To: Dunbar, Bill[dunbar.bill@epa.gov]
From: Tim Bristol, Trout Unlimited
Sent: Thur 10/17/2013 5:06:30 PM
Subject: Bristol Bay in the News October 17, 2013

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Bristol Bay in the News: October 17, 2013

The fallout from the Anglo American's recent decision to leave the Pebble Mine continues to reverberate across Alaska and the lower 48. While the news was welcome to opponents of the mine, several opinion and news pieces touched on the fact that the threat from the Pebble Mine - and the fight to prevent it - still very much exists.

From the Seattle Times: "The mine is a bad idea, but a financial setback for the proposal does not mean the threat has gone away."

From Bloomberg's James Greiff: "The Clean Water Act is the main tool at the EPA's disposal that might put a permanent kibosh on the mine."

And in Daily Finance, Matt DiLallo says: "What is clear is that any company that wants to take over the project would do well to have a stellar environmental record (which in the mining industry is hard to come by). Even then, such as company should expect to have to fight an entrenched opposition that has already pushed out one major player, and isn't likely to fold up its tents anytime soon."

They're right – Anglo American's departure is a setback for the proposed Pebble Mine, but it's far from the end of the project. Northern Dynasty Minerals, which will soon be the sole investor in the Pebble Limited Partnership (PLP), has signaled it intends to seek investors in the project and will move forward with permitting. Absent of finding another investor, Rio Tinto could play a major role in the future of the Pebble project by simply divesting its share of Northern Dynasty Minerals, as NRDC's Joel Reynolds notes.

While PLP has moved forward without Anglo American, the changes have hit Pebble's staff and consultants – both in Bristol Bay and Washington, DC. News recently broke that PLP has laid off workers near the proposed mine site, as well as

Washington consultants.

Carey Restino summed up the implications in a Bristol Bay Times op ed: "That's the reality of investors like this — their commitment is only as good as their profits are solid. This is all about money and nothing else, no matter how nice the folks may be who work there. And if the bottom line doesn't pan out, change — swift, abrupt change — results."

Back in Washington, even during a government shutdown, the Pebble Mine was once again the subject of a Congressional hearing. Despite the fact that the EPA was unable to provide a witness since 94% of its staff was furloughed, the Subcommittee on Energy and Mineral Resources on the House Natural Resources Committee decided to take a look at EPA's supposed "assault on mining jobs." As Norman Van Vactor, CEP of the Bristol Bay Economic Development Corporation, said in his testimony: "EPA's involvement in Bristol Bay offers the opportunity for a science-based, common-sense solution to the threat posed by the proposed Pebble Mine."

In closing, McClatchy ran a lengthy profile on the issues surrounding the Pebble Mine, which concluded with a quote from Colorado School of Mines professor Ron Cohen. "Here you are going to build a very large mining operation between two major tributaries that run right down to probably the finest, best-managed fishery in the world," he said. "This is one of the last locations I would consider mining."

I couldn't have said it better myself. You can find recent stories on Bristol Bay in the articles below.

For more information, visit savebristolbay.org

Tim Bristol

Trout Unlimited Alaska Director

In Pebble Mine project, Alaskan villages see perils, promise

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By Sean Cockerham
McClatchy DC Bureau
September 29, 2013

But Ron Cohen, an associate professor at the Colorado School of Mines, said that potential came with significant risk.

"Here you are going to build a very large mining operation between two major tributaries that run right down to probably the finest, best-managed fishery in the world," he said. "This is one of the last locations I would consider mining."… Click here to read more.

Editorial: Vigilance required at Alaska's Bristol Bay

A major partner in the proposed Pebble mine project in Alaska has withdrawn, but do not assume the giant mine is dead or Bristol Bay is safe.
The Seattle Times
September 24, 2013

OPPONENTS of a massive gold, copper and molybdenum mining operation proposed for the headwaters of Alaska's salmon-rich Bristol Bay are not letting their guard down.

The announcement earlier this month that London-based Anglo American would end its partnership with Canada's Northern Dynasty Minerals to develop the Pebble mine was well-received by critics, but no one assumes the fight is over.

