

# ST. OLAF

SPRING 2012

## CALL OF THE WILD

COUNTER BALANCE PEACE MAKERS CAREER CONNECTIONS



**ON THE COVER:** Alaska's Bristol Bay region is the world's best wild salmon habitat and the proposed location of one of the world's largest gold and copper mining operations. *Photograph*  
© 2012 Robert Glenn Ketchum

**ST. OLAF MAGAZINE**  
SPRING 2012  
Volume 59 · No. 2

Carole Leigh Engblom  
EDITOR

Don Bratland '87,  
Holmes Design  
ART DIRECTOR

Laura Hamilton Waxman  
COPY EDITOR

Greg Breining, Claire  
Carlson '12, James Daly '13,  
Suzy Frisch, Amy Lohmann '14,  
J. Trout Lowen, Jessica Moes '14,  
Catherine Monson '12, Jon  
Rondestvedt '61, Jeff Sauve,  
Amelia Schoeneman '12, Kari  
VanDerVeen, David McKay Wilson  
CONTRIBUTING WRITERS

David Gonneman '90,  
Bill Kelley, Mike Ludwig '01,  
Tom Roster, Steven Wett '15  
CONTRIBUTING PHOTOGRAPHERS

*St. Olaf Magazine* is published three times annually (Winter, Spring, Fall) by St. Olaf College, with editorial offices at the Office of Marketing and Communications, 507-786-3032; email: [magazine@stolaf.edu](mailto:magazine@stolaf.edu)

**POSTMASTER:** Send address changes to Data Services, St. Olaf College, 1520 St. Olaf Ave., Northfield, MN 55057

Readers may update information online: [stolaf.edu/alumni](http://stolaf.edu/alumni) or email [alum-office@stolaf.edu](mailto:alum-office@stolaf.edu). Contact the Office of Alumni and Parent Relations, 507-786-3028 or 888-865-6537

**Class Notes deadlines:**  
Spring issue: Feb. 1  
Fall issue: June 1  
Winter issue: Oct. 1

The content for class notes originates with the Office of Alumni and Parent Relations and is submitted to *St. Olaf Magazine*, which reserves the right to edit for clarity and space constraints. Please note that due to privacy concerns, inclusion is at the discretion of the editor.



[www.stolaf.edu](http://www.stolaf.edu)



# ST. OLAF

## features

### 12 Counter Balance

BY DAVID MCKAY WILSON

Named "the most important financial journalist of her generation," Gretchen Morgenson '76 is considered the foremost investigative chronicler of America's financial crisis and its fallout.

### 18 Call of the Wild

BY GREG BREINING

Forsaking the world of finance for the Alaska Coalition, Scott Hed '90 is fighting to protect one of America's last frontiers: Bristol Bay, Alaska.

### 26 Pioneering the Peace Corps

BY CAROLE LEIGH ENGBLOM

For fifty-one years, Oles have been volunteering for the Peace Corps, taking their cue from Susan Thompson '61.

### 30 Peace Makers

BY CLAIRE CARLSON '12 AND J. TROUT LOWEN

In 2011, the Peace Corps commemorated fifty years of promoting peace and friendship around the world, with each generation of Ole Peace Corps volunteers inspiring the next.

### 38 Career Connections

BY KARI VANDERVEEN

Thanks to the annual Ole Law event, Will Raun '14 enjoyed an Interim packed with hands-on learning and networking opportunities with Ole lawyers, and a pending summer internship.

### 52 Almanac: The Legacy of Miss Fiske

BY JEFF SAUVE

In 1875, Miss Ella Fiske became the first music teacher, and third faculty member, at St. Olaf's School.

