



5 MINUTES WITH...

Red Gold Shines Bright

Film captures life in an Alaskan fishing community

LAUREN OAKES IS the associate producer of *Red Gold*, a new film that documents the families and commercial fishermen of Bristol Bay, Alaska, and how their way of life might be severely altered if the controversial Pebble Mine is constructed on the mineral-rich land.

OUTDOOR LIFE: How did you learn about the Bristol Bay mining situation, and what made you think it would be a good subject for a documentary?

LAUREN OAKES: My boss at Trout Unlimited, Tim Bristol, was approached about it at a Denver retailer show. Without knowing for certain what the final product would be, we were sure the film process would provide a unique opportunity to spend time in the region and understand the lifestyles of the sport, commercial and



When Lauren Oakes started making *Red Gold*, the film's direction was uncertain. Now it is getting international praise.

GUN LAWS

Regulation Relaxation

Guns no longer banned from parks—sort of

The Department of the Interior recently issued a rule that relaxed the ban on guns in our national parks, but the announcement was not without a caveat.

Individuals are now allowed to carry concealed, loaded firearms into parks,

provided they possess the appropriate permits to carry those weapons in the state in which the park is located, according to the *Seattle Times*.

"America was founded on the idea that the federal and state governments work together to serve the public,"

said Assistant Secretary of the Interior for Fish, Wildlife and Parks, Lyle Lavery.

"The regulation respects this tradition by allowing individuals to carry concealed firearms in park units to the extent that they could do so under state law."

native fishermen so deeply connected to Bristol Bay's renewable resources.

OL: What kind of preparation went into the filmmaking?

OAKES: I spent a lot of time making contacts in the area, finding pilots, talking with biologists to figure out where the fish would be. It's an area about the size of Washington, so getting around was our big challenge right from the start.

OL: The film has been getting a lot of positive press, including awards at film festivals. What has the experience been like?

OAKES: It has exceeded my expectations. Every day we have people contacting us from around the state, country and globe who want to help. Since the film, the Bureau of Land Management has made a decision to open another million acres in Bristol Bay to mining development. That's something the Obama administration can change, so I hope there is more national coverage with the new administration.

OL: What was most surprising about documenting the people of Bristol Bay?

OAKES: It was so hard to find a Bristol Bay local who wholeheartedly supported the mining project. So few people were willing to speak on camera; the ones who did were paid some \$300,000 by the mining company to do so.

OL: What's the current state of the Pebble Mine and Bristol Bay?

OAKES: We hope to see a bill in the state legislature this year for special protection of the Bristol Bay watershed. History has demonstrated that without higher levels of vigilance, critical habitat and wild fish populations can be squandered in less than a generation.