WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A metal trap ~~comprising~~consisting essentially of pre-formed microspheres impregnated with an organic acid salt of a rare earth element.

2. The metal trap of Claim 1, wherein the pre-formed microspheres comprise kaolinite, montmorillonite, bentonite, attapulgite, kaolin, amorphous kaolin, metakaolin, mullite, spinel, hydrous kaolin, calcined hydrous kaolin, clay, or a mixture of any two or more thereof.

3. The metal trap of Claim 1, comprising at least 1 wt. % of the rare earth element, on an oxide basis.~~2, wherein the pre-formed microspheres comprise calcined hydrous kaolin.~~

4. The metal trap of ~~any one of Claims~~Claim 1~~-3, comprising at least 1 wt. % of the rare earth element, on an oxide basis.~~

~~5. The metal trap of any one of Claims 1-4~~, wherein the rare earth element is lanthanum, cerium, ytterbium, gadolinium, yttrium, neodymium, or a mixture of any two or more thereof.

~~6~~5. The metal trap of ~~any one of Claims~~ Claim 1~~-5, wherein the rare earth element is lanthanum, cerium, or a mixture thereof.~~

~~7. The metal trap of any one of Claims 1-6~~, wherein the organic acid salt is a formate, acetate, a propionate salt, or a mixture thereof.

6. The metal trap of Claim 5~~8. The metal trap of Claim 7~~, wherein the organic acid salt is a formate salt.

7. The metal trap of ~~9. The metal trap of Claim 7, 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.~~

~~10. The metal trap of any one of the preceding Claims, formed by contacting the pre-formed microspheres with the reaction product of an alkaline salt of the rare earth element and an organic acid.~~

~~11. The metal trap of any one of Claims 1-10~~Claim 1, wherein the pre-formed microspheres have a particle size of from about 40-150 microns.

~~12. The metal trap of any one of Claims 1-10, wherein the pre-formed microspheres have a particle size of from about 60-100 microns.~~

~~13. The metal trap of any one of Claims 1-12~~8. The metal trap of Claim 1, wherein the pre-formed microspheres have a pore volume of at least about 0.10 cm^3/gram.

~~14~~9. A fluid catalytic cracking (FCC) catalyst composition comprising:

a zeolite component comprising a first microsphere; and

a separate non-zeolitic component ~~comprising~~ consisting essentially of pre-formed second microspheres, ~~separate from the first microsphere, and~~ impregnated with an organic acid salt of a rare earth element.

~~15~~10. The FCC catalyst composition of Claim ~~14~~9, wherein the pre-formed ~~second~~ microspheres comprise kaolinite, montmorillonite, bentonite, attapulgite, kaolin, amorphous kaolin, metakaolin, mullite, spinel, hydrous kaolin, calcined hydrous kaolin, clay, or a mixture of any two or more thereof.

~~16~~11. The FCC catalyst composition of ~~any one of Claims 14 or 15~~Claim 9 wherein the rare earth element is lanthanum, cerium, ytterbium, gadolinium, yttrium, neodymium, or a mixture of any two or more thereof.

~~17~~12. The FCC ~~catalyst~~ composition of ~~any one of Claims 14-16, wherein the rare earth element is lanthanum, cerium, or a mixture thereof.~~

~~18. The FCC composition of any one of Claims 14-17~~Claim 9, wherein the organic acid salt is a formate, an acetate, or a propionate salt, or a mixture of any two or more thereof.

~~19. The FCC composition of Claim 18, wherein the organic acid salt is a formate salt.~~

~~20. The FCC composition of Claim 18, 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.~~

~~21~~13. The FCC catalyst composition of ~~any one Claims 14-20~~Claim 9, wherein the rare earth element is present in a range of 0.1 wt% to about 20.0 wt% on an oxide basis.

~~22~~14. A method of preparing a metal trap of claim 1, the method comprising contacting pre-formed ~~second~~ microspheres with an organic acid salt of a rare earth element.

