



Australia Zoo

MEDIA RELEASE

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Australia Zoo Vows to Continue the FIGHT

The Land Court today reserved its decision to allow Cape Alumina the right to continue the exploration and drilling of Australia Zoo's conservation property, Steve Irwin Wildlife Reserve.

The Court heard a debate over the intended relationship between mining companies and land owners, under the Mineral Resource Act, particularly in relation to the obligations of mining companies providing appropriate notices of entry to the land owner.

The discussion also considered whether certain aspects of the Act were there to protect the land owner or to give the mining company overriding rights.

Australia Zoo has vowed to continue the fight to Save Steve's Place.

"The fight is only just beginning," Terri Irwin said today.

"This wetland conservation property is a tribute to Steve. I will do whatever I can to protect it.

"We will continue to fight to Save Steve's Place alongside the thousands of Australians who have already voiced their concern.

"The support has been inspiring, and has confirmed that we are representing the interests of a nation in protecting our wildlife and their habitat.

"The Save Steve's Place petition gives the people of Australia a voice – and it is ringing loud and clear. We are almost at 10,000 signatures!" Terri said.

To sign the petition, go to www.australiazoo.com.au and click on Save Steve's Place.

The 135,000 ha property, in Queensland's Cape York Peninsula, is home to a set of five important spring fed wetlands which provide a critical water source to threatened habitat, provide permanent flow of water to the Wenlock River, and is home to rare and vulnerable plants and wildlife.

Cape Alumina Pty Ltd has lodged mining lease applications which include approximately 12,300 ha of the Reserve.

"The proposed area for mining on the Steve Irwin Wildlife Reserve contains the head waters of irreplaceable waterways and unique biodiversity which will not recover after mining operations are finished," Terri said.

"I am a realist and I understand that mining is an important industry, however we have learned over the last 50 years of bauxite mining, it is critical to set aside the most environmentally sensitive areas, such as SIWR, and consider not mining them. Responsible mining companies are already doing this as part of developing carbon credit programs," Terri said.

Cape Alumina company documents indicate an intention to mine 50 plus million tons over a 10 year period commencing 2010. The greater part of this mine is on SIWR.

Initial surveying demonstrates that SIWR is home to rare and threatened plant and wildlife species including six plant species which are highly vulnerable and four plant species which have never been recorded on the western Cape York.

"We have also found rare birds - and that is after only initial surveys. Imagine all the treasures we will uncover after further research," Terri said.

The Wenlock River is also the richest in fresh water fish diversity of any Australian river, and supports a critical population of endangered Spear-tooth Sharks, Saw Fish and the now vulnerable Estuarine Crocodile.

The area, which was recently inspected by the Environmental Protection Agency, was found to contain unique springs and associated biodiversity which have an important hydrological role in the local area by providing perennial flow into the Wenlock River... which has the richest freshwater fauna of any Australian river.

"We will continue to work together with the Federal Government and the State Government in Queensland to protect the unique flora and fauna on the 135,000 hectares of the Steve Irwin Wildlife Reserve.

"Through internationally recognised research projects, fire management, feral animal control and ongoing infrastructure, employment opportunities will also continue into the future. Our dedication to this property for conservation and humanitarian benefit will far exceed the opportunity presented by ten years of mining."

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