The transboundary Taku, Stikine, and Unuk Rivers of Southeast Alaska and Northwest British Columbia’s Salmon Coast are the rivers that feed us - physically, culturally, economically, and spiritually. These wild, glacial rivers flow from the vast boreal forest of British Columbia (B.C.) into the temperate rainforest of Southeast Alaska and the Tongass National Forest.

Along these major salmon river systems, the B.C. government is aggressively pursuing unprecedented industrial development, including large-scale mines, many with massive toxic waste dams - without the meaningful consent of those living downstream.
The Taku, Stikine, and Unuk Rivers are central to life, culture, commerce, sustenance, and ways of life in this region - and home to several Indigenous Nations, including the Tlingit and the Tahltan - linking about 80,000 people in many communities on both sides of the U.S.-Canada border. These rivers are hotspots of biodiversity, climate refugia, and birth all five species of wild Pacific salmon - and serve as economic powerhouses that contribute $48 million annually to Southeast Alaska’s economy. Our transboundary rivers have been stewarded by Indigenous peoples since time immemorial and are subject to the U.S.-Canada Boundary Waters Treaty of 1909.
B.C. is feverishly rushing through massive open-pit gold and copper mines, including their colossal toxic waste storage facilities, at the headwaters of shared, iconic salmon rivers. This is happening without the meaningful input of communities and Tribes downstream in Alaska, and despite a global push to ban earthen mine tailings dams.

The industrialization of these river systems is the largest threat to some of the last remaining wild salmon habitat left on the planet. B.C.’s archaic mining laws are not strong enough to protect communities that depend upon cold, clean water, and wild salmon.

Almost 20% of all three AK-B.C. transboundary watersheds are staked with B.C. mineral claims. B.C. markets these mines of the "Golden Triangle" as important for the “clean energy transition.” In reality, the vast majority of mining companies are targeting mostly gold. About 80% of the gold they dig up will become jewelry and bullion.
This international issue requires an international solution. That is why Tribes, municipalities, business owners, and concerned citizens are calling for a temporary HALT to exploration, development, and expansion of B.C. mines along shared AK-B.C. salmon rivers until the U.S. and Canadian federal governments convene local communities, stakeholders, and Indigenous leaders to develop a binding international agreement that:

- Honors no-go zones and decisions by impacted local residents and Indigenous peoples
- Ensures B.C. mining companies and shareholders are liable for cleaning up their waste
- Permanently bans toxic mine waste dams along AK-B.C. transboundary salmon rivers

**TOXIC TAILINGS DAMS**

B.C. continues to permit earthen mine "tailings dams" along shared salmon rivers even though these massive mine waste dams have to hold back a toxic slurry of acid-generating waste forever. These dams pose a great risk to environmental and human health because these will ultimately fail. An expert panel that reviewed B.C.'s 2014 Mount Polley mine waste dam failure (pictured right) found B.C. could face an average of two tailings dam failures every ten years. Peru, Chile, and Brazil have all banned upstream tailings dams. It's time these ticking time bombs are also banned along some of the world's last remaining intact salmon rivers.

**SPECIAL PROTECTIONS FOR SPECIAL PLACES**

This international issue requires an international solution. That is why Tribes, municipalities, business owners, and concerned citizens are calling for a temporary HALT to exploration, development, and expansion of B.C. mines along shared AK-B.C. salmon rivers until the U.S. and Canadian federal governments convene local communities, stakeholders, and Indigenous leaders to develop a binding international agreement that:

**THE RIVERS THAT FEED US**

- Honors no-go zones and decisions by impacted local residents and Indigenous peoples
- Ensures B.C. mining companies and shareholders are liable for cleaning up their waste
- Permanently bans toxic mine waste dams along AK-B.C. transboundary salmon rivers

**TAKE ACTION AND LEARN MORE AT SALMONBEYONDBORDERS.ORG**
Major BC mines, claims, and companies in the Stikine/Shtax'héen watershed

Contact Chris Sergeant at: christopher.sergeant@umontana.edu
Sources: BC Data Catalogue, BC MINFILE, Esri, HydroSHEDS
Canadian large-scale mines impact the U.S. waters of three other British Columbia (B.C.) border states — Washington, Idaho, and Montana — just as they pollute or threaten to pollute the Alaska-B.C. transboundary Taku, Stikine, and Unuk Rivers. For decades, B.C. has stalled meaningful international action between the U.S., Canadian and Indigenous governments to protect shared rivers and salmon. B.C. promotes its handshake agreements (MOUs) with downstream U.S. states, while doubling down on the destruction of critical fish and wildlife habitat so vital to our economies and ways of life. B.C.’s own Auditor General has sharply criticized the B.C. mine evaluation, approval, monitoring, mitigation, and bonding processes, warning that B.C. is at risk of violating the Boundary Waters Treaty in relation to the ongoing B.C. mining-related pollution of international waterways.

CANADA POLLUTES SHARED WILD RIVERS

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