~~23~~15. The method of Claim ~~22~~14, wherein the contacting ~~pre-formed second microspheres with the organic acid salt of a rare earth element~~step is selected from the group consisting of coating, spray drying, and impregnating.

~~24~~16. The method of Claim ~~22~~14, wherein the organic acid salt of the rare earth element is comprised in an aqueous medium comprising the organic acid.

~~25. The method of any one of Claims 22-24, further comprising preparing the organic salt of the rare earth element by reacting an alkaline salt of the rare earth element with the organic acid.~~

~~26. The method of Claim 25, wherein the alkaline salt of the rare earth element is a carbonate salt.~~

~~27. The method of any one of Claims 22-26, wherein the rare earth element is lanthanum, cerium, ytterbium, gadolinium, yttrium, neodymium, or a mixture of any two or more thereof.~~

~~28. The method of Claim 27, wherein the rare earth element is lanthanum, cerium, or a mixture thereof.~~

~~29. The method of Claim 25, wherein the organic acid is formic acid, acetic acid, propionic acid, or a mixture of any two or more thereof.~~

~~30. The method of Claim 29, wherein the organic acid is formic acid.~~

~~31. The method of Claim 29, 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.~~

~~32~~17. A method of preparing a FCC catalyst composition according to Claim ~~14~~9, comprising blending the zeolite component and the non-zeolitic component.

~~33. The method of Claim 32, wherein the zeolite component is prepared by a method comprising:~~

~~pre-forming a precursor first microsphere comprising a non-zeolitic material and alumina; and~~

~~*in situ* crystallizing a zeolite on the pre-formed first microsphere to provide the zeolite component.~~

~~34~~18. A method of cracking a hydrocarbon feed under fluid catalytic cracking conditions, the method comprising contacting the hydrocarbon feed with the FCC catalyst composition of Claim ~~14~~9.

~~35~~19. A method of passivating and/or trapping at least one metal contaminant from a hydrocarbon oil feed in an FCC unit bed, the method comprising contacting the hydrocarbon oil feed with the FCC catalyst composition of Claim ~~14.~~ 9.

~~36~~20. The method according to Claim ~~34~~18, wherein the at least one metal contaminant is vanadium.

~~37.~~21. A ~~fluid catalytic cracking (FCC) catalyst composition comprising:~~
~~a non-cracking component comprising a first microsphere; and~~
~~a non-zeolitic component~~metal trap comprising pre-formed ~~second~~ microspheres~~,~~ ~~separate from the first microsphere, and~~ impregnated with an organic acid salt of a rare earth element~~.~~

~~38. The FCC catalyst composition of Claim 37~~, wherein the ~~pre-formed second microspheres comprise kaolinite, montmorillonite, bentonite, attapulgite, kaolin, amorphous kaolin, metakaolin, mullite, spinel, hydrous kaolin, calcined hydrous kaolin, clay, or a mixture of any two or more thereof.~~

~~39. The FCC catalyst composition of any one of Claims 37 or 38 wherein the rare earth element~~metal trap is ~~lanthanum, cerium, ytterbium, gadolinium, yttrium, neodymium, or a mixture of any two or more thereof.~~

~~40. The FCC catalyst composition of any one of Claims 37-39, wherein the rare earth element is lanthanum, cerium, or a mixture thereof.~~

~~41. The FCC composition of any one of Claims 37-40, wherein the organic acid salt is a formate, an acetate, or a propionate salt, or a mixture of any two or more thereof.~~

~~42. The FCC composition of Claim 41, wherein the organic acid salt is a formate salt.~~

~~43. The FCC composition of Claim 41, 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.~~

~~44. The FCC catalyst composition of any one Claims 37-43, wherein the rare earth element is present in a range of 0.1 wt% to about 20.0 wt% on an oxide basis.~~

~~45. A method of preparing a FCC catalyst composition according to Claim 37, comprising blending the non-cracking component and the non-zeolitic component~~directly mixed with a particle matrix.