

MUSICIANS UNITED TO PROTECT BRISTOL BAY THREE-YEAR REPORT (2013-2015)

In the three years since we first launched on New Year's Day 2013, Musicians United To Protect Bristol Bay has accomplished far more than we had ever imagined we could, particularly given that we are a all-volunteer network with no paid staff and a very modest budget based entirely on contributions from individual donors.

Here are the highlights of those three years.

VICTORIES

The past three years have been a very promising period for the overall campaign to stop the Pebble Mine. Although Musicians United is only one part of this very large campaign, we have contributed to three significant victories:

- **EPA moves to protect Bristol Bay:** *Today, the Environmental Protection Agency announced it will protect Bristol Bay using its authority under the Clean Water Act.* On February 28, 2014, the United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) announced that it would initiate proceedings under Section 404-C of the Environmental Protection Act of 1972 to block construction of the proposed Pebble Mine.

This was a stunning even if not final victory. Pressure to act had been building on the EPA for some time, and Musicians United played an important role in helping build that pressure.

This is an excellent example of the mobilization role that Musicians United plays and is poised to play in the future. When the EPA asked for public comment on the Pebble Mine/Bristol Bay issue, we went to our members, asking them to mobilize their fans and supporters to send comments to the EPA.

While we don't know the exact number of comments we generated directly, we do know that EPA received over 850,000 requests from regular people, musicians, Alaska Native tribes, commercial and sport fishermen and women, jewelry companies, seafood processors, restaurant owners, chefs, conservation organizations, members of the faith community, sport recreation business owners, elected officials and others asking EPA to take action to protect Bristol Bay.

The action of the EPA has been delayed by court proceedings brought forward by the Pebble Partnership, the resolution of which could take significant time.

- **Anglo American withdraws from the Pebble Partnership:** On September 16, 2013, Anglo American, a British-South African mining corporation that was a 50% stakeholder in the Pebble Partnership, announced that it was withdrawing from the project. Anglo American CEO Mark Cutifani stated that his company wanted to

invest in lower-risk projects, saying, "Our focus has been to prioritize capital to projects with the highest value and lowest risks within our portfolio."

Musicians United To Protect Bristol Bay played an important role in making those "risks" more than clear to Anglo-American.

• **Rio Tinto withdraws from the Pebble Partnership:** In April 2014, British-Australian mining giant Rio Tinto decided to give up its roughly 19 percent stake in Northern Dynasty Minerals Ltd., the parent company of the Pebble Partnership. Rio Tinto issued a statement that the Pebble Mine "did not fit" with the company's strategy.

MEMBERS

Musicians United currently has a total of over 500 members, including musicians from Alaska, the Lower 48, Canada, Ireland, Northern Ireland, Germany and the Netherlands. Among our members are:

Pete Seeger (USA)	Tret Fure (USA)
Noel Paul Stookey (USA) (of Peter, Paul and Mary)	Greg Greenway (USA)
Libby Roderick (Alaska)	Kim and Reggie Harris (USA)
Laura Lind (USA)	Maria Dunn (Canada)
Connie Kaldor (Canada)	Michael Johnathon (USA)
Super Saturated Sugar Strings (Alaska)	Pieter Groenveld (The Netherlands)
Peter Rowan (USA)	Tim Easton (USA)
Holly Near (USA)	Nuala Kennedy (Ireland)
John McCutcheon (USA)	Steve Eulberg (USA)
Vince Herman (USA)	The Looping Brothers (Germany)
Alyssa Delbaere-Sawchuk (Canada)	Kruger Brothers (USA/Switzerland)
Egbert Meyer (The Netherlands)	Tommy Sands (Northern Ireland)
Evan Greer (USA)	Vince Herman (USA)
	Tom Chapin (USA)

Our members are among the best-known and most-loved artists in folk and bluegrass music, with substantial credibility, loyal fans and followers and significant media access. They are the heart and soul of Musicians United To Protect Bristol Bay.

SONGWRITING

One of the ways in which Musicians United members help spread the word about the campaign to stop the Pebble Mine and to protect Bristol Bay permanently is by writing songs—and they've written some great ones. Among them are:

- "Not Here" and "No Place Like It On Earth" by former Alaska State Senator Suzanne Little, one of Musicians United's co-founders.

