Unit 06\_GeoClips: Grand Canyon Groundwater

So now we're on the rim of the canyon. The rim of the canyon does not have streams on the surface. When it rains, which is not all that often, but when it rains, what happens is that the water soaks in. So if you had a rainstorm, you see the water start to make a stream, but then it soaks in. What happens to that water? It goes down through the spaces in the rocks until it hits a rock that it can't get through, such as the Bright Angel Shale. Then it runs along laterally and it comes out at those beautiful springs that we see in the canyon.

Now what's happening here is there's more and more people want to live here, and they want to have water, so they drill wells. And after you drill a well, you suck the water out and you use it to water your grass, or your crops, or your golf course, or to drink or flush or what have you, and eventually it evaporates. And so what you're doing is removing the water that should be running to the springs. And there's worry-- it's not happening yet, but there is worry-- that someday, we may start to lose the springs in the Grand Canyon and the unique biota, the wonderful ecosystems, that live down there because of development outside of the park up here.