



# EARTHWORKS

## Earth Notes

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### Four leading jewelers sign the Bristol Bay Protection Pledge

Herff-Jones, Commemorative Brands Inc., Birks and Mayors, and Hacker Jewelers have joined 15 other jewelers in [pledging support for permanently protecting Alaska's Bristol Bay Watershed](#) from large-scale metal mining, including the controversial [Pebble Mine](#). Together, these four companies represent nearly \$1 billion in sales.

Alaska's [Bristol Bay](#) supports the world's largest remaining wild sockeye salmon fishery. The Anglo American and Northern Dynasty's proposed Pebble Mine is a direct threat to the salmon fishery and the communities that depend on it. The list of retailers taking the Bristol Bay Protection Pledge continues to grow. More and more jewelers recognize that the Bristol Bay watershed is an ecosystem of international significance, and

### Take Action!

*Protect the Grand Canyon from Uranium Mining*



Thanks in part to your letters, the Obama administration recently took emergency action to temporarily halt new mine claimstaking around Grand Canyon National Park.

Now the Interior Department wants to know whether new mining in the area should be prohibited for the next 20 years.

**Please send a quick message to Secretary of Interior Ken Salazar and him support the withdrawal of 1 million acres surrounding the Grand Canyon from mining claimstaking.**

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that large-scale metal mining is simply inappropriate there.

This month, Tiffany & Co. has placed an [advertisement](#) in National Jeweler magazine encouraging other leading jewelers to join this important effort, saying "Despite the best of intentions, 175 years of experience sourcing gemstones and precious metals tells us that there are certain places where mining cannot be done without forever destroying landscapes, wildlife and communities. Bristol Bay is one such place." The proposed Pebble mine violates the [Golden Rules](#) for responsible sourcing of precious metals. [\[Learn More\]](#)

## USGS report shows extensive mercury pollution of streams nationwide: underscores need for federal regulations

[A recent study by the U.S. Geological survey found pervasive mercury contamination in nearly 300 streams across the country.](#) Every fish examined tested positive for mercury contamination. The problem is so wide-spread every state except for Wyoming has issued public health advisories warning people to limit fish consumption because of concerns about mercury exposure.

According to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's [Toxic Release Inventory](#), hard rock mining (gold mining in particular) is the largest mercury emitter in the United States-releasing over 6 million pounds to air, land, and water in 2007.

Most of that is released in waste rock and tailings dumps. But there's still enough emitted into the air to make gold mining intensive areas in Nevada one of the mercury air pollution hotspots in the country. Airborne mercury can travel considerable distances before rain and snow eventually bring it back to the ground, where it is often deposited into lakes and streams. Although gold mining is a significant source of mercury air pollution, there are no federal regulations that require the industry to reduce its emissions.

[Read an editorial on [EARTHblog.org](#) about why we need to regulate federal mercury emissions]

## 160 organizations urge Congress to pass FRAC Act

As the expansion of hydraulic fracturing operations associated with natural gas drilling continues, and the concerns of [citizens living in oil and gas field communities](#) are becoming realized, it has become imperative that we put in place safeguards to protect our communities and the water they depend on. We do not want 10-15 years of natural gas production to leave us with a lifetime legacy of contaminated water.

[A letter signed by 160 local, regional, and national organizations](#), representing faith, conservation, sportsmen, and civic interests was released on 9/18/2009, calling on Congress to support and pass the Frac Act.

The bill, [the Fracturing Responsibility and Awareness of Chemicals Act](#) or Frac Act, also known as H.R. 2766 and it Senate counterpart S. 1215, would do two things: require public disclosure of chemical constituents used in hydraulic fracturing and bring hydraulic fracturing back under the Safe Drinking Water Act. [\[Learn More\]](#)

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The Better Business Bureau and Charity Navigator have given their *highest ratings* to EARTHWORKS

**Recycle your cell phone from home!**



Cell phones contain toxic metals that can pollute the environment and threaten human health.

When recycled responsibly, these metals can be put back into circulation, decreasing the need for new metal mining.

## Air quality study reveals high levels of pollution in Dish, Texas

The tiny town of DISH, Texas -population 180- has the unfortunate fate of being located at the epicenter of the Barnett Shale gas play, and is home to 11 compression stations, as well as a host of pipelines, metering stations, gathering lines and gas wells.

For years residents have complained of foul smelling air, noise, and health problems to industry and regulators. Finally their concerns have been validated. A recently released [air quality study](#) study revealed high concentrations of toxic air emissions, including neurotoxins and carcinogens, on or near residential properties.



EARTHWORKS board member Wilma Subra has written an analysis of the study, which can be found [here](#). [\[Learn More.\]](#)

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## Recycle your old computer responsibly with Reconnect

Do you have an old computer lying around that you want to recycle? Dell and Goodwill Industries manage the [Reconnect program](#). A free recycling program designed for residential consumers who wish to recycle used computers responsibly. To find a center location near you go, visit their [website](#).

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## IRMA completes second phase of standards development

EARTHWORKS is a participant in the Initiative for Responsible Mining Assurance, a multi-sector, multi-stakeholder effort to create and independent, third-party certification and verification system for the mining sector to assure compliance with environmental, human rights and social standards. IRMA brings together mining companies, industry/commodity associations, retailers, NGOs, community groups, labor and other sectors

IRMA participants and consultants have developed a series of draft standards covering some of the key issues that IRMA seeks to address. These issues include: indigenous peoples, cyanide and mercury use, revenue transparency, resettlement, and labor rights, among others.

IRMA participants from various sectors have provided comments on drafts of an initial set of 14 standards. Based on the comments received, about 5 of the standards can be considered close to final. IRMA participants are now participating in multi-sector working groups on the standards where additional work is needed, in advance of the IRMA in-person meeting in December, 2009. [\[Learn More\]](#)

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## Prime Minister Harper visits the White House

On September 16th Canadian Prime Minister Stephen Harper visited the White House. Harper's government champions the tar sands industry -- at

the expense of Canada's international reputation on combating climate change, the rights of indigenous peoples, and environmental protections.

Although Prime Minister Harper was expected to press President Obama for special treatment of tar sands oil -- the dirtiest fossil fuel -- he came away with nothing to aid the expansion of tar sands.

The meeting created a stir before, during and after the visits, with numerous [reports](#), the release of a fantastic [DVD: Breaking Our Addiction](#), and [protests](#).

Learn more at [dirtyoilsands.org](http://dirtyoilsands.org)

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