- “The Fishermen of Bristol Bay” by American Federation of Musicians (AFM) Local 1000 President Tret Fure.
- “A Prayer for Bristol Bay” by Grammy winner Tom Chapin and Si Kahn.
- “Land of the Midnight Sun” by Colorado bluegrass artist Mary Beth Cross.
- “Salmon for Gold” by Sandy Andina, who performs both as a solo artist and, with Stephen Lee Rich in the duo Andina and Rich.
- “Damn That Salmon” by former *Washington Post* and *Rolling Stone* music critic Geoffrey Himes.

Many of these songs and others are available on for free download on our website. They provide a way for musicians who are not songwriters to find new material about Bristol Bay and the Pebble Mine that they can perform and record.

BRISTOL BAY CD

Musicians United To Protect Bristol Bay got its start when Bristol Bay commercial fisherman Dan Strickland invited Si Kahn to come to Alaska to write a theme song for the campaign to stop the Pebble Mine. During the nearly two weeks Si spent in Anchorage, including a visit to Bristol Bay and a float plane trip to view the proposed Pebble Mine site, Anchorage and Palmer, he wrote almost two dozen songs. Fifteen of them ended up on his album *Bristol Bay*.

Bristol Bay includes co-writes with Grammy-winning artists Tom Chapin and Jon Vezner. It concludes with a beautiful instrumental titled *Bristol Bay* by Swiss banjo virtuoso Jens Kruger, recent winner of the \$50,000 Steve Martin Prize for Banjo and Bluegrass Excellence, who produced the album. As Geoffrey Himes wrote in the respected online magazine *No Depression*:

All 16 songs are set in the southwest corner of Alaska, but most of the tunes touch on the Pebble Mine threat only glancingly, if at all. Most of them provide that thing an artist can offer and a political activist can't: what the situation feels like to the people who live there—and in one remarkable song how it feels to the sockeye salmon. If those fish can swim hundreds of miles against the current “Upstream,” Kahn asks, why can't the humans overcome the odds of battling a well-financed mining corporation?

The CD was sent to 800 radio DJs around the world. It received such extensive airplay that it was recognized as the #1 CD for July 2013 and the #6 CD for the entire year on the international Folk DJ List, based on weekly airplay reports submitted by some 200 DJs around the world.

Bristol Bay was officially released in June 2013 in Bristol Bay itself, right before the start of the sockeye salmon fishing season. Musicians United co-founders Suzanne Little and Si Kahn organized and performed at concerts in Dillingham, the largest town on Bristol Bay and a major fishing center, and in Naknek, another fishing

community, even performing in front of the local marine supply store as fishermen and women raced in to buy gear for their boats before the season started.

As part of the CD release tour, Si and Suzanne performed and conducted Musicians United workshops at Alaska's two main summer folk festivals, Salmonstock and the Seldovia Summer Solstice Music Festival, as well as giving concerts in Homer and Soldotna.

TV APPEARANCES

One of the high points of the past three years was a 58-minute TV and radio special dedicated to the Pebble Mine/Bristol Bay issue on the WoodSongs Old-Time Radio Hour, hosted by Michael Johnathon. Filmed live in Lexington, Kentucky, the show featured Grammy Winner Tom Chapin; internationally recognized bluesman Guy Davis; Alaska fiddler and poet Ken Waldman; and Musicians United co-founder Si Kahn. Tom and Si also appeared on the WKYT-TV morning show .

Another TV high point was *ABC Alaska's* interview with Monica Zappa a few days before she started her Iditarod run. The video is available on the Musicians United website, along with footage of Monica and her dogs crossing the finish line in Nome and immediately unfurling a large banner that says "Clean Water/Wild Salmon/No Pebble Mine."

RADIO APPEARANCES

Radio has been an important medium for spreading the word. The WoodSongs Old-Time Radio Hour special program on Bristol Bay was broadcast by over 500 radio stations around the world. A partial sampling of other radio appearances by Monica Zappa, Suzanne Little and Si Kahn includes:

- KNBA, Anchorage, Alaska: Monica, Suzanne and Si
- KTEB, El Paso, Texas: Si
- KTOO, Juneau, Alaska: Suzanne and Si
- KDLG, Dillingham, Alaska: Suzanne and Si
- KRCB, Rohnert Park, California: Si
- KOAN, Anchorage, Alaska: Si and Suzanne
- WYSO, Yellow Springs, Ohio: Monica and Si
- WBCR, Great Barrington, Massachusetts: Si

PRINT AND ELECTRONIC MEDIA

We've been successful with electronic and print media, with articles in publications from the U.S., Canada and Germany. A sampling includes:

- Folker*, the leading German language folk and roots music magazine
- Penguin Eggs*, the leading Canadian folk music magazine
- No Depression*, a major U.S.-based internet magazine

- Paste*, an internet magazine that the *Wall Street Journal* called “the finest among American music titles.”

