

# SOUTHWEST ALASKA AND PEBBLE MINE: THE STORY OF A NOT-SO-GOLDEN FUTURE

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## Introduction

Today the approach of Pebble Mine, North America's largest proposed gold, second largest proposed copper, and multi-billion pound molybdenum mine, threatens to disrupt southwest Alaska. With a \$300 billion value, the case is strong, but there is mounting evidence that Pebble should not be allowed to mine. Essentially, Pebble is too much of a risk as it will adversely effect watersheds, endanger salmon, and jeopardize a subsistence lifestyle. An active solution to stop Pebble stems from local Native Alaskans influencing Alaska Governor Sarah Palin to support anti-Pebble legislation.



Spawning sockeye salmon in southwest Alaska's Kvichak River (Photo courtesy of Ben Knight).

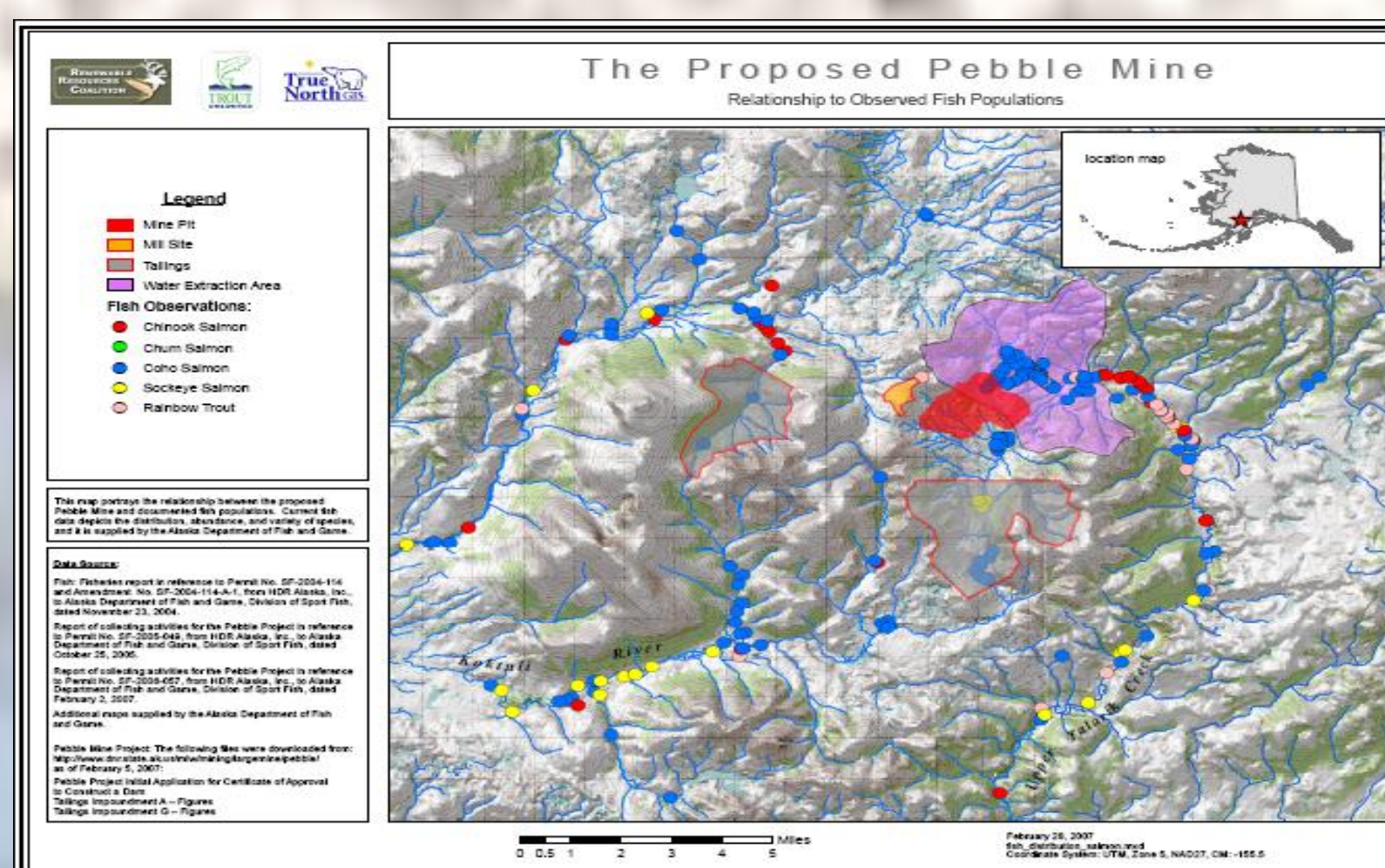
## Pebble's Risk: Water, Salmon, and Subsistence

**Water:** In order to fill tailing's pond necessary to contain contaminated waste, Pebble plans to dewater three rivers, covering 18,000 acres in 28 square miles across the region.

