

Water Quality: Mine Drainage

Acid Mine Drainage. This unavoidable and destructive by-product of the sulfide mining process has been deemed one of the most serious threats to water quality by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

Mining into sulfide ores brings this volatile ore to the surface, crushing it and exposing it to water and oxygen, a dangerous combination that leads to a substance closely associated with battery acid. This acid makes its way through every crack and crevice and ultimately pollutes thousands of miles of rivers and streams every year. It contaminates drinking water and threatens animal and plant species.