## departments

2 The First Word

3 On the Hill

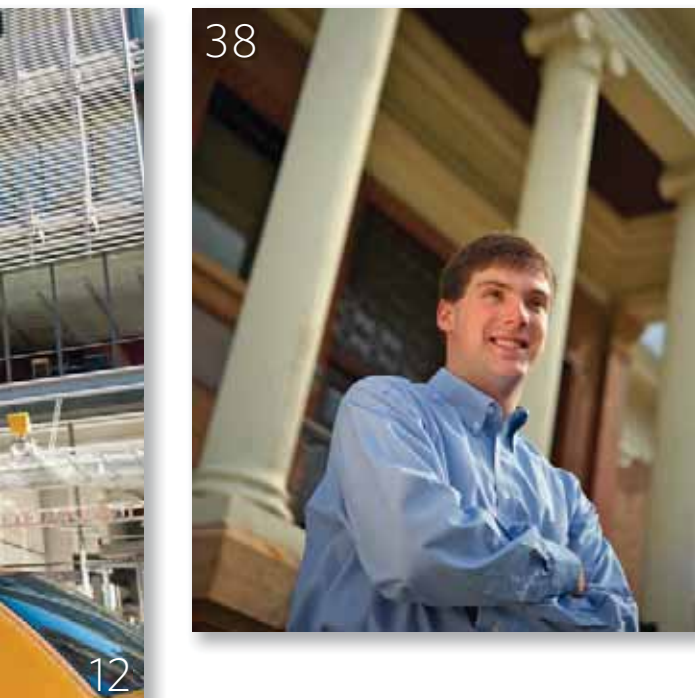
40 Alumni News

44 Advancing the Mission

45 Class Notes



30



38

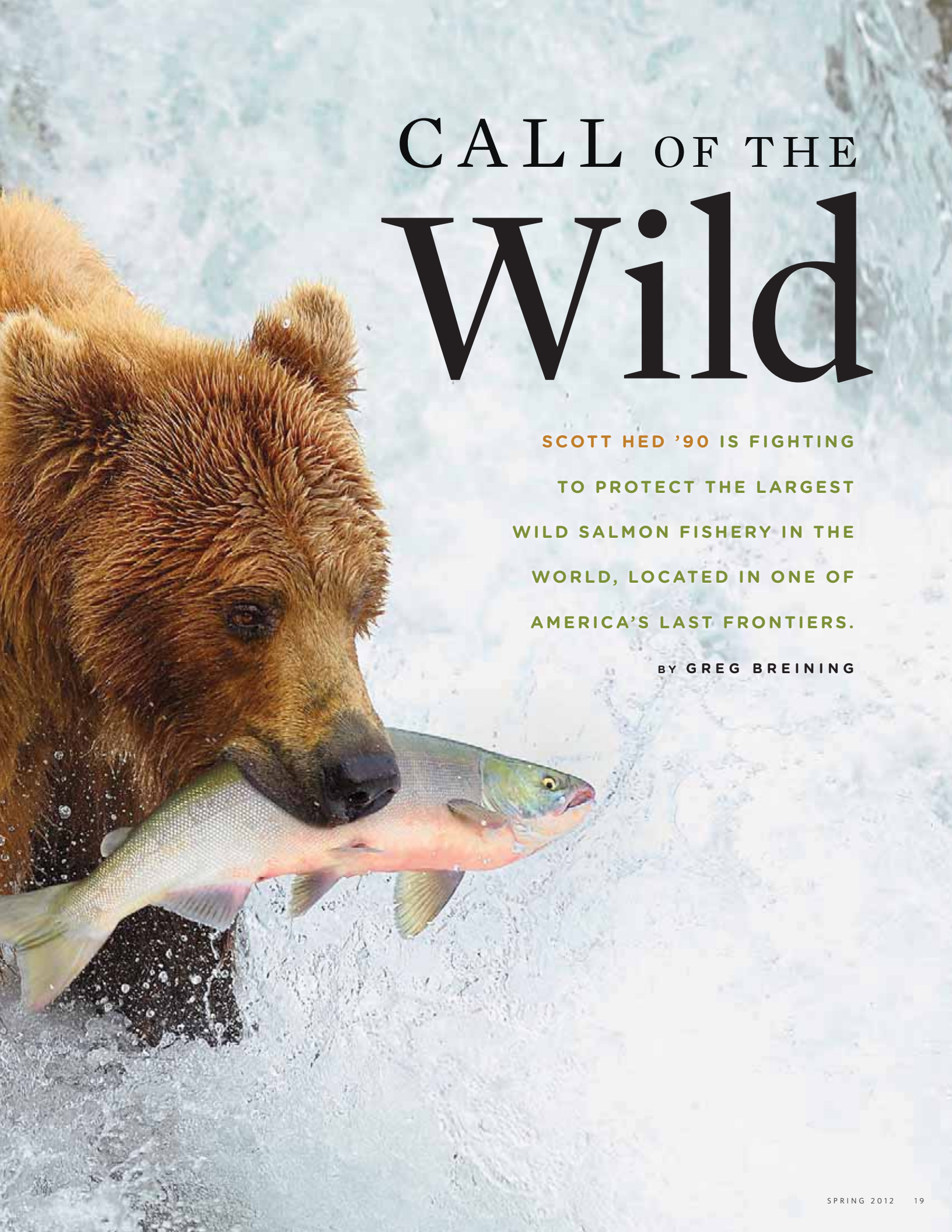
12





An Alaskan coastal brown bear fishes for spawning pink salmon in a tributary of southwestern Alaska's Kvichak River.





# CALL OF THE Wild

SCOTT HED '90 IS FIGHTING  
TO PROTECT THE LARGEST  
WILD SALMON FISHERY IN THE  
WORLD, LOCATED IN ONE OF  
AMERICA'S LAST FRONTIERS.

BY GREG BREINING



“IF A PLACE LIKE BRISTOL BAY CAN BE LOST, I THINK A LOT OF PEOPLE FEEL EVERYTHING IS ON THE TABLE. NOTHING IS OFF LIMITS.”

**S**COTT HED SEEMED TO HAVE it all. Decent job. Good pay. Fun coworkers. Great town to live in — Sioux Falls, South Dakota. And on the best days, he could even claim that something he helped finance, a piece of medical equipment perhaps, might have saved a life.

But he wasn't feeling it. Back when he was fresh out of St. Olaf with a degree in economics, his job in the finance industry had been a great fit. But now, after several years of the nine-to-five grind, he was going to work because it was what he'd done the day before, and the week

before, and the month before, and because it was what he went to college for. Was that reason enough?

Sometimes change takes an inducement. Sometimes it takes a kick in the pants. With the announcement his office was closing, Scott Hed got one of each.

He had the chance to keep a job and move back to Minnesota, or to stay in Sioux Falls and find a new job. “I said to myself, I'm thirty-two, this is a chance,” recalls Hed a dozen years later. “What do I want to do with the rest of my life? So I asked: What's behind door number three?”

