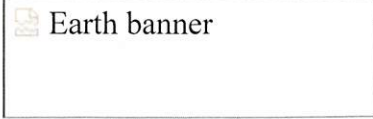


Stanley Mack



RC 033



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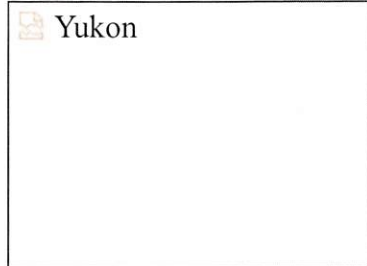
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Runoff pollution poisoning Yukon River

April 19, 1998
Web posted at: 4:30 p.m. EDT (2030 GMT)



GALENA, Alaska (CNN) -- The Yukon River stretches nearly 2,000 miles through some of the most pristine wilderness in North America, but Alaska's lifeline is hazardous to the life it sustains.

Although blessed with stretches of untamed beauty, the Yukon is in danger of severe pollution

The Yukon has become polluted by the three "M's" of arctic pollution: mining, manufacturing and the military.

"Every year it floods, and when it floods the water comes up through the ground, and all of the contaminants that are in the landfill mingle with the water," Steve Howdeshell of Louden Tribal Council told CNN. "When the water recedes, the contaminants go out with the water into the river."

Even at its headwaters, the Yukon is contaminated with creosote and PCBs from manufacturing.

Correspondent Jack Hamman reports on the condition of Alaska's Yukon River

2 min. 17 sec. V Xtreme

[video](#)

The river's troubles date back to the Klondike Gold Rush, and decades of runoff waste from hundreds of mines.

The central Alaskan village of Galena is one of the largest settlements along the Yukon, and one of the most polluted regions.

Howdeshell says the most pressing problem in the area is groundwater contamination resulting from military activities.

Galena was home to three important U.S. Air Force installations for much of this century. All three are now

EPA officials say they realize a partnership is needed to find a workable solution; that the Yukon will never be protected, unless the government and the tribes find a way to help the region's residents learn a better way to care for their environment.

Correspondent Jack Hamann contributed to this report.

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Note: Pages will open in a new browser window

- [Welcome to the United States Environmental Protection Agency's Homepage](#)

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