

WCC-2016-Res-054-EN

Protecting the world's greatest salmon fishery in Bristol Bay, Alaska from large-scale mining

RECALLING the numerous Resolutions and Recommendations regarding both mining and indigenous peoples that have been adopted by IUCN General Assemblies and World Conservation Congresses;

CONSIDERING that the Bristol Bay watershed is an unparalleled ecological and economic resource of global significance, supporting the world's largest salmon fishery, sport and subsistence fishing and hunting, and tourism;

RECOGNISING that the Bristol Bay watershed has sustained indigenous peoples in Alaska for millennia;

NOTING that the Bristol Bay watershed provides habitat for more than 29 fish, 40 mammal, and 190 bird species;

AWARE that the Bristol Bay watershed also contains low-grade mineral deposits, including the proposed Pebble Mine;

ALARMED that, if developed as proposed, the Pebble Mine would be the largest gold and copper mine in North America, producing over 10 billion tons of mining waste;

TROUBLED that as little as a two to eight parts per billion ($2-8 \times 10^{-9}$) increase in copper above background levels can be toxic to salmon;

DISMAYED that plans for the Pebble Mine require the construction of a port in critical habitat for Cook Inlet beluga whales (*Delphinapterus leucas*), which are designated as Critically Endangered on the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species;

COMMENDING the United States Environmental Protection Agency for conducting a scientific assessment which concluded that large-scale mining of the Pebble deposit would result in "significant" and even "catastrophic" effects;

HIGHLIGHTING the overwhelming opposition to the Pebble Mine, including 85% of commercial fishermen, 81% of indigenous peoples, and 80% of residents in Bristol Bay;

CONCERNED that the construction of infrastructure necessary to build the Pebble Mine will enable the development of North America's largest mining district in the Bristol Bay watershed; and

ALSO CONCERNED that if action isn't taken to stop large-scale mining in the Bristol Bay watershed, it will have devastating impacts on the region's environment, economies, and indigenous peoples;

The World Conservation Congress, at its session in Hawai'i, United States of America, 1-10 September 2016:

1. CALLS ON the Director General, Commissions and Members to support, as appropriate, through administrative, technical, scientific, and financial assistance, the local indigenous peoples, tribes, and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) of Bristol Bay working to prevent large-scale mining in the Bristol Bay watershed including, in particular, the proposed Pebble Mine;
2. URGES that the Bristol Bay watershed be protected from large-scale mining like the Pebble Mine; and
3. ALSO URGES the Government of the United States to consider the historic importance of preserving the Bristol Bay watershed from an economic, environmental and cultural heritage perspective, and to take the necessary measures to prevent the granting of permits for large-scale mining in the Bristol Bay watershed.

State and agency Members of the United States abstained during the vote on this motion for reasons given in the U.S. General Statement on the IUCN Motions Process.