**Salmon:** Twenty-four streams in this dewatered region have been documented to support up to 552,000 spawning salmon. Specifically, habitat will be lost as average river flows will be reduced. As a result, not as much organic, life sustaining material will be carried.

**Subsistence:** An average of 152,778 subsistence salmon are caught each year in Bristol Bay, equating to around 315 pounds per person. Residents dry, smoke, freeze, can, salt, pickle, ferment, and eat salmon fresh.

## Affected Water and Fish in Pebble's Footprint Zone



Map courtesy of Renewable Resource Coalition

## Science on Pebble

"One dilemma for the public is that mining companies, NDM included, routinely claim that they can operate a modern metal mine without environmental impacts. *This is simply false.* It is inevitable that an operation of this magnitude will have some negative impacts... I have never seen a comparable metal mine operated, long-term, that has not produced such negative impacts." (Robert Moran, Ph. D. Geology).

## Southwest Alaska's Treasure: Commercial Fishing

**Sockeye Salmon:** Bristol Bay is home to the largest commercial harvest of sockeye salmon in the world. Long term data shows annually about 16.5 million fish are harvested. Four other types of Pacific salmon are harvested: Chinook, chum, pink, and coho. Most importantly, recent information shows an improving fishery, estimated to be worth \$450 million a year.

Commercial Salmon Harvest in Bristol Bay 1959-2003

Sub-species	sockeye	Chinook	chum	pink	coho
Average Salmon Catch	16.5 million	100,000 thousand	900,000 thousand	500,000 thousand	100,000 thousand

Table 2: Average historical commercial salmon catch in Bristol Bay

Sockeye and Total Salmon Harvest in Selected Years

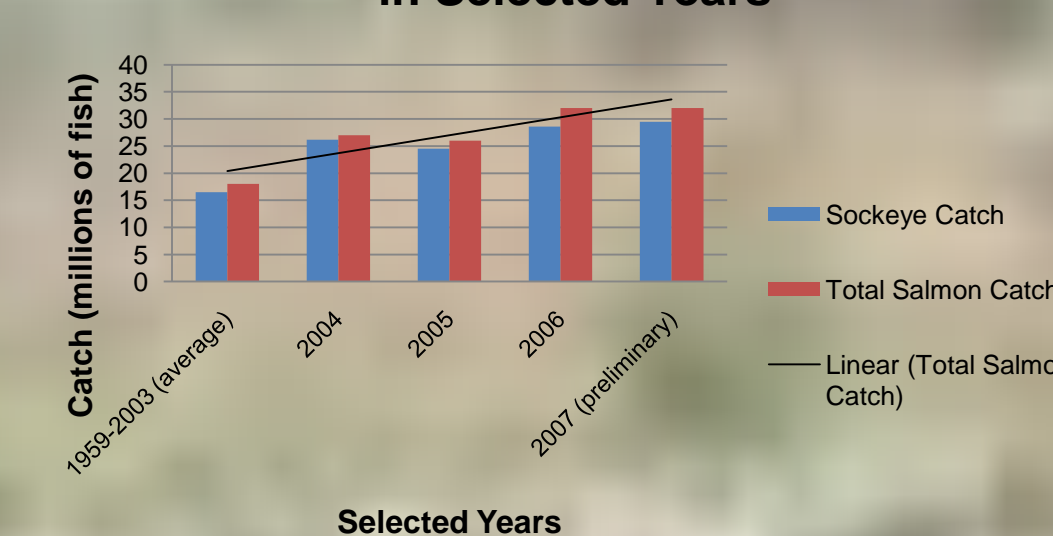
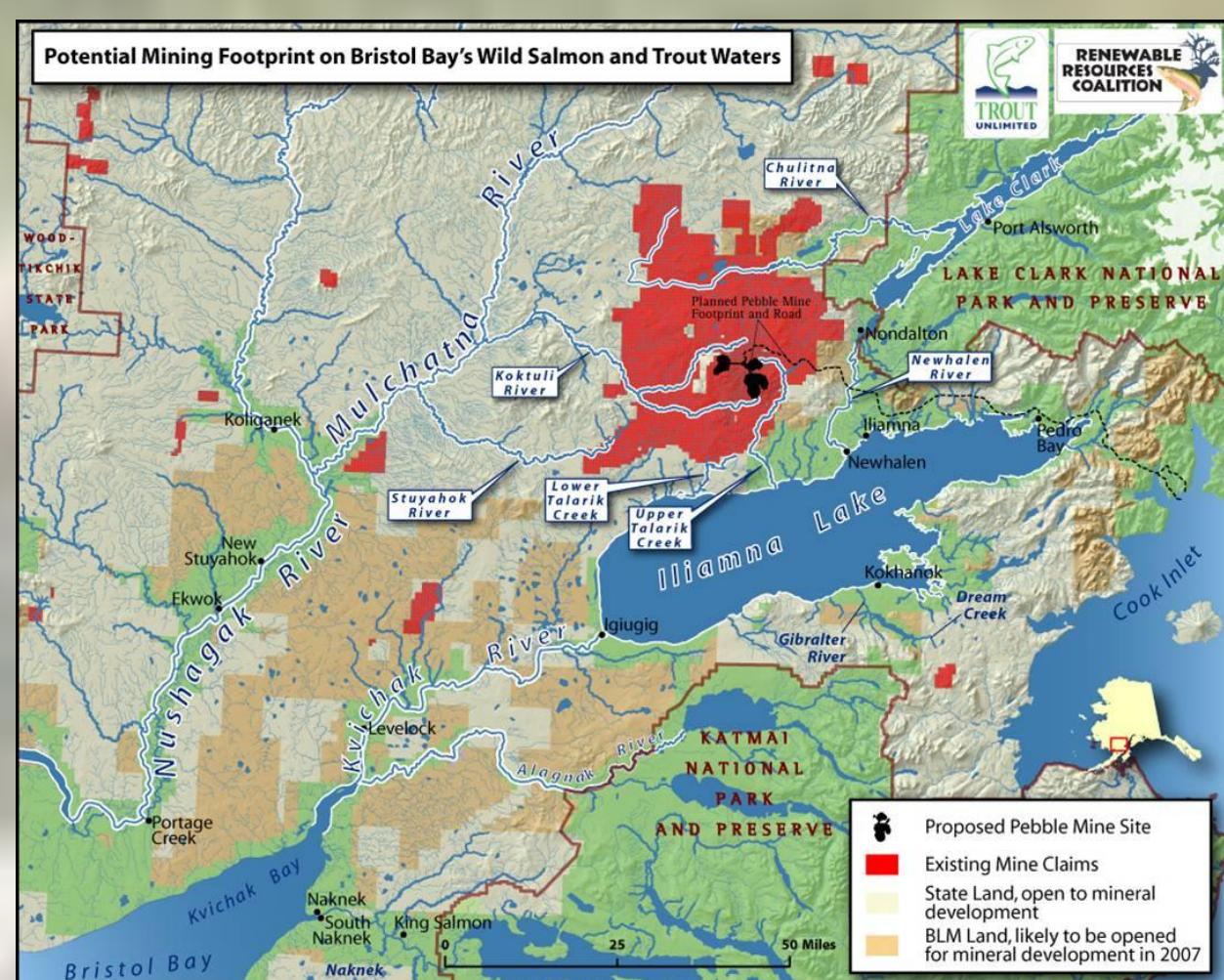


