



Australia Zoo

2 October 2008

Australia Zoo would like to clarify just a few of the number of inaccuracies recently reported in the press regarding the Steve Irwin Wildlife Reserve.

Firstly, Cape Alumina's claims that "there are probably no crocodiles" on the Reserve, is a case in point.

Steve Irwin tracked crocodiles in the Wenlock area well before Cape Alumina Pty Ltd was formed in 2004. This area has one of the most prolific populations of crocodiles in Australia and this is the reason the Reserve was identified to continue Steve's research.

As recently as August, Australia Zoo tracked a number of crocodiles on the Steve Irwin Wildlife Reserve, as reported by *60 Minutes*. Please find attached a photo of Terri Irwin jumping a crocodile on the Australia Zoo research trip in August this year on the Steve Irwin Wildlife Reserve.

Secondly, the claims that the area will be able to be rehabilitated after strip mining are inaccurate.

Damage from mining bauxite on the property is irreversible.

The proposed area for mining on the Steve Irwin Wildlife Reserve contains irreplaceable springs and unique biodiversity which will not recover after mining operations are finished.

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.

And finally, Australia Zoo's commitment to the Steve Irwin Wildlife Reserve is, and will continue to be significant.

Australia Zoo was invited by the Government to make an application for a project to honour the life and work of Steve Irwin.

The property on Cape York, now the Steve Irwin Wildlife Reserve, was identified by all parties as being of exceptional environmental significance.

Australia Zoo was not asked to fund any part of the purchase of this property.

As part of Australia Zoo's contribution to the acquisition of the Reserve, we have contracted with the Commonwealth to build a research station and to manage the 35 ecosystems so far discovered in perpetuity.

Our dedication to this property for conservation and humanitarian benefit will far exceed the opportunity presented by ten years of mining.

The fight against mining on the Steve Irwin Wildlife Reserve is not over.

The Land Court has granted Cape Alumina exploration rights onto the 135,000 ha property, and has allowed the company to complete its exploration drilling and environmental studies.

This is not a right to mine.

The Save Steve's Place petition gives the people of Australia a voice – and it is ringing loud and clear. We have received over 50,000 signatures, which affirms the public is behind us.

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To sign the petition, go to www.savestevesplace.com

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