

MEDIA RELEASE



17 August 2009

Brockovich joins fight to Save Steve's Place

Environmental crusader, Erin Brockovich, has voiced her support for Terri and Bindi Irwin's fight to protect the Steve Irwin Wildlife Reserve, a 135,000 ha conservation property in Queensland's Cape York Peninsula that's being threatened by strip mining.

"I admire all that Erin Brockovich has achieved and I'm very appreciative and honored to have Erin's support to help us fight to Save Steve's Place" Terri said.

"When people join the fight to Save Steve's Place, they are demonstrating that there is a global concern about setting aside the Steve Irwin Wildlife Reserve instead of destroying it for all time. The support has been inspiring, and has confirmed that we are representing the interests of a nation in protecting our wildlife and their habitat".

"We will continue to fight to Save Steve's Place alongside the tens of thousands of Australians, and now the thousands of people around the world, who have already voiced their concern" said Terri.

There are now over 207,000 people who have signed the petition. To join the fight and Save Steve's Place, log on to www.savestevesplace.com.au and sign the petition.

Australia Zoo would also like to clarify an inaccuracy recently reported in the press regarding Cape Alumina having permission to mine part of the Steve Irwin Wildlife Reserve prior to 2006. This statement is completely false. Cape Alumina has no track record of mining experience and has NEVER had any mining approvals granted anywhere.



Open every day (except Christmas Day) 9:00am - 5:00pm
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The 135,000 ha property, in Queensland's Cape York Peninsula, is home to a set of six 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 100 plus million tons over a 10 year period commencing 2013. 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.



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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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