



Letter to the Editor Star Valley Independent August 16, 2007


Dear Editor;


As the local organizer for the Caribou Clean Water Partnership, my role is to educate and engage the public about the selenium contamination risk. We welcome participation and urge you to become familiar with all of the science available.


A recent letter to your paper indicated that we are barking up the wrong tree. I would like to explore some of the points raised in it.

 First, Deer Creek is impacted by one of the pits and waste dumps from the old Georgetown Canyon Mine which sits at the head of the South Fork of Deer Creek; so mining does impact Deer Creek.

 And, the mine's 2006 monitoring reports show that Sage Creek and Hoopes Spring exceed drinking water standards by as much as three times. The same report shows that trout in Hoopes Spring, Sage Creek and Crow Creek below Sage Creek exceed the proposed USEPA fish standards.

 Arch by Idaho State University indicates that selenium concentrations at these levels predict a loss of up to 90 percent of trout carrying capacity. The entire Salt River may face fish population declines.

Not only fisherman should be concerned though, as trout are an early indicator of selenium contamination levels that impact other species. All water contamination is a danger to our future and selenium should not be considered unimportant or non-existent.  mine does spend money on selenium issues, but so far their efforts have not been successful.

 measure of success is not in the amount spent, but in how effective the clean up of selenium is. Regardless of expense, only effective prevention of selenium leaching and clean up of existing contamination will protect the future of Star Valley.

Respectfully,

 Li Bell