Door number three turned out to be a severance package, and the opportunity to take a few months off and fall in love — with Alaska, a place he visited years earlier. Soon, he was promoting the state to nature lovers and sportsmen and women in the Lower Forty-Eight and enlisting their help in protecting some of its treasured wild lands, including the famous Arctic National Wildlife Refuge.



The site of the Pebble mine claim, one of the largest open-pit mines ever proposed. If developed, “everything in this picture will be turned into a pit 2,000 feet deep and over two miles across,” says renowned conservation photographer Robert Glenn Ketchum.

PHOTOGRAPH © 2012 ROBERT GLENN KETCHUM



Most recently, the stakes have risen. Hed has been criss-crossing the country as director of the Sportsman's Alliance for Alaska in a crucial bid to protect Bristol Bay — one of the most spectacular wild salmon fisheries in the world — from the threat of an open-pit copper and gold mine and tailings basin that would cover twenty square miles and be deep enough to swallow the Empire State Building. "If a place like Bristol Bay can be lost, I think a lot of people feel everything is on the table," says Hed. "Nothing is off limits."

Hed spends weeks away from his wife and home every year. The work is exhausting. But it is also challenging and rewarding. He feels a purpose every day. "I have never looked back," he says. His decision to head off to Alaska and seek a new career teaches the value of taking a chance and cultivating a passion. It also highlights the advantage of a liberal arts education.

