

BRISTOL BAY CURRENTS

Newsletter of the Bristol Bay Watershed and Fisheries Protection Campaign

Dear Residents and Bristol Bay Stakeholders,

My name is Bobby Andrew. I am a lifelong subsistence hunter and fisherman, and am spokesman for Nunamta Aulukestai, "Caretakers of our Land", an association of eight Alaska Native village corporations in Bristol Bay. Nunamta, along with our partners throughout the world, works tirelessly to achieve our mission of responsible development and care for our lands in our region. At the forefront of caring for our lands is stopping the development of the proposed Pebble Mine, which we feel is an irresponsible and unsustainable prospect for our region with potential catastrophic impacts on our environment, our people, our culture, and our subsistence way of life.

I want to encourage you to join our campaign that includes a diverse coalition of individuals and organizations working together to safeguard the resources of our region. In the last year, we have grown, diversified, and become more organized. Our activities include:

- Working for higher standards of protection on state lands in Bristol Bay through the Alaska Legislature and Board of Fisheries.
- Identifying 92 miles of anadromous streams near the Pebble project site for addition to the State's Catalogue of Anadromous Waters providing them higher protections.
- Making tremendous strides linking chefs, salmon processors, food media and fishermen together in our efforts, raising the visibility and value of Bristol Bay salmon among consumers
- Initiating legal challenges to the deeply flawed Bristol Bay Area Plan, and the legality of the heavy-duty exploration activities at the proposed mine site. Plaintiffs in both suits include comfish; sportfish; tribal governments; Nunamta; Victor Fischer, a delegate to the Alaska Constitutional Convention, and residents of the region, including former Alaska First Lady, Bella Hammond, Rick Delkittie, and Violet Willson.
- Securing promises from major Jewelers to never source gold from Pebble.
- Organizing and executing fly-ins of Bristol Bay residents to speak in both Juneau and D.C.
- Enlisting the support of thousands of sportsmen from around the country.
- Delivering a message to Anglo at their own shareholders meeting in London that we do not welcome them in Bristol Bay.

The list of our efforts goes on and on. You can read further details in this Bristol Bay Currents newsletter, part of our effort to keep you informed about what is happening and what you can do. Please see the back cover for campaign websites and sign up for regular email updates from organizations working to protect Bristol Bay. I look forward to working together with you to secure permanent protection for our renewable resources in the Bristol Bay watershed!

-Bobby

Spring 2010

INSIDE

AK2UK

Jewelers

BB Salmon in Seattle

BB Guide Academy

Sportsmen Take Action

PLP Violates Permits

AK's Large Mine Permitting process

Artists Uprising

Double threat to Beluga's

Sig Hansen on Pebble

Much more!

Finding Fish...

A team of independent scientists were out last summer documenting the presence of juvenile salmon, and in the Bristol Bay watershed. Many anadromous streams and rivers in Alaska are undocumented, meaning that while they're thought to contain salmon, they're not on the official list called the Anadromous Waters Catalogue. Once a water body is in the catalogue it receives more protection from development than it otherwise would. These researchers hope that by documenting streams and rivers near the Pebble deposit, it will enhance the conservation of these important salmon-bearing waterways that feed Bristol Bay. To date, they have found young salmon in 92 miles of previously undocumented streams near where the Pebble mine would be built, including two streams directly on top of the Pebble deposit.



Alaskans object to mine at London shareholders meeting

For at least a few minutes this Earth Day, the debate over Alaska's massive Pebble copper and gold prospect captured the attention of an international mining company and its shareholders in London. Verner Wilson, outreach coordinator for Nunamta Aulukestai, (caretakers of our land in Yup'ik), spoke out against the potential mine in Southwest Alaska to a crowd of business people assembled at London-based mining giant Anglo American's annual shareholders meeting. Anglo is Pebble's major financial backer. [ADN, April 23, 2010]

Anglo American has dozens of mining projects around the world but Pebble was the only one mentioned by Anglo chairman Sir John Parker during his opening remarks before shareholders.

"Our bottom line remains that, if the project cannot be designed in a way that provides the proper protections for Alaska's fisheries and wildlife, or to the livelihoods of Alaskan communities, then it shouldn't be built," he said.

