CLAIMS

1. A metal trap comprising pre-formed microspheres impregnated with a solution comprising an organic acid salt of a rare earth element and a salt of calcium and/or magnesium, wherein the pre-formed microspheres consist of calcined hydrous kaolin and the pre-formed microspheres have a pore volume of at least about 0.10 cm^3/gram, wherein the pre-formed microspheres have a particle size of from about 40-150 microns.

2. The metal trap of Claim 1 comprising at least 0.1 wt. % of the rare earth element on an oxide basis, and at least 0.1 wt. % of the calcium and/or magnesium on an oxide basis.

3. The metal trap of Claim 1 comprising from about 1 wt% to about 20 wt% of the rare earth element on an oxide basis, and from about 1 wt% to about 6 wt% of the calcium and/or magnesium on an oxide basis.

4. The metal trap of Claim 1, wherein the rare earth element is lanthanum, cerium, ytterbium, gadolinium, yttrium, neodymium, or a mixture of any two or more thereof.

5. The metal trap of Claim 1, wherein the salt of calcium and/or magnesium is a salt of calcium.

6. The metal trap of Claim 1, wherein the organic acid salt is a formate, acetate, a propionate salt, or a mixture thereof.

7. The metal trap of Claim 6, wherein the organic acid salt of the rare earth element is lanthanum formate, lanthanum acetate, cerium formate, cerium acetate, or a mixture of any two or more thereof.