Figure 1: Recent trends in commercial salmon catch

## Location of Pebble Mine



Map courtesy of Alaska Department of Natural Resources, Division of Mining, Land & Water



Map courtesy of Renewable Resource Coalition

## Southwest Alaska Ecology

Southwest Alaska's rich ecosystem is home to grizzly and black bear, wolverine, wolf, fox, lynx, moose, caribou, beaver, salmon, trout, osprey, eagle, and people – all in peril at the hands of a multi-national company's need for precious metals.



Bird's eye view of a grizzly bear fishing – at 20 feet (Photo courtesy of Ben Knight).

## Pebble's Owners

Pebble Mine is owned by two multi-national companies, Northern Dynasty Minerals [NDM] (Canada) and Anglo American (UK). Both are marked with unsuccessful track records. Still, they claim impressive amounts of metals - \$300 billion, especially molybdenum, gold, and copper found in two projects, West and East, on the mine site.

## Precious Metals Contained in Pebble Mine

Pebble Mine Project	Molybdenum (billions of pounds)	Gold (millions of ounces)	Copper (billions of pounds)
Pebble West	1.35	42.1	24.7
Pebble East	2.7	39.6	42.6

Table 1: Pebble Mine's molybdenum, gold, and copper reserves

## Native Resistance at the Mercy of Governor Palin

**Caretakers of the Land:** Thirteen Alaskan Native Groups throughout Bristol Bay have joined forces trying to stop Pebble. Ultimately, the group's actions rest on influencing Alaskan Governor Sarah Palin to support three key pieces of Alaska Legislation: The Bristol Bay Fisheries Reserve, the Jay Hammond Sate Game Refuge, and the Alaska Clean Water Initiative. This legislation and subsequent law will protect southwest Alaska from mining for generations to come.



Where is the future of Bristol Bay? (Photo courtesy of Bristol Bay Alliance).