



Protect the Gardens of Stone

“Say NO to open cut mining!”



Friday 13th May, 2011

MEDIA RELEASE: For immediate release

“Environment groups take action to protect Gardens of Stone”

The uniquely scenic and biodiverse Gardens of Stone is under imminent threat due to a consolidation proposal by Coalpac Pty Ltd. If approved, wildlife habitat and natural heritage will be lost forever, water systems will be stressed and there would be direct impacts for local residents. On Saturday 14th May, 2011 environment groups and their supporters will be taking action to help protect this iconic landscape from irredeemable destruction.

“Coalpac Pty Ltd seeks to extend open-cut and highwall mining into a large area of the publicly-owned Ben Bullen State Forest, NSW. The NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service has acknowledged its wish to add this forest to the conservation reserve system as a matter of priority” says Tara Cameron, Vice President of Blue Mountains Conservation Society.

“Many of the highwall scarps will abut strata directly below the ‘pagoda’ rock formations, their features and stability may be threatened by collapse. Environment groups are outraged at this proposal” says