In a press conference after the meeting, Wilson, and a larger delegation of native leaders from Bristol Bay, kept out of London by an erupting volcano, addressed another promise made by Anglo's CEO, Cynthia Carol; that if local communities did not support the project, they would not continue forward. Wilson and others delivered messages opposition, stating their own bottom line that,

"[Anglo] can't show you anywhere on earth where this type, this size and this kind of mine has not had major environmental problems, and we in Bristol Bay, do not want to be the experiment."

Wilson said he told the Anglo executives during the shareholders meeting about recent polls indicating that a vast majority of Bristol Bay region residents oppose Pebble, delivered messages from local villages, city councils, and corporations stating their opposition to the project -the regional Native corporation, Bristol Bay Native Corp., who after years of neutrality announced last year that it also opposes Pebble.

Wilson said Anglo should stick to its commitment last year to abandon Pebble because the project does not have the support of local communities.

In a final warning to Anglo American's shareholder's Wilson announced that Bristol Bay's fishery is a global resource, and the whole world will be watching this project.

To see copies of the Nunamta letter, the survey, and the advertisement in the London Times, go to www.ourbristolbay.com.

"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." -

-Anglo American CEO Cynthia Carroll in Fast Company online magazine

Nearly 100,000 Sign Petition Against Pebble

NRDC, the Natural Resources Defense Council, has joined local groups in a big way to oppose Pebble Mine. Its first major target: Anglo American, which held its annual shareholder meeting in London on April 22 (ironically, Earth Day).

Using that meeting as a focus, NRDC mobilized its members to sign letters of protest to Anglo American. Demonstrating a major commitment to the campaign, NRDC ran a full page ad in the New York Times to help raise awareness of the issue in the lower 48 and to bolster the petition drive. NRDC also spearheaded a coalition ad in the London Financial Times.

This immense effort on the petition to Anglo American generated almost 100,000 signatures in only a month.

Signatures were hand-delivered to Anglo American at its shareholders meeting on April 22, where Verner Wilson, on behalf of Nunamta Aulukestai, asked Anglo

CEO Cynthia Carroll to keep the promise she made last year that the Pebble project would not proceed in the face of continued local resistance.

This Earth Day, the whole world is watching Anglo American.



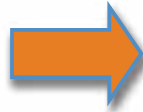
Don't let them destroy Alaska's wild salmon paradise.

(Another) Major U.S. Jewelry Maker to Boycott Alaska Pebble Mine Gold

April 14, 2010

From the story in the **Anchorage Daily News**:

The nation's second-largest jewelry retailer on Tuesday joined the opposition to development of a gold and copper prospect in Southwest Alaska. Zale Corp. said it will boycott precious metals from the Pebble prospect if it becomes a mine. Zale also said it supports permanently protecting the Bristol Bay watershed from large-scale metals mining. Pebble is situated near the headwaters of two of Bristol Bay's salmon-spawning rivers. Five Bristol Bay rivers collectively support the world's largest wild-sockeye salmon fishery. The Texas-based jewelry giant has 1,930 stores in the United States, Canada and Puerto Rico. Conservation group Earthworks and partners have now enlisted more than 30 jewelers to oppose Pebble development.



The Pebble Limited Partnership's Response? "Big Deal."

Canada's Northern Dynasty Minerals Ltd. and London-based Anglo American have formed the Pebble Partnership to work the Pebble prospect. John Shively, chief executive of the partnership, said Zale coming out against Pebble is nothing more than a meaningless publicity stunt. "It is pretty easy for a company to come out against buying gold that doesn't exist at this point," he said. "We are years away from construction. The people managing that company now will probably be gone. Big deal."

Truth About Pebble President vs. Bristol Bay Salmon in Seattle

A media fight broke out last fall, during the Fish Expo in Seattle, when the Truth About Pebble's President, Gail Phillips, called for a boycott of restaurants promoting Bristol Bay salmon. Here are a few excerpts from the flurry of stories published last November –

One of the Pebble Mine's most prominent supporters over the weekend called for a boycott of the restaurants taking part in Trout Unlimited's Savor Bristol Bay campaign. Gail Phillips, the president of Truth about Pebble, a group of mine supporters, sent out her appeal for a boycott via e-mail to her "family and friends" -- including the chefs -- following an Associated Press story featuring chef Kevin Davis at the Steelhead Diner and chef Seth Caswell at Emmer & Rye. [The Associated Press]