"I always tell people, don't let what you're going to school to get your degree in dictate what you do with the rest of your life," says Hed. "The world's a big place. There's a lot of opportunity out there."

. . .

**H**ed's high school graduating class in Gaylord, Minnesota, totaled fifty-five. As class valedictorian, he applied to the Massachusetts Institute of Technology with the thought of going into engineering. After ending up on the waiting list, he decided to look at smaller colleges in Minnesota.

He had played in his high school band and knew someone who went to St. Olaf and participated in the college's music program. "So I learned a little bit about St. Olaf and came and took a look," says Hed. "I could see myself in this place."

Enrollment in a liberal arts college gave Hed the opportunity for a broader experience than he might have had as an engineering major. He chose economics, with an accounting concentration. "I thought the world of business seemed interesting. Seemed like something you could make some money at."

While Hed imagined someday working on Wall Street, his first job took him to Marshall, Minnesota, and, within a few years, to Sioux Falls. But that suited him. He grew up hunting ducks and pheasants, fishing around southern Minnesota, and canoeing each year with his family in the Boundary Waters Canoe Area, near the Canadian border in northern Minnesota. "My mom and dad were really good about instilling a love of the outdoors, wild places, big landscapes," he says. They traveled to all the grand North American landscapes: Yellowstone, the Grand Tetons, the Maine Coast, the Black Hills. Hed found it ironic that on the nation's bicentennial, his family was vacationing in Canada's Banff National Park.



Although he would rather be fly fishing for trout and salmon in southwestern Alaska, Scott Hed (above and far right) more often finds himself traveling to Washington D.C. in support of efforts to protect the region from development and other environmental threats.



But for all that, he wasn't quite prepared for his first trip to Alaska, a short jaunt on a bargain-price plane ticket. He rented a car and drove to Denali National Park and down the Kenai Peninsula. He was astounded by Alaska's scale and remoteness, by the sense that there were mountain ranges where humans had never set foot. "You cannot believe there's that much open country," he says. "It was just the wildest of the wild places I had ever been in my life."

So now, with his job ending and ten months pay coming, Hed decided to return to Alaska and see it in an "epic" way. He called an outfitter in Fairbanks and signed up to backpack across the Brooks Range in northern Alaska and then raft down the Kongakut River through the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge.

"You seem pretty interested in this," the outfitter said over the phone. "I'm working with a conservation group that's bringing people to Washington, D.C. to speak to members of Congress on behalf of Alaska. You interested?"

"It sounded kind of daunting," Hed recalls. He hadn't even taken the trip yet. "Why would my lawmakers care what Scott from Sioux Falls thinks about this place in remote Alaska?"



But he went to D.C. And he found he enjoyed representing a place he loved but barely knew. “What initially seemed very daunting and intimidating turned out to be a chance where I met some really great people,” he says. He discovered how easy it was to talk to someone about something he cared deeply about. He learned to “speak from the heart,” he says. “You don’t have to be an expert on it.”

That summer, he backpacked and rafted in arctic Alaska. Of many memorable experiences, one of the most spectacular took place on the banks of the Kongakut as hundreds, if not thousands, of caribou engulfed his camp in their migration from the foothills to the coastal plain. That day, he watched the caribou plunge into the racing water, the calves entering timidly and washing downstream before reaching the distant bank, where they rejoined their mothers.

“An incredible experience,” recalls Hed. “It really kind of locked in my passion about Alaska.”

He returned home to a message on his answering machine: The Alaska Coalition needed a representative in the Midwest to speak to groups on behalf of protecting Alaskan wild lands. Did Hed know anyone? Hed returned the call. He recalls saying, “Of course I know someone in the Midwest, and you’re talking to him. So let’s do a phone interview and see what comes of this.”

. . .

**H**ed went to work as a representative for the Alaska Coalition and later took a staff position with another conservation group, the Alaska Conservation Foundation. He continued to live in Sioux Falls, talking to midwesterners about the big Alaska issues, primarily protecting the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge from oil drilling, and preventing clear-cutting in Tongass National Forest in the Alaskan panhandle.

