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BAY

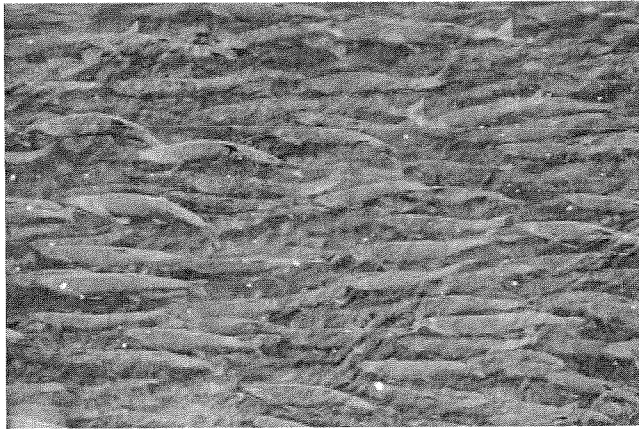


**Alaska
Conservation
Foundation**

Bristol Bay

Alaska's Bristol Bay watershed—lifeblood of the world's largest wild sockeye salmon runs—is threatened by plans for a gigantic open-pit gold mine.

Alaska's Bristol Bay can be defined by one thing: SALMON. Over a half-million square miles of rivers and streams sustain the largest remaining wild salmon populations and habitat on Earth. Millions of sockeye, Chinook, chum, coho and pink salmon return from the sea to their spawning grounds in the pristine waters of Bristol Bay each year.



Spawning sockeye at Katmai National Park. Photo by Ben Knight.

In return, these salmon nourish a wild, largely unspoiled ecosystem and support a sustainable human economy. Commercial fishing boats jostle for the best position to set their nets, while anglers travel from around the world for a chance to catch salmon and trout at remote lodges. The region's Native peoples, still living their traditional ways, fill their freezers and smokehouses with fish for the coming year.

Bristol Bay teems with wildlife. Huge brown bears prowl the streams eager to fuel their bodies on salmon. And on land the Mulchatna Caribou Herd—one of the largest in Alaska at 120,000 animals—roams across the tundra. Moose, wolves, black bears, waterfowl, raptors and other migratory birds create a rich diversity.

This is a region where humans have treaded lightly and live in balance with nature. But, life in Bristol Bay may be altered forever—a plan to develop a massive open-pit gold and copper mine at the headwaters of Bristol Bay is underway. Additionally, offshore in Bristol Bay's rich marine waters, the drive to drill for oil and gas resources continues after more than 30 years.

The Threat: Pebble Mine



Exploration continues in Bristol Bay. Photo courtesy of Erin McKittrick.

The Pebble Mine threatens Alaska wild salmon and the health of the entire ecosystem that depends on them. If developed, it will be the largest open-pit mine in North America!

To extract billions of tons of raw ore from the mine, an enormous hole would be gorged in the ground—more than 2 miles across and 2,000 feet deep. The billions of tons of mine waste would be dumped into man-made lakes, created by flooding 10 square miles of land behind earthen dams more than 600 feet high. Sulfur and other chemicals would be impounded in these lakes—located in an **active earthquake zone**. And to keep things running smoothly 35 billion gallons of water would be drawn from local streams and rivers each year.

Sustaining a Healthy Bristol Bay - a Diverse Coalition Fights Back

The grave threat posed by the Pebble Mine has united a diverse coalition. Commercial fisherman, sport anglers, Native subsistence fishermen, lodge owners, fishing guides, local businesses and environmental groups have joined together because of their shared interest in protecting this extraordinary region. The coalition is working to prevent permitting of the mine by state and federal agencies, demonstrate that the project is simply too costly for investors and secure the permanent protection of Bristol Bay.

Alaska Conservation Foundation's (ACF) Bristol Bay Protection Campaign is instrumental to this effort. ACF helps coordinate the campaign's activities and provides funding for scientific research, legal support and public outreach. The campaign includes commercial fisherman, sportsmen, lodge owners and Alaska Native villages and organizations working diligently to stop the mine.

You Can Help!

By [donating](#) to ACF, you help support these efforts to protect Bristol Bay from the certain ruin that would be inflicted by the Pebble Mine.

Your \$ at Work

ACF serves as fiscal sponsor of the Bristol Bay Protection Campaign to fund the scientific research, legal support and public outreach necessary to protect the Bristol Bay watershed and the communities that rely on it remaining healthy.

See the list of grants awarded with your help!

- [FY2011](#)
- [FY2010](#)

Updates from the Field

[Read](#) about more challenges and successes in Bristol Bay now.

The Alaska Conservation Foundation protects Alaska's natural environment and the diverse cultures and ways of life it sustains. We do this by promoting conservation philanthropy and by strategically directing resources to conservation leaders, organizations and initiatives.

ACF is a charity you can count on!

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