One of the chefs, who along with a dozen others, was featuring Bristol Bay salmon on his restaurant's menu, had this to say in response to Gail Phillips's call to boycott his business:

"Ms Phillips, do not think that because I am concerned for the responsible protection of the incredible oceanic resources of Bristol Bay that I do not see the value in building mines and extracting materials that can help better transform our lives in a myriad of ways. Hospital equipment, faster computers, and better communication technology not to mention the revenue to the state and improved infrastructure of Bristol Bay are just a few of the areas that can benefit from the addition of the natural resources that will be found in the proposed Pebble Mine. But just as you claim that I and fellow Seattle chefs are getting caught up in the wrong fight, I want to once again remind you that at this time, all we are asking is for our customers to please eat Alaskan salmon, especially those caught in Bristol Bay. The potential economic upsurge could have benefits that ultimately will sway the votes of the Alaskans who will decide in the coming years whether or not to permit the Pebble Mine. We are asking the restaurant diners of Seattle to cast their vote now, to vote with their forks. Please ask your friends and family to refrain from boycotting our restaurants. Who else is going to buy all of that great Alaskan fish?" [The Seattle PI]

Finally, food blogger Ronald Holden -- Seattle's Global Gourmet, put it even more succinctly:

"Seriously, Ms. Phillips, are you nuts?' Every single visitor and every single local knows Seattle is famous for salmon, Like it or leave it, salmon is at the heart of Seattle's restaurant economy."

Bristol Bay Fly Fishing & Guide Academy

The second annual *Bristol Bay Fly Fishing and Guide Academy* is now accepting applications for participation in the 2010 Academy. Young people ages 15-22 are invited to apply to spend August 9-13, on the Nushagak River near Ekwok with experienced Bristol Bay fishing guides learning how to fly fish and guide while gaining hands-on job experience.

Instructors will teach academy participants how to incorporate traditional knowledge into a guiding service, interact with clients, and what to expect as a Bristol Bay fishing guide.

This educational program provides young Bristol Bay entrepreneurs with instruction in the basics of fly fishing and sport fish guiding. Experienced professionals, including Ekwok leader Luki Akelkok (Alaska Native and Bristol Bay lodge owner), will share skills, tips and their passion for their work, giving motivated young people the chance to prepare for future careers based in their home communities. The program's purpose is to keep more benefits of Bristol Bay tourism in Bristol Bay, generating a more diverse, sustainable local economy while benefiting future visitors.



Other camp activities include safety training, river ecology and an introduction to operating a small tourism business. Opportunities exist for employment as a guide the following summer for those who successfully complete the academy. Priority placement in the academy will be given to applicants from the Bristol Bay region and a University of Alaska course credit will be offered to those who successfully complete the academy.

Applications are being accepted now through Tuesday, June 15. Please encourage a young person to apply. Contact Tim Troll at ttroll@tnc.org. Get updates on the website :www.BBFlyFishingAcademy.org.

Sportsmen Across the Country Learn about Pebble Mine

Sportsmen and women across the Lower 48 had a chance to hear the latest news from the Bristol Bay campaign again this winter. For the third consecutive season, the Sportsman's Alliance for Alaska (SAA) exhibited at consumer fishing, hunting, and outdoor shows - bringing the story of Bristol Bay to very receptive audiences. In 2010, SAA participated in 20 shows - ranging from 2-5 days each - in the following states: Texas, Colorado, California, Massachusetts, Nevada, New Jersey, Washington, Oregon, Arizona, Michigan, Utah, Minnesota, and Virginia. SAA received help from Trout Unlimited staff and some exceptional volunteers across the country to make these show appearances a big success. In several markets, we held special evening events



SAA Director Scott Hed and hunting television host Cameron Hanes at the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation convention.

to further raise awareness through showing the award-winning documentary *Red Gold*. Thousands of concerned anglers and hunters signed postcards to federal decision-makers (think Environmental Protection Agency, Army Corps of Engineers, etc.) that will be involved in the permitting process once that point arrives. Sportspeople have a connection to Alaska, either through personal experience or dreams of visiting someday, and they want to pitch in to defend Bristol Bay. We've got a growing army of supporters in the Lower 48, and we'll work to keep these people involved when opportunities arise for them to engage. Plans are already underway for the 2011 sport show season. -Scott Hed

Visit www.SportsmansAlliance4AK.org or email Scott@SportsmansAlliance4AK.org for more information or if you are interested in volunteering at any shows in 2011.

