



Save Steve's Place

The Mining

The integrity of the ecological and cultural values of The Steve Irwin Wildlife Reserve is seriously threatened by proposed strip mining for bauxite in its western area.

The area on the Steve Irwin Wildlife Reserve represents approximately 1% of the bauxite area under mining interests on western Cape York, but is of exceptionally high conservation significance.

Each of the impacts also results in further "knock on" effects across the landscape and further downstream in the river systems.

The Strip mining process will involve total vegetation destruction by bulldozer of over approximately 12,300 hectares, and the removal of three or more metres of bauxite.

Total loss of original biodiversity, including all vegetation and wildlife, and the entire landscape is lowered by 3 - 5 metres.



The supporting bauxite substrate on which the various plants and animals have taken millennia to evolve and adapt to cannot be replaced.

Regenerated areas never recover to original condition and biodiversity, and lack the large habitat trees with hollows that are crucial for nesting birds, possums, and goannas.



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What about the Springs?

Strip mined areas suffer from greatly altered hydrology.

The semi absorbent bauxite layer is no longer present to filter water down into the aquifer, and there is increased water run-off during the wet season rains.

There are grave concerns how this altered hydrology will affect the perennial function of the Perched Bauxite Springs and the Wenlock River.

These relic springs survive only because of the stable outflow of water from the bauxite plateau aquifer.

Increased wet season run off is going to increase turbidity and sedimentation of the Wenlock River, affecting sea grass beds downstream in Port Musgrave which are crucial feeding grounds for endangered marine turtle and dugong populations.

The increased wet season run off may also cause major flooding of crocodile nests, flooding which is currently mitigated by the absorbent effects of the bauxite layer which exists on a landscape scale.



For more information about the Steve Irwin Wildlife Reserve and the fight to Save Steve's Place, contact:
Phone: +61 7 5436 2000 Email: info@australiazoo.com.au Website: www.savestevesplace.com