

DATE: Jan. 29, 2013

CONTACT: Mark Shaffer, Director of Communications, (602) 771-2215 (o);
(480) 433-9551 (cell)

Silver Bell Mining, LLC Agrees to \$110,000 Settlement for Water Quality Violations from Spill near Marana

PHOENIX (Jan. 29, 2013) – Arizona Department of Environmental Quality officials announced today that Silver Bell Mining, LLC has agreed to pay a \$60,000 penalty and perform preventive actions valued at \$50,000 as part of a consent judgment to resolve water quality violations caused by a June 2010 spill from a pipeline at its Silver Bell Copper Mine near Marana in Pima County.

The actions agreed to by Silver Bell Mining to prevent future spills from pipelines include drafting and implementing a pipeline operations and maintenance manual covering more than 20 miles of pipelines; performing periodic pipeline physical inspections, tests and repairs; and training employees on proper procedures for fusing pipe segments together.

A rupture in a welded pipeline seam allowed 70,000 gallons of highly acidic solution, containing about 4,000 pounds of sulfuric acid and dissolved metals, to escape into a dry wash on Silver Bell property. The solution moved nearly 1 mile before being captured by a storm water impoundment, also on mine property. Pollutants in the discharge exceeded Arizona aquifer water quality standards for fluoride, arsenic, beryllium, cadmium, chromium, nickel and selenium.

Silver Bell Mining workers reacted quickly and contained the discharge on the property, recovering 13,000 gallons of liquids and removing 650 cubic yards of contaminated soil. Silver Bell also completed actions to prevent future similar pipeline ruptures, by reducing the radius of curvature in bends in its pipelines, installing equipment to decrease pipeline operating pressures, and changing the surface grades around pipelines to direct any future flows away from washes and into lined impoundments.

“This was a serious spill but Silver Bell reacted responsibly to contain it and clean it up and developed a plan to keep this from happening again,” said ADEQ Director Henry Darwin.

The consent judgment is subject to court approval.

To receive press releases by email: <http://www.azdeq.gov/subscribe.html>
Follow ADEQ on Facebook: <http://www.facebook.com/azdeq>
Follow ADEQ on Twitter: <http://twitter.com/ArizonaDEQ>