



April 2012 | BBNC

PEBBLE WATCH

Give and Take

About *Give and Take*

Pebble Watch *Give and Take* is produced as a supplement to the Pebble Watch newsletter. It provides additional educational content on topics related to responsible resource development and enriching our Native way of life.

In this issue we focus on public input—why it's important and how you can join the conversation. We've included success stories, resources for further study on civic involvement, and upcoming dates for input related to Pebble mine.

Special insert:

Inside you'll find "Pebble Watch Explores: Environmental Baseline Document,"



the first in a series of fact sheets from the Pebble Watch team. It gives an overview of the Pebble

Limited Partnership's baseline data document released in early 2012. Topics include how the document is related to permitting and how to get the most from your reading.

Questions? Write Pebble Watch at staff@pebblewatch.com.

BBNC Bristol Bay Native Corporation

Your voice

JOINING THE CONVERSATION



Bristol Bay Watershed Assessment: Residents of New Stuyahok speak to visitors from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, June 2011. Additional meetings are scheduled for June 2012 to discuss the draft assessment. Specific dates will be posted at www.pebblewatch.com. Photo: Bristol Industries, LLC

Local, state, and national decision-making can be influenced by everyday citizens. When you have an opinion or concern about a topic that may affect you or your community, there are ways to make your voice heard.

Research your topic. Being knowledgeable about your topic is essential when you want to voice your opinion. Researching both sides of a controversial issue such as the Pebble prospect gives you a better understanding, and shows that you are well-informed. How to find out information:

- **Library resources** – A school or community library may have what you need, or the librarian may point you in the right direction. Or search the statewide library at sled.alaska.edu.
- **Internet resources** – Use the Internet to research topics important to you. Be aware that many sites are biased one way or another, especially about controversial topics. Always try to find a "primary" resource, where a fact was first documented.
- **Interviews** – Talk with or email people who are conducting their own research, or who work for or serve on a board of directors. Interview elders for their Traditional Ecological Knowledge.

(continued inside)

Ready to speak your mind?

Visit www.pebblewatch.com for a convenient list of public officials, agencies, and media outlets.

EXPRESS yourself

Providing public comment on an issue that affects your home, land and culture is vital to making sure your voice is heard.

Here are some ways to make that happen:

www.regulations.gov

This is the place to go for information about providing public input for proposed government rules, regulations, or other actions. It's an easy-to-navigate site that helps you post written comments, tells you when the comment period is available, and answers questions about what happens to your comments after you've posted them.

The Pebble Watch newsletter and web site will keep you up to date about public comment periods for issues of importance to the Bristol Bay region, so keep reading.

Whenever a public comment period is opening up, the government is required to post a public notice about it. These public notices are most commonly found in your local newspaper. If you don't have access to a hard copy of the newspaper that covers your area, go to the online edition and look under "Public Notices." Look at www.federalregister.gov for notices too.

If you are giving public comment orally and English is your second language, you may ask the agency to have an interpreter assist you with your testimony.

Don't like public speaking? Hand in written testimony instead. See tips at right.

"Your Voice" (continued from cover)

Partner with others. Join—or create—an organization to move your ideas forward. You might partner with schools, businesses, or other groups with similar goals. You could start a petition for change and gather support personally or online through sites such as www.change.org.

Use different ways to spread the word. Use email, phone, social media, and letters to the editor to express your opinion. Make sure your points are clear and well-written.

Tips for preparing written comments

Whether you are submitting comments to local agencies or in response to a call for input in the Federal Register, use these tips to make the most of your comments.

PREPARE

- Start early. Read the proposed rule or document carefully, underlining points you would like to address.
- Contact agency experts if you need additional information.

WRITE

- Outline your comments, making sure they are directly relevant to the issue.
- Be clear about whether you are for or against the stated issue.
- Include your own personal experience to individualize your comments.
- If you've used articles or other documents for reference, provide copies or information about where to find them.
- Avoid overly emotional language.
- Type or print your comments legibly.

REVIEW

- Review your comments for accuracy.
- Ask a friend or two to review your comments and provide feedback.

SUBMIT

- Submit comments by the stated deadline.
- Sign your name, and give contact information. Anonymous submissions may be discounted.

Get funded. If you have a specific project that could help add to the discussion, search for organizations or agencies that might have grants available.

Remember your legislators. Contacting local, state and national lawmakers is an important way to let legislators know what their constituents think.

Everyday Examples

Ordinary citizens can influence legislation and legislative policy. Here's proof.

Alaska's official state dog

A few years ago, students in Anchorage's Polaris K-12 School wondered why Alaska had an official state mineral, flower, bird and fossil but no state dog. After all, they reasoned, dogs are an important part of Alaska's history. Their teachers saw this as a great opportunity for them to learn how ordinary

citizens influence legislation.

