, in their own native lifestyle;
A style that money cannot buy, not even for a while.

In closing let me say, "The love of money is the root of all evil."
I wonder who will pay; The price for raking up the ground in a greedy upheaval.

Once mining begins, there's no such thing as "Sacred Ground";
The main concern is measured by what's worth by the pound.

*rich: a full supply, an abundant provision

Not Worth The Risk

"Nothing bad will happen. Trust us." Now where might we have heard that before?

Even with the latest technology and best intentions, accidents do happen. Are we willing to risk one of the world's richest hunting grounds to a risky foreign-owned scheme to develop massive mines in southwest Alaska?

Alaska's famed Bristol Bay region is home to some of the finest hunting on the planet for caribou, moose, and brown bear. These rugged and remote lands also support the biggest wild salmon fishery on the planet. Alarmingly, 2,500 square miles of prime habitat in southwest Alaska is at risk of being transformed into a massive mining district. It's hard to imagine the region's game and fish doing well among a network of roads, open pits, and toxic tailings ponds.

Hunting is a proud American tradition. For hunting to continue, we need strong and stable game populations and the habitats to support them. In this case, the risk of industrial development to future hunting opportunities and our hunting heritage is simply too high. **Protect Bristol Bay.**

To learn more, visit www.SportsmansAlliance4ak.org

JOIN OUR SUPPORTING CAST



WHY I'M BOYCOTTING PEBBLE'S KEYSTONE COMMUNITY DIALOGUE

I am Verner Wilson III, a fisherman born and raised in Bristol Bay. As a tribal member, BBNC shareholder, and someone who has studied the risks of mining to salmon, I'm concerned with Pebble's upcoming attempt to "greenwash" their mine by hiring the Keystone Center, which specializes in community and conflict mediation. By using Keystone, Pebble is buying the appearance of "dialogue" with stakeholders. The trouble is, however, they are beginning with the question of how to properly build Pebble Mine, rather than ask should the mine be built in the first place. The first meeting, scheduled for December 3 in Anchorage, is framed with an opinion-based, biased sounding title of "Responsible Mining: Global Perspectives." Through this process, Pebble appears to be attempting to buy social license they currently do not have. The vast majority of Bristol Bay residents, local leaders, BBNA and BBNC have all expressed opposition to the mine. Yet, Pebble proceeds anyway. Too often, mining companies have had 'dialogues' with affected communities before, only to spew broken promises. The Keystone Dialogues represent Pebble's latest attempt to push a risky project near Bristol Bay's world-class salmon spawning grounds, but we know better.

Verner Wilson III • 907.360.8591



This newsletter was published with the support of the following organizations working to protect Bristol Bay. For more information check out their websites and www.savebristolbay.org:



www.nunamta.org



www.bbrsda.com



www.alaskaconservation.org



www.nrdc.com



www.renewableresourcescoalition.org



www.savebristolbay.org



www.npca.org



www.sportsmansalliance4ak.org

QUESTIONS?

Katherine Carscallen
907.842.5370

WILD SALMON DAY AT THE ALASKA STATE FAIR

The Renewable Resources Coalition, along with a wide range of partners, including Trout Unlimited and Nunamta Aulukestai, sponsored Wild Salmon Day at the Alaska State Fair. "It was a resounding success," proclaimed Melissa Heuer, Program Director for the Renewable Resources Foundation. Beautiful sunny skies following a day of torrential rains brought people to the fair in droves on Wild Salmon Day. Estimates of 39,000 visitors reportedly filtered through the entryways, greeted by an army of smiling volunteers who handed out packets of information touting the importance of wild salmon to the economy as well as to the lives of all sport, subsistence and commercial users.