Everything about the Pebble mine is huge — the potential mineral recovery, the scale of the project and the potential for disaster in one of the world's most vibrant fisheries… Click here to read more.

Alaska's Zombie Gold Mine to Nowhere

By James Greiff
Bloomberg
October 1, 2013

What's the way forward for Pebble Mine? Here's something to think about: Say Northern Dynasty hooks up with a Chinese company, loaded with cash and less concerned with the reputational niceties that colored the thinking of Anglo American and Mitsubishi? The minerals under the rivers that feed Bristol Bay aren't going away and a mining project that seems unappealing today might look much more attractive when commodities prices rise again, as they inevitably will.

So that leaves the matter in the hands of the EPA, which has come under attack by conservative politicians who say the agency has acted as a surrogate for the mine's opponents. The Clean Water Act is the main tool at the EPA's disposal that might

put a permanent kibosh on the mine. The law is serious stuff, but does anyone think it wouldn't result in a legal challenge? Don't imagine that this fight is over… Click here for full article.

Pebble Mine: A $300 Billion Precious Metal Motherlode Nobody Wants to Dig Up

By Matthew DiLallo
Daily Finance
October 2, 2013

Far removed from the hustle and bustle of modern society lies one of America's most hotly contested mining projects. The proposed Pebble Mine in the Bristol Bay region of Southwest Alaska is thought to hold more than $300 billion in precious metal deposits including copper, gold and molybdenum. That's huge: An operational mine there would boost overall U.S. copper production by 20 percent.

The problem is that those riches are located right at the headwaters of the rivers flowing into the world's most productive salmon fishery… Click here to read more.

OPINION: Pebble fallout sheds light on tenuous nature of resource development

By Carey Restino
The Bristol Bay Times
October 11, 2013

This week, the pink slips started flying for Pebble Partnership employees. Anyone following the developments at the proposed Pebble Mine, where the major backer recently pulled out, expected downsizing would follow. Anglo American has invested more than $500 million in the project since it came on board, and its financial backing was the driving engine of the controversial effort. Without that money behind them, the remaining Pebble partners will need to seriously regroup, if that. Click here to read more.

Rio Tinto's Opportunity: Leave the Pebble Mine

By Joel Reynolds
The Huffington Post
September 24, 2013

But Rio Tinto's continuing participation in a project that threatens certain destruction to one of the best examples of a sustainable ecosystem anywhere in the world today -- a project overwhelming opposed by the people who live in the region -- can't be reconciled with its verbal commitment to sustainability. And it can't be tolerated.

We urge Rio Tinto to re-examine its financial participation in the Pebble Mine. Surely, its resources can be used more sustainably and more productively elsewhere, in projects more likely to generate an economic return. Because if the region's residents and the Bristol Bay fishing industry have anything to say about it -- supported for as long as it takes by NRDC -- the Pebble Mine will never see the light of day… Click here to read more.

Without monied partner, Pebble cuts staff, ends contracts

By Lisa Demer
Anchorage Daily News
October 7, 2013

Just three weeks after mining giant Anglo American abruptly announced it was pulling out of the proposed Pebble gold and copper mine, the Pebble Partnership said it is laying off numerous staff members and suspending contracts… click here to read more.

Pebble may cut Washington consultants

By Manuel Quiñones
E&E News
October 4, 2013

Pebble LP, the company hoping to develop a large copper and gold mine in southwestern Alaska, may reduce its use of Washington, D.C.-based consultants, a spokesman said last night… Click here to read more

(subscription required).

Shutdown tensions seep into mining hearing

By Laura Barron-Lopez
The Hill
October 10, 2013

House Democrats on Thursday blasted Republicans for the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) absence during a hearing called by the GOP to review the agency's "questionable" actions against American mining jobs.

The Energy and Mineral Resources hearing — which was held to examine the EPA's watershed assessment of the proposed gold and copper mine in Alaska's Bristol Bay and the federal raid of gold miners in Chicken, Alaska — quickly became embroiled in government politics… Click here to read more.

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