

ALASKA GOLD

1 x 60 HD



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The Bristol Bay region of southwest Alaska is home to the largest wild Sockeye salmon fishery in the world. It's also home to what could be the world's largest copper, gold, molybdenum deposit—estimated to be worth some \$300 billion.

At the headwaters of the two major river systems supporting the bay's world-renowned fisheries, the Pebble Partnership—comprised of two mining companies Anglo American and Northern Dynasty Mines—is proposing to extract this mineral wealth by digging one of North America's largest open-pit mines, the "Pebble Mine."

Despite the magnitude of the discovery there is substantial public concern about the risks posed in developing the mine. The United States Environmental Protection Agency confirms hard-rock mining as the top toxic waste producer in the nation. But executives at the Pebble Partnership dispute the growing opposition to the project and continue to invest millions of dollars in its environmental and socioeconomic study that will inform the plans of mine development. Yet federal and state agencies express frustration with the company's lack of transparency in shaping critical study designs and sharing the scientific data generated.

If developed responsibly, the Pebble Project could generate billions of dollars in capital investment for the struggling region, create thousands of jobs, as well as generate tens of millions of dollars in annual tax payments for both the state and local governments. There is a lot at stake: billions of dollars, thousands of jobs, traditional ways of life, metals and wild salmon—that are both in high global demand—and perhaps the integrity of one of the most productive, intact watersheds remaining on earth.

FRONTLINE travels to Alaska to profile the communities connected to this watershed and probes the fault lines of a growing battle between those who depend on this extraordinary fishery for a living, the mining companies who are pushing for Pebble, and the political framework that will ultimately decide the outcome.

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CREDITS

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