Then, about six years ago, the foundation asked Hed to shift his focus to an area of emerging concern. — Bristol Bay in southwestern Alaska. Northern Dynasty Minerals, a mineral exploration and development company based in Vancouver, British Columbia, wanted to consolidate mineral claims in the headwaters of Bristol Bay. If approved, it would lead to a mammoth open-pit copper and gold excavation known as Pebble Mine. Would Hed, the foundation asked, be willing to talk to hunters, anglers, and sporting-goods companies across the United States about the danger the Pebble Mine posed to the salmon runs in Bristol Bay?

The proposed site of the Pebble mine is an area of tundra wilderness in the headwaters of the Kvichak and Nushagak Rivers, two of the eight major rivers that feed Bristol Bay.



The job seemed like perfect match — almost too perfect. Says Hed, “I thought to myself, do I need to read the fine print here? Where is the catch? Am I still going to get paid?” He would talk to sportsmen and women — his people in many ways — about a place they all loved or dreamed of going to. “So I said, sign me up.”

To carry out the lobbying effort, Hed started the Sportsman’s Alliance for Alaska as a project of the Alaska Conservation Foundation. So far, he has lined up the support of more than





500 hunting and fishing organizations across the country, including some 150 companies that cater to sportsmen and women, such as Sturm, Ruger & Co., a firearms manufacturer, and the Scott Fly Rod Company.

Says Hed, “I like to say I’ve got everyone from catch-and-release fishermen to big-game hunters. I have been able to work the fishing industry because [Bristol Bay] is honest-to-God one of the premier fly-fishing destinations on this planet for trophy rainbow trout as well as the salmon.”

Bristol Bay forms a huge notch in the coast of southwest Alaska, cradled by the sweeping arm of the mountainous Alaska Peninsula. Its watershed is a complex system of rivers, lakes, streams, and wetlands that support the most productive wild sockeye salmon fishery in the world. Each year, up to 40 million mature salmon — Chinook, Coho, sockeye, chum, and pink — ascend the rivers of Bristol Bay to spawn. Most abundant are the sockeye, green and red in their spawning colors. They swim and thrash up the clear shallow tributaries in such numbers that they



Chikuminuk Lake, Wood-Tikchick State Park. The Bristol Bay basin is a complex system of rivers, lakes, streams, and wetlands that support the most productive wild salmon fishery in the world.

MICHAEL MELFORD/NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC STOCK





Salmon is the most valuable commercial fish managed by the state of Alaska, and Bristol Bay is its richest commercial fishery.  
NICK HALL/GETTY IMAGES



Each year, up to 40 million mature salmon ascend the rivers and streams of Bristol Bay to spawn. Most abundant are the sockeye, green and red in their spawning colors.  
MICHAEL MELFORD/NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC STOCK



turn the streams themselves the color of blood.

The bay and its tributaries support a commercial wild salmon fishery worth \$350 million a year, with some 8,000 fishing jobs and another 4,000 in processing and other fishing-related positions. Anglers, especially fly-fishermen, flock to the spawning runs, paying as much as \$1,000 a day to stay at lodges on the best streams in hopes of landing the proverbial fish of a lifetime.

**BRISTOL BAY AND ITS TRIBUTARIES  
SUPPORT A COMMERCIAL WILD SALMON  
FISHERY WORTH \$350 MILLION ANNUALLY,  
WITH 8,000 FISHING JOBS AND ANOTHER  
4,000 IN PROCESSING AND OTHER  
FISHING-RELATED POSITIONS.**

The Pebble Mine, if developed, would sit on the streams that drain into the Nushagak River and the Kvichak River (by way of Iliamna Lake). These two river systems produce about 40 percent of Bristol Bay's sockeye salmon. No ordinary mine, Pebble would be one of the largest for copper, gold, and molybdenum in the world, a combination of underground shafts and an open pit that all together would measure up to 3 miles across and 1,700 feet deep.

