



**page 10** After investing US\$20M in Palmer, Dowla opts to JV with Constantine



## NEWS NUGGETS

Compiled by Shane Lasley



HECLA MINING CO.

Since acquiring full ownership of Greens Creek in 2008, this Southeast Alaska silver mine has been a cornerstone asset for Hecla Mining Co. Greens Creek produced an impressive 9.25 million ounces of silver in 2016.

### Greens Creek tops 9M oz silver

Hecla Mining Co. Jan. 10 reported that its Greens Creek Mine in Southeast Alaska produced 9.25 million ounces of silver in 2016, the highest production since the Idaho-based miner bought full ownership of the operation in 2008. This strong performance helped push Hecla's total silver production to a record 17.2 million oz, 48 percent higher than 2015. In addition to the silver, Greens Creek produced 53,912 oz of gold, along with healthy quantities of zinc and lead. For the fourth quarter, 2.2 million oz of silver and 14,415 oz of gold were produced. In addition to the 7.2 million oz of silver, Hecla's four operations – Greens Creek, Lucky Friday in Idaho, Casa Berardi in Ontario and San Sebastian in Mexico – produced 233,929 oz of gold, 68,516 tons of zinc and 42,471 tons of lead in 2016. When calculating the value of the gold, zinc and lead, this comes to 46.1 silver-equivalent oz, a 23 percent increase over 2015. "The 17.2 million ounces of silver produced and the 46 million silver-equivalent ounces produced mark the third consecutive year we have broken our 125-year production record, a result of our strategy of investing in organic growth," said Hecla President and CEO Phillips Baker, Jr. "Through the down cycle we continued to build our production capacity with the start-up of San Sebastian, the development of the pit at Casa Berardi and the construction of the #4 Shaft at Lucky Friday. The performance of these investments plus the ongoing strong performance of Greens Creek allowed Hecla to generate substantial cash flows this year and we expect well into the future." Hecla ended 2016 with roughly US\$198 million in cash, cash equivalents and short-term investments, an increase of about US\$43 million for the year.

### Kensington ends 2016 strong

Coeur Mining Inc. Jan. 5 announced that its Kensington Mine in Southeast Alaska produced 33,688 ounces of gold in the fourth quarter, a 27 percent increase over the previous

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SHANE LASLEY

Tourists pan for gold below the historic Pedro gold dredge at Chicken, a mining community in Alaska's Fortymile Mining District. More than 600,000 ounces of placer gold has been recovered in the Fortymile and small family run operations continue to be the economic driver for the region.

### FEDERAL POLICY

## Area of critical concern

BLM's Eastern Interior plan unpopular; Alaska miners hope for better deal

By SHANE LASLEY

Mining News

Despite protests by Alaska miners and government, the U.S. Bureau of Land Management has pushed ahead with a management plan that will place roughly 74 percent of BLM-administered lands in



BUD CRIBLEY

Alaska's Eastern Interior region off limits to mining for decades to come.

BLM is responsible for the management of 6.5 million acres in the federal government's Eastern Interior planning area, a roughly 30-million-acre, triangle-shaped expanse of eastern Alaska that stretches from the Yukon Territory border to a point about 240 miles into the interior of the state. This area, roughly the size of New York State, blankets most of five historic mining districts – Fortymile, Goodpaster, Fairbanks, Circle and Tolovana (Livengood). It has produced roughly 21 million ounces of gold and is known to host a broad range of other minerals.

Every 20 years, the federal land manager is charged with developing a resource management plan that serves as a framework for decision making across this swath of Alaska for the coming two



LISA MURKOWSKI

decades. It has, however, been more than 30 years since the plan for this particularly gold enriched area was refreshed.

The federal agency said its new Eastern Interior management plan seeks to strike a balance between responsible development and conservation.

"We've worked hard to listen to the concerns of a diverse group of local stakeholders who rely on these public lands for their subsistence, mineral development, and recreation," BLM Alaska State Director Bud Cribley said upon releasing the proposed management plan for a 30-day comment period at the end of July.

Many of Alaska's political leaders, however, feel the plan is weighted heavily toward conservation; deliberately making it difficult for miners to realize the mineral potential on federal lands in the area.

"While some parts of the Eastern Interior deserve special protection, the withdrawals and closures in this plan are intentionally excessive," said Sen. Lisa Murkowski, R-Alaska. "As has become the norm over the past eight years, the

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