MUSIC FESTIVALS

Music festivals and concerts have proved to be a very effective way for us not just to spread the word about the need to stop the Pebble Mine and to protect Bristol Bay permanently, but also to recruit new members for Musicians United.

Musicians United’s main musical spokespeople are co-founders Suzanne Little, a former Alaska State Senator, and Si Kahn. They’ve appeared together at three different Alaska music festivals (the Alaska Folk Festival in Juneau, where Si was the official 2013 guest artist; the Seldovia Summer Solstice Music Festival; and three times at Salmonfest in Ninilchik on the Kenai Peninsula).

The Alaska Folk Festival provides a good example of how Musicians United To Protect Bristol Bay operates in these settings. Suzanne and Si gave two 45-minute main stage concerts before audiences of over 800 people, with the emphasis on songs the two of them had written about Bristol Bay. They held two workshops to introduce those attending to Musicians United, signing up several dozen new members.

They held a sing-along of traditional civil rights and union songs, along the way inviting participants to join Musicians United. And they talked individually and in small groups with dozens of performing musicians and music fans, spreading the word about the need to stop the proposed Pebble Mine and to protect Bristol Bay permanently

MUSIC CONFERENCES

Music conferences are another way Musicians United spreads the word and recruits new members. We were there in strength at the annual Folk Alliance International conference in Toronto in February 2013, with member Stephen Lee Rich joining Suzanne Little and Si Kahn. We had a full-page ad in the program; a special opening night concert; a private showcase room where over the course of four nights we presented a total of 28 artists from Denmark, Ireland, Canada and the United States; and a booth in the exhibit hall. Using this concentrated approach, and with our three-person organizing team, we were able to sign up over 60 new members.

We used a similar formula at the International Bluegrass Music Association (IBMA) annual World of Bluegrass gathering in Raleigh, North Carolina in September 2014: Again Suzanne Little, Stephen Lee Rich and Si Kahn as the floor team; a full-page program book ad; an exhibit hall booth; and a showcase room which was lit up by the music of such bluegrass greats as Dale Ann Bradley, Missy Raines and the New Hip, the Looping Brothers from Germany, and the Kruger Brothers from Switzerland with legendary fiddler Michael Cleveland.

Member Stephen Lee Rich also represented Musicians United at other national and regional music conferences, including the People’s Music Network, the Southeast Regional Folk Alliance (SERFA) and Folk Alliance Region Midwest (FARM).

MUSHING FOR BRISTOL BAY

Musicians United is very proud to have sponsored “musher” Monica Zappa, who ran her first Iditarod, known as “The Last Great Race,” in March 2014 under the banner “Mushing for Bristol Bay.” It was one of the toughest races in memory, 975 miles alone through the Alaska wilderness in freezing weather, with winds up to 65 miles per hour. Of 69 mushers who qualified to start, only 50 finished—and Monica Zappa was one of them.

Musicians United To Protect Bristol Bay arranged for Monica to appear on a national news broadcast, recruited a documentary film crew; organized a special evening with Alaska Native dancers and several musical acts to give Monica a great sendoff; wrote and recorded a song for her Iditarod run titled “Mushing To Save Bristol Bay”; and created and disseminated a YouTube video based on the song.

Here’s what Monica wrote to the Musicians United leadership team shortly after crossing the finish line in Nome, after 13 days and 975 miles alone on the Iditarod Trail:

Thanks to all for all the hard work and support you gave me and my team for this year’s race. We could not have done it without you! I wore the Musicians United To Protect Bristol bay patches on my hat and sled bag all the way to Nome! Many people noticed and I was often asked if I was a musician! It was a perfect opening for saying no, but we are working closely to protect Alaska's greatest resource....wild salmon!

I had so much fun on the race, we took our time, talked to the folks and many conversations were about Bristol Bay and the happenings there. I delivered packets of info to all checkpoints with residents. I think we got some top notch publicity in local papers, television, radio, internet, and we can even look forward to an article in Mushing Magazine next issue!

It was a very rough and scary trail, as you may have heard, at times. I am so lucky to have survived in one piece, and I did the best job I could do to get all my dogs to the finish line too. Thanks again, Monica.

To see the music video created by Musicians United’s Madison-based member Stephen Lee Rich of the song “Mushing To Save Bristol Bay,” written and recorded by Si Kahn for Monica’s Iditarod run, and to hear an interview with both Monica and Si on WYSO-FM in Yellow Springs, Ohio, please visit our website.

