

Anglers Unite Against Pebble Mine!

“The proposed Pebble Mine would develop a low-grade, sulfuric-acid-generating, gold-copper-molybdenum sulfide deposit using open-pit and other methods.”



Russell Bassett, Association of Northwest Steelheaders

Bristol Bay Sport Fishery

- 100 year history
- Over 13,000 annual anglers
- Thousands of jobs, including many from the Pacific Northwest
- \$160 million to economy

If built, Pebble Mine will:

- Generate up to 10 billion tons of toxic mine waste that would be held behind massive earthen dams located in an unstable seismic zone prone to earthquakes.
- Require development of a 100-mile road into wilderness, and construction of a major new fossil-fuel power plant big enough to supply the city of Anchorage.
- Require nearly 35 billion gallons of water a year, critically reducing flow to multiple salmon rivers.

According to the Environmental Protection Agency, the hard-rock mining industry is the single largest source of toxic waste in the country. History has shown that these mines often have devastating impacts on community health and fish populations. The toxic by-products which are an inevitable result of open-pit mines like the proposed Pebble Mine puts millions of salmon at great risk, as they are sensitive to even the slightest increases in certain metals like copper.

There is a good example in Oregon of the devastating effects these mines have on watersheds and fish runs. The 76-acre Formosa Mine Superfund Site in the South Umpqua drainage was originally mined for copper and zinc from 1910-1937. The mine was reopened in 1989, and when mining operations ceased in 1993, the mine was filled with mill tailings, crushed ore and limestone. In 1997, the acid mine drainage control system failed and toxic drainage was released into the South Fork of Middle Creek and other points downstream. Eighteen miles of fish habitat downstream from the mine was severely degraded, and the

Bristol Bay, Alaska is home to one of the earth’s most prolific fisheries. Up to forty million sockeye salmon return to Bristol Bay each year, making it the world’s largest run. In addition to sockeye, there are stunning runs of king salmon (the largest runs in Alaska) and trophy rainbow trout, along with several other fish species.

I have yet to travel to Bristol Bay, or anywhere in Alaska for that matter, due to budget constraints, but I’m constantly dreaming about it. Let’s face it, Alaska is the Holy Grail of fishing. All that wilderness, all those fish. It’s a salmonid fisherman’s paradise. For several years now I have been saving for that dream trip to “the last frontier,” and I want to ensure that dream is not marred by corporate greed. Not now and not ever.

Large-scale mineral development like the Pebble Mine that is proposed to be placed in the headwaters of Bristol

Bay’s best wild-salmon rivers, would likely change this place forever. Canadian mining corporation Northern Dynasty Minerals and Anglo American want to develop what would be the largest open-pit gold-copper mine in North America in the headwaters of two of the most critical wild-salmon-producing drainages in the world, the Nushagak and Kvichak.

The proposed Pebble Mine would develop a low-grade, sulfuric-acid-generating, gold-copper-molybdenum sulfide deposit using open-pit and other methods. At the same time, the Bureau of Land Management wants to open a million adjacent acres to hard-rock mining in this pristine watershed, coursed by rivers, streams, creeks, rivulets and lakes. The proposed Pebble Mine and Bristol Bay Mining District may pose the greatest single threat facing Alaska’s salmon-bearing rivers and the communities and fisheries that depend upon them.

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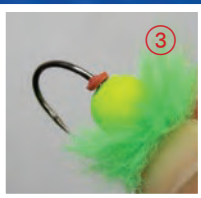
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The fisheries of Bristol Bay generate \$450 million for Alaska's economy each year, and sport fishing is responsible for more than \$160 million of that figure.

documented fishery that had thrived prior to this time was destroyed. Tax payers are the ones who are footing the bill to clean up the Formosa Mine, which is only a very small fraction of the size of the 54.5-square-mile proposed Pebble Mine.

The Association of Northwest Steelheaders recently joined the campaign to stop the Pebble Mine, not only because it's vitally important to protect American's great wild fisheries, but also because of its importance to the economy.

The fisheries of Bristol Bay generate \$450 million for Alaska's economy each year, and sport fishing is responsible for more than \$160 million of that figure. The Bristol Bay commercial fishery, which is a wild, sustainable fishery, is the most valuable in the world, accounting for 52 percent of all private-sector jobs in the region. Bristol Bay is also important to the Pacific Northwest economy, as thousands of both commercial and recreational Pacific Northwest fishermen, and the businesses that depend on them, make part of their livelihood from the region. Many guides from Oregon and Washington spend several months of the year guiding in Bristol Bay. The region is especially important to young guides trying to break into a very tough business here in the Pacific Northwest, as their time in Alaska allows them to be able to afford the lean times here.

Steelheaders Co-Government Affairs Director Ty Wyatt has spent 14 of the last 15 years in Bristol Bay, six of which were as a professional guide.

"I go to Bristol Bay because I love to fish," Wyatt said. "The most amazing thing about Bristol Bay is its diversity. Each area is unique and totally different, from the fish populations, to the climate and vegetation. It's 500 square miles, and from one end to the other it's completely different.



The costs of not protecting this fishery are way too great, and damage done to watersheds are very, very difficult to reverse.

Why would anyone think it's acceptable to build the Pebble Mine? How can we accept a short-term gain of \$500 billion that is not sustainable and sacrifice a \$400-million-a-year fishery that we would never get back? If we destroy it, we won't get it back. It'll be gone forever."

Steelheaders do not want to see this thriving fishery become another Columbia River scenario with commercial, tribal and recreational fisheries fighting over a small allocation of Endangered Species Act impacts, the vast majority of which are hatchery fish. Wild, sustainable fisheries like those of Bristol Bay **MUST** be protected! The costs of not protecting this fishery are way too great, and damage done to watersheds are very, very difficult to reverse, as evidenced by the billions of dollars spent on salmon recovery in the Pacific Northwest.

The EPA has the authority to protect America's natural resources, jobs and the regional economy of the Bristol Bay area. The Northwest Steelheaders urge you to support EPA's Watershed Assessment of Bristol Bay so decision-makers will have the science to make informed decisions. Please contact your federal representatives and tell them that Bristol Bay is too important to Alaska and the Pacific Northwest to allow the Pebble Mine to be built.



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