PLP breaks the law during exploration while State agencies reissue permits before assessing damage after winter break-up:

For a short time starting last January the state suspended short-term water and land use permits at the proposed mine site and levied a \$45,000 fine on the Pebble Limited Partnership. **Pebble broke the law by withdrawing water from lakes and streams outside areas where it is permitted.** The Department of Natural Resources says Pebble reported the unpermitted water withdrawals occurred at 45 sites over a three-year period.

The Alaska Department of Natural Resources reinstated land use permits for the Pebble Limited Partnership on April 23rd. In addition, the Partnership will need to follow Fish and game's direction for the reinstatement of Fish Habitat Permits before water withdrawals can resume. When the suspensions were announced, field operations at the Pebble Mine site were shut down for the winter. State agencies have not yet been able to return to the sites of the illegal water withdrawals to assess potential damage.

OUR PERSPECTIVE:

Pebble is credited with "self reporting" their violations. However, after 3 years of violating their permits, an ongoing lawsuit that uncovered these violations before PLP, and reported them to the agencies and court, is what spurred PLP to "self report."

Furthermore, the permits violated were issued by Alaska's Department of Natural Resources. **DNR previously claimed that its monthly inspections were some of the most rigorous DNR ever had undertaken for mineral exploration, yet its inspections with ADF&G and DEC personnel never discovered the water use violations.** DNR also claims that Alaska's large mine permitting process is comprehensive enough to protect Bristol Bay's watershed and fishery, but in reality, DNR is so overworked and understaffed that they cannot identify when preliminary permits issued three years ago are repeatedly violated. Tellingly, DNR also did not issue these permits until 2007, 18 years after exploration started. **ADF&G admits that fish screens were not required for many years of Pebble's exploration. DNR admits that no water permits were required for 18 years. That means that Pebble withdrew water with no oversight and no protections for fish and water resources for most of the exploration period.**

It is very disturbing that it has taken lawsuits to encourage DNR and ADF&G to carry out their responsibilities to protect the public's resources.

Pebble Mine: Double Trouble for Beluga Whales

Alaskans have been hearing a lot about beluga whales recently, but one thing you may not have heard is that Pebble Mine threatens two of the five populations of beluga whales in Alaska: in both Cook Inlet and Bristol Bay.

The Pebble Limited Partnership plans to construct a massive set of infrastructure in Iniskin Bay – including a marine terminal, roads, and pipelines. Iniskin Bay and the surrounding waters have been identified as part of habitat that is "critical" to the beluga whale by scientists with the National Marine Fisheries Service. It's one of the few places in lower Cook Inlet where the endangered population of belugas is commonly sighted. Industrial development in Iniskin Bay, including increased ship traffic through the lower Inlet generally, does not bode well for the endangered belugas there.

As for the Bristol Bay belugas – a healthier population of about 1,600 – Pebble Mine threatens them by threatening the salmon. Belugas rely on salmon for food. Beluga whales in Bristol Bay, just like the fishing communities, need the salmon runs threatened by Pebble Mine.



Over the years the Pebble Partnership has boasted about sharing their data openly and transparently with the public. However, they recently cancelled their Science Technical Working groups, which had been set up to share data before permitting. Here is the statement from DNR's website:

The Pebble Project Technical Working Groups (TWGs) were created to facilitate pre-application state and federal agency discussions with the project proponent, Pebble Limited Partnership (PLP). TWG meetings began in mid-2007 and covered a wide array of topics as see at <http://dnr.alaska.gov/mlw/mining/largemine/pebble/twg/twgsuspended.pdf>

This voluntary process regarding environmental and project design studies was suspended by PLP in January 2010; communications between the PLP and individual agencies then continued through conventional channels and procedures.

Additionally: it was reported that agency staff from various State and Federal agencies walked out of the last TWG meeting in frustration because Pebble refused to provide complete data sets or answer questions.