One of the most troubling aspects of the Pebble Mine is the tremendous volume of low-grade ore that would be pulverized to get at scattered flecks and tiny veins of metal. Compared to the ore of the historic Kennecott Mine in the Copper River drainage, which averaged 13 percent copper over its life, the ore of the Pebble Mine is expected to yield only 0.34 percent copper, 0.023 percent molybdenum, and 0.01 ounces gold per ton.

The result? More than 99 percent of the estimated 10.78 billion tons of ore in the Pebble Mine would be pulverized and stored on site behind earthen dams up to 740 feet high. The metallic sulfide waste rock from these dams has the potential to produce acid drainage that could enter the salmon streams, poisoning the fish. To make matters dicier, that area of the Alaskan coast is riven with faults that frequently shift to produce some of the world's largest earthquakes, such as the magnitude 9.2 quake that shook Prince William Sound in 1964. Large earthquakes might lead to tailings dam failures that could wipe out entire watersheds.

In response to these very real concerns, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), under the Clean Water Act, has undertaken a scientific analysis of the Bristol Bay watershed to better understand how large-scale development might affect water quality and the salmon. Hed calls this project "the biggest book report ever put together for Bristol Bay." The assessment, scheduled to be completed by late 2012, will inform the EPA's policies on protecting the area's water quality and the salmon fishery.

As the mining proposal continues to go ahead, developers will have to apply for dozens of permits from the state of Alaska and the federal government. One key permit would allow the creation of the massive dams to contain the mining waste.

Hed and other campaign leaders are hoping that the findings of the EPA's watershed assessment and other investigations lead the federal government to step in to stop the mine.

According to Hed, a lot rides on whether the Pebble project goes forward. "I think people view this as: If Pebble goes, a lot more is going to end up happening," he says. "Outside of the Pebble claim, there are 1,000 square miles of mining claims that exist and are simply lying in wait. If Pebble were permitted, the infrastructure would be in place that doesn't exist today." In other words, roads would provide access to other claims.

In an unusual showing of solidarity, native communities around Bristol Bay have joined with sportsmen and women, and commercial fishermen in Alaska and elsewhere. Chefs, restaurant owners, and food markets have opposed the mine. Even jewelry companies, including Tiffany & Co, Helzberg Diamonds, and Jostens have vowed to get their gold elsewhere.

"There are all these diverse interest groups that asked the EPA to get involved — all of whom have come out and said this is not an anti-mining initiative," says Hed. "This is simply the wrong idea in the wrong place, in an area that is extremely valuable in its current state.

"It's an incredibly unique set of circumstances that gives me cautious optimism that the good guys have a fighting chance," says Hed. "It is simply one of those iconic places that are far too few in this world, in this time."

. . .

**H**ed says he has no regrets about his midlife career change. On the other hand, he has no second thoughts about his original decision to get an economics degree at St. Olaf and work in the financial field.

"It gave me a lot of great experience. I made great friends that I'm still friends with to this day," he says. Still, he recommends the benefits of soul searching. "I think more people should take a bit of time to honestly look in the mirror when they get ready to go to work in the morning. Ask yourself a really hard question: Do I love, do I have a passion, do I really care about what I'm going to go and do for the next eight to ten hours today?"

"Just keep your eyes and ears open, because you never know what's going to present itself."

For the last three years, Hed has returned to St. Olaf to speak to students about his career and Alaska. It's an opportunity to talk about conservation and also a chance, he says, to give "broad guidance to kids that are here today."

During Hed's most recent visit to St. Olaf last spring, President David R. Anderson asked him what he'd do next in his career if conservation groups such as the Alaska Conservation Foundation and Sportsman's Alliance for Alaska prevailed in stopping the Pebble Mine.

"I've had other people ask me that question," Hed recalls answering. "I said, you know what? If this turns out right, I will have worked myself out of a job."

"But that means I will have done my job." 🦄

GREG BREINING is a Twin Cities author and journalist whose articles and essays have appeared in the *New York Times*, *Audubon*, *National Geographic Traveler*, and many other publications.

Learn more at [sportsmansalliance4ak.org](http://sportsmansalliance4ak.org) and [savebristolbay.org](http://savebristolbay.org).