The students embarked on a journey that would end with the Alaska Legislature declaring an official state dog.

Students researched how state

government works, learned all there was about the history of the Malamute in the Arctic, submitted their request through a legislator, answered House legislative committee questions to support their request, and got public backing from a wide variety of groups in the state. Eventually, the State House passed the bill.

When the bill got stuck in a Senate committee, the students went public with their frustration. They enlisted the help of local media and columnists to put the spotlight on their bill's plight. The pressure worked. Today, Alaska has an official state dog: the Malamute.



Photo: Vicki and Chuck Rogers via Flickr

Food additives in school lunch

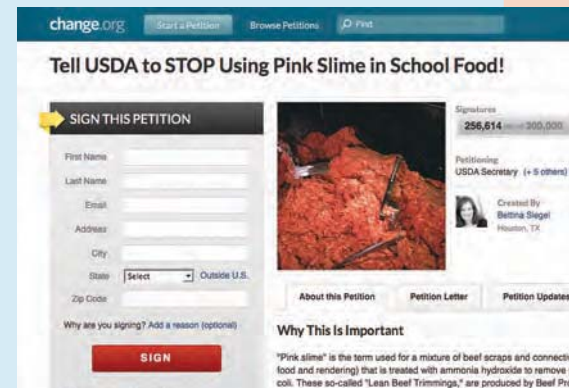
According to the FDA, ammonium hydroxide is perfectly safe to use as a direct food additive. It's in everything from baked goods to cheeses to school lunches.

But after descriptions of "pink slime" appeared in the media, parents

around the country sat up and took notice. Pink slime is a combination of ground beef and what the USDA calls lean beef trimmings, essentially

all of the leftover bits of beef that no one wants. Ammonium hydroxide is mixed in to kill bacteria such as *E. coli* and salmonella. It is also used as a sanitizer in household and industrial cleaners. The FDA refers to the mix as "lean, finely textured beef," claiming it's safe for consumption and less fatty than pure ground beef.

Parents across the country were horrified when they found out this was in their children's school lunches. Food columnist Bettina Siegel launched a petition on March 8 to ban the product from the National School Lunch Program. Within days she had more than 220,000 signers. Public pressure caused Safeway and Kroger, America's largest supermarket chains, to state they will no longer carry the product. And schools now have the option of not using it.



More resources

www.projectpermits.com

Cooperative Extension resource explains the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and opportunities for public input.

www.iCivics.org

Interactive games teach about civics—from the local level up to the Presidency.

www.whitehouse.gov/blog

Offers stories about young people who have made a better future for their communities.

From recycling soap, to running an emergency food assistance program, young people have made a difference. Search "For the Win" at whitehouse.gov/blog.

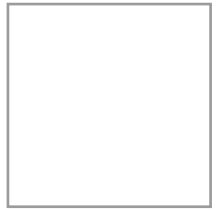
www.centerforactioncivics.org

Lesson plans include "Project Soapbox," which teaches the qualities of a good speech and how to structure a speech effectively.

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 Bristol Bay
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Opportunities to participate:



Keep yourself updated and learn the facts by following Pebble Watch or liking us on Facebook!

WATERSHED ASSESSMENT

May 2012

Read the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Bristol Bay Watershed Assessment when it comes out **in early May**. Follow www.pebblewatch.com to know when the assessment is released and for a link to the online document. The EPA also plans to provide the assessment on CD for public meetings or through the mail by request. A limited number of paper copies will be shared with Tribes and placed in libraries, community centers, and for individuals with limited internet access. EPA welcomes suggestions for paper distribution locations. Write to R10BristolBay@epa.gov.

WATERSHED ASSESSMENT MEETINGS

June 2012

Representatives from EPA first visited Bristol Bay in June 2011. Now they are coming back to discuss the Watershed Assessment and potential risks of large-scale mining in Bristol Bay's watersheds. These meetings provide an opportunity to voice your opinion and question EPA directly. **Meetings will take place during the first two weeks in June in several locations: Dillingham, Newhalen, Naknek, Nondalton, New Stuyahok and Anchorage.** Webinar presentations are also being planned for interested people who are not able to attend a public meeting. Complete details about times and locations will be posted on www.pebblewatch.com as they become available.

SCIENCE PANELS

October 2012

The Keystone Center has scheduled a series of Independent Science Panels (ISPs) as part of a dialogue on Pebble mine development. The panels are designed to help stakeholders "assess the credibility" of baseline data, and evaluate the risks, benefits and tradeoffs associated with a preliminary mining plan. They are scheduled for **October 2-4, October 10-12, and October 29-31** in Anchorage. Dialogues will be webcast live on Alaska Public Television so that stakeholders can participate from afar. Visit www.keystonecenter.org for more details about the dialogue process.