Bristol Bay: Inspiring the Arts

"Fishing in Bristol Bay: Three Histories, One Threat"

Beyond salmon or gold, the waters of Bristol Bay contain the vast riches of history through three different, but overlapping, cultures of fishing. In his upcoming article, "Fishing in Bristol Bay: Three Histories, One Threat," Dr. Samuel Snyder details the history of subsistence, commercial, and sport fishing in the region, while highlighting the importance of culture and history for protecting the vast and vibrant salmon ecosystems of Bristol Bay.

"for at least 9,000 years, the region's life-giving renewable resources have supported indigenous Yup'ik, Alutiiq, and Dena'ina people, whose cultural identities significantly revolve around the annual migrations of salmon."

"...there is a common culture and shared identity among Bristol Bay fishermen, who understand what it takes to fish commercially and to fish one of the most intense fisheries with extreme tides, extreme weather, and rapid pulses of salmon."

"sport fishing in Bristol Bay provides a young, but vital component of the history of fishing in Bristol Bay. If fly fishers before and after Norman Maclean have equated the sport with religion, then Bristol Bay is high holy ground for religious pilgrimage."

Look for Dr. Snyder's article in the American Fly Fisher, Summer 2010.

Clean Water, Clean Minds



The Renewable Resources Coalition recently sponsored an art show titled "Clean Water, Clean Minds" featuring Bristol Bay artists Tricia Ward, Apayo Moore, Everett Thompson, Gary Hadfield and many more. To learn more about the show and the artists contact Melissa at (907) 743-1900 Melissa@RenewableResourcesCoalition.org



Tim Troll's painting is part of the exhibit *Sailing for Salmon: 125 Years of Commercial Fishing in Bristol Bay* on display this summer at the Pratt Museum in Homer. To celebrate the exhibit the Pratt museum is restoring a Bristol Bay Double-ended sailing gillnetter.

The exhibit will open on Friday May 21 with a reception featuring Tim Troll and historian John Branson

Seasons of Subsistence



Seasons of Subsistence is a documentary photography project that explores the unique subsistence culture of Bristol Bay Native People in Alaska. By following several families and communities in Bristol Bay, photographer Nick Hall, is creating an audio-visual archive that examines a way of life and a group of people who remain intimately bound to the seasonal flux of natural resources.

Hall has completed projects on a summer putting up fish at Lewis Point, and the winter hunting and trapping activities in New Stuyahok. In the coming seasons look for more stories at seasonsofsubsistence.com.

Deadliest Catch's Sig Hansen Continues to Speak Out on Pebble



In a recent interview with Trout magazine, Sig Hansen, star of the Discovery Channel hit Deadliest Catch and captain of the Northwestern crab boat, shared his reasons for opposing Pebble Mine. Here is an excerpt from the interview:

You've become involved in the anti-Pebble Mine effort.

Why do you as a fisherman oppose the Pebble Mine?

It's just common sense for me, because of the fact that it is Bristol Bay. And so it's very dear to my heart. I just don't feel that taking that risk is worth it.

You're very busy, so why did you take the time to become active in the cause and what have you done so far?

As far as being active, I just feel like, because of the show Deadliest Catch, we've got a lot of notoriety and we're proud of that. The fact that you can walk down a street and people recognize you as a fisherman—that never happened before. There's a lot of ways to use that, and I just feel like this can bring a little more awareness to what's going on up there. With the mine and the proximity and how close it is to such a delicate river system, what better person to reach out to people and speak partly for the fishermen?

How did you find out about the Pebble Mine?

Well, we've been up in the Bay and we've seen the [anti-Pebble] stickers all over the place. The fishermen that we talk to, when they deliver their salmon, it's not uncommon that that conversation comes up when you're up there.

Would you say most fishermen are of the same mind?

Oh, absolutely. And there's a balance there that we want to keep intact.

Like I said, I just hope that our notoriety can help in some way. We've already had some flack mail because they talk about the jobs that can be gained and the monies that can be gained for the state of Alaska through [the mine] and we understand that. But then again, you're talking about thousands of other jobs that could be lost, a fishing industry that has been there for a long time. I just don't see how one can outweigh the other. To me, as a fisherman, it's ludicrous.

The proposed Pebble Mine issue is in the media constantly. Stay tuned for coverage in National Geographic Magazine and Frontline television coming soon.

