The Pebble mineral deposit lies at the headwaters of the Nushagak and Kvichak river systems. These rivers support the world's most prolific sockeye salmon runs, which residents of the region have relied on for thousands of years for subsistence, and for the last 130+ years as part of a 1.5 billion dollar commercial fishery.

Bristol Bay Native Corporation (BBNC), along with nine Bristol Bay federally-recognized tribes, Bristol Bay Native Association, other tribal organizations, and many groups and individuals petitioned the United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) in 2010 to initiate action under Section 404(c) of the Clean Water Act to protect fisheries and waters from large-scale hard rock mining of the Pebble deposit. EPA spent the following three years assembling all available information regarding the watersheds and the potential impacts of large-scale mining.

In January 2014, EPA issued the final Bristol Bay Watershed Assessment which confirmed what residents of the region already know: the streams, rivers, wetlands, lakes, and other waters near the Pebble deposit and the salmon fisheries these waters support, are unique and valuable resources — resources that would be at risk if the Pebble deposit were to be mined. The assessment concluded that development of the Pebble deposit could destroy up to 151 km (94 miles) of streams, eliminate up to 18 km² (4,900 acres) of wetlands, and require the construction of up to three waste impoundments that cover an additional 50 km² (12,355 acres). In more general terms, the assessment concluded that mining the Pebble deposit would pose an enormous threat to the region’s salmon fisheries and the people and communities that rely on those fisheries.

Protecting the World’s Largest Sockeye Salmon Fishery and 20,000 Sustainable Jobs Nationwide

EPA’s Proposed Determination Brings Economic and Cultural Certainty to Our Region
Following consultation with the Army Corps, Pebble Limited Partnership, and the State of Alaska, in July of 2014 EPA announced proposed restrictions that are protective of the region’s incredible salmon resource. EPA held then held a 60-day comment period on its Proposed Determination and seven public hearings throughout Alaska, receiving more than 670,000 comments, 99% of which supported the Proposed Determination. EPA’s proposed restrictions did not veto mining or the Pebble project and has not prevented the company from initiating the permitting process.

The people of the Bristol Bay region have endured the uncertainty of Pebble mine’s potential development for more than a decade. Since 2004, the company has claimed the permitting process is eminent but has never submitted a permit application. In 2017, the company has repeated its promise to initiate permitting this year. The EPA should keep the Proposed Determination in place as the Pebble Mine enters permitting. Keeping the Proposed Determination in place to help inform the permitting process will maintain the EPA’s important role in protecting this world class salmon fishery and economic powerhouse.

For the good of the Bristol Bay region, the EPA should keep the Proposed Determination in place help to inform the permitting process and ensure protection of the region’s incredible salmon resource.

EPA’s Proposed Determination includes these restrictions:

Discharges from the Pebble deposit within the disposal site are prohibited if they will eliminate:

- More than 5 miles of streams documented as anadromous;
- More than 19 miles of streams not documented as anadromous;
- More than 1,100 acres of wetlands, lakes or ponds;

Discharges are also prohibited if they will alter stream flows by more than 20% in more than 9 miles of streams documented as anadromous.

FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT:

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