

# Healthy Wildlife at the Proposed Rock Creek Mine

Just as we've proven we're able to do at our Greens Creek mine in Alaska, Hecla is committed to protecting fish and wildlife around the Rock Creek project, where the plan of operations includes extensive mitigation measures to protect wildlife.

## Grizzly Bear

- purchasing 2,450 acres of grizzly habitat
- funding two Montana, Fish, Wildlife & Parks wildlife management specialists and one law enforcement officer
- offering community-based grizzly bear information, education, and outreach programs
- providing bear-resistant garbage receptacles at Forest Service campgrounds
- developing a transportation plan to minimize vehicular traffic
- avoiding clovers and other bear-attracting plants in seed mix for roads, etc.



In 2011, the U.S. Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals stated: The grizzly bear mitigation plan was so robust that the Fish and Wildlife Service concluded it **"would in fact improve condition over the long-term over the existing conditions...."**

## Bull Trout

Protecting aquatic habitat is fundamental to the Rock Creek mine plan. A number of measures will therefore be implemented to minimize any potential impact to bull trout, including:

- sediment controls are projected to reduce sediment by 400 tons per year, which will actually improve aquatic habitat from current conditions
- water collected throughout the mine life will go through a multi-stage water treatment process to ensure that it meets standards for the protection of fish and other aquatic life
- the majority of water will be recycled and reused throughout the mining and milling process
- extensive monitoring and testing will be done to verify that strict water quality standards are being met



In 2011, the U.S. Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals upheld the Biological Opinion, stating that the Rock Creek Project would result in **"no adverse modification"** to critical bull trout habitat.

## Greens Creek and Rock Creek Similarities

While no two ecosystems are alike, there are numerous similarities between the habitat surrounding Rock Creek and the setting in Alaska where our Greens Creek mine has operated for nearly three decades:

- **environmentally sensitive locations** – The Greens Creek Mine is located in the Tongass National Forest, adjacent to the Admiralty Island Wilderness Area; Rock Creek is nearby the Cabinet Mountain Wilderness.
- **bears** – Admiralty Island is the home of the highest density of brown bears in North America; Rock Creek is in the Cabinet-Yaak Grizzly Recovery Area.
- **fish** – Admiralty Island has robust populations of all five species of Pacific salmon; the Rock Creek tributary, which the mine project is named after, feeds into the Clark Fork River, home to bull trout and other native trout species.



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