Koktuli River Nominated as Outstanding National Resource Water

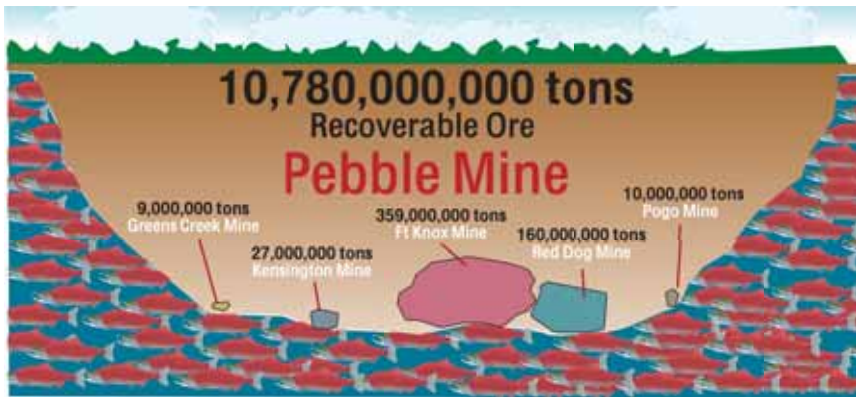
Located just north of Lake Iliamna, the Koktuli River meanders through a beautiful area of tundra, rolling hills, small lakes and ponds. The Koktuli may be small in stature but it connects to larger systems, serving as a headwater source of clean water and critical spawning habitat for the world's most productive wild salmon fishery.

The river's remote nature, pure water and high-quality habitat is an important contributor to the enormous salmon runs that return to Bristol Bay every year and is also an important source of food, culture, recreation and income for many Alaskans. In February area-based businesses, conservation groups, tribes, village corporations and commercial fishermen, asked DEC to designate the Koktuli as an Outstanding National Resource Water (ONRW), a ranking under the Clean Water Act that gives a river's water the highest possible level of protection. By designating a river or stream as an ONRW, an agency is saying no new or increased pollution discharges can occur withi



The Koktuli deserves such status because it is one of Alaska's most threatened waterways. The river lies adjacent to the Pebble copper and gold deposit that developers want to turn into a gigantic sulfide mine. DEC recently rejected our nomination, arguing in essence that the agency cannot grant the Koktuli the highest-level protection until miners apply for a permit to pollute it. Our question to DEC is: **Why wait to conserve a natural resource until it is facing an imminent threat?** Refusing to safeguard the Koktuli's pristine and vitally important water quality because no one has petitioned to pollute it yet is the exactly the kind of response that calls into question the ability of state agencies to protect renewable resources in Bristol Bay.

Clearly in the case of the Koktuli, the DEC blew it. Large-scale metal mines have a documented history of polluting nearby rivers, lakes and groundwater. And when you're talking about the headwaters of Alaska's greatest salmon runs, the margin for error is narrower than in other locations. Besides, the problems at Pebble have already begun. In February, the same month the groups asked for ONRW status for the Koktuli, the state fined the Pebble Partnership \$45,000 for illegally drilling and taking water from outside the boundaries of its exploration permits. Some of these illegal sites lay along the Koktuli. ONRW protection for the Koktuli is the conservative, common-sense approach for this crucial headwater river. We urge ADEC to initiate a process now that will allow it protect the Koktuli before it's too late.



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



www.nunamta.org



www.earthworksaction.org



www.nrdc.org



www.renewableresourcescoalition.org



www.sportsmansalliance4ak.org



www.tu.org



TRUSTEES FOR ALASKA
SUSTAIN | PROTECT | REPRESENT
www.trustees.org

Pebble Mine is Bad Business

Since late 2009, the Renewable Resources Coalition has made a concerted effort to reach out to the Alaska business



community. In collaboration with Bob Gillam, RRC is striving to educate Alaska businesses about the importance of the Bristol Bay fishery as an integral business and economic resource for the state. Drawing on his long history in business management, Bob Gillam is an effective communicator to the Alaskan economic sector. Our outreach activities have included presentations to Rotary Clubs, Chambers of Commerce, and various business organizations throughout the state.

RRC plans to continue these efforts throughout 2010 and beyond. In doing so, RRC seeks to maintain its outreach efforts across the state and is excited to be hosting the Second Annual Wild Salmon Day at the Alaska State Fair on August 29, 2010. We hope to see you there.