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Hunting and Angling Community Commends EPA on Use of Clean Water Act to Protect Bristol Bay, Alaska

Anchorage, AK – Today's Environmental Protection Agency announcement of its proposed determination to protect Bristol Bay using Section 404c of the Clean Water Act elicited praise from a vast coalition of more than 1,100 sporting groups and businesses opposed to proposed mining operations that threaten Southwest Alaska's famed Bristol Bay region. The groups continue to support the EPA's use of its authority under the Clean Water Act to protect this international fishing and hunting "bucket list" destination. The sporting community realizes EPA's action is serious but also knows this type of mining in this area is the special situation for which the 404c section of the Clean Water Act was written.

Scott Hed, director of the Sportsman's Alliance for Alaska, emphasized the broad support for the conservation of the Bristol Bay region, stating, "*Hunters and anglers from across the country have joined forces and worked for years to defend one of the planet's finest sporting destinations. The EPA previously identified the threats posed by massive mining proposals in the region and now has issued some advance guidance that will ensure any future development in Bristol Bay will not harm its vast natural resources. Sportsmen welcome this development and believe EPA is taking the right approach by using the Clean Water Act to provide Bristol Bay a future unclouded by the uncertainty it has faced for the last decade.*"

The effort to protect Bristol Bay has seen one of the largest and most diverse mobilizations of the sporting community in history. A range of sporting conservation groups and trade associations including the ***Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership, Dallas Safari Club, American Fly Fishing Trade Association, Trout Unlimited, Pope & Young Club, Federation of Fly Fishers, Conservation Force, American Sportfishing Association, Delta Waterfowl Foundation*** and a veritable laundry list of the most recognizable brands in [hunting](#) and [fishing](#) products have expressed their support for EPA's use of the Clean Water Act to protect Bristol Bay. This support stands firm in the face of recent attacks in Congress on EPA's Clean Water Act authority.

"Bristol Bay provides unmatched opportunities to fish and hunt because of its unique fisheries and wildlife habitat, and the related jobs and economy are sustainable and irreplaceable," said **Whit Fosburgh, president and CEO of the Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership**. *"The EPA*

agrees and has acted judiciously in attempting to ensure Bristol Bay is not threatened by the wrong type of mining development. Sportsmen and conservationists across the country are cheering the EPA, and we encourage the agency to move forward in finalizing its determination.

Dallas Safari Club Executive Director Ben Carter added, *“The Dallas Safari Club and its membership have supported wildlife and habitat conservation and hunting and fishing access in southwest Alaska for many years. Mining plans on the scale of the proposed Pebble Mine put at risk the very habitat and opportunities we have fought to conserve. Without habitat there is no fish and game. It is that simple. We oppose any development in the Bristol Bay region that would jeopardize this critical ecosystem and welcome the news that EPA has moved from studying Bristol Bay to using the Clean Water Act to give this incredible region the basic protections it deserves.”*

“When EPA released the findings of its Bristol Bay Watershed Assessment earlier this year, it established what the sport fishing community has understood for as long as anglers have been fishing in Bristol Bay: Development of the wrong type of large-scale mining in this region will have significant negative impacts on waters that support this vibrant fishery. ” said **Gordon Robertson, Vice President of the American Sportfishing Association.**

Ben Bulis, President of the American Fly Fishing Trade Association added *“Our industry commends the EPA for taking the next step to provide certainty for Bristol Bay and all the businesses and jobs in Alaska and across the country that benefit from it. Our membership heartily supports the EPA’s thoughtful and measured action under the Clean Water Act, which will provide sport fishing opportunities in Bristol Bay for generations of anglers to come.”*

“Protecting Bristol Bay has united the sporting community,” **Hed** concluded. *“Never before has such an overwhelming show of support rallied to the defense of a treasured place. Whether you’ve visited Bristol Bay in the past and can’t wait to return or you simply dream of fishing or hunting in the region someday, the EPA’s action affects us all. With its action today, the Obama administration is protecting jobs, preserving vital hunting and fishing habitats, and securing its conservation legacy by permanently protecting Bristol Bay. This development brings us one step closer to a conservation victory that will rank with the greatest of our generation.”*

For more information on the Sportsman’s Alliance for Alaska visit www.SportsmansAlliance4AK.org.

For more information on today’s EPA announcement see <http://www2.epa.gov/bristolbay/proposed-determination-pursuant-section-404c-clean-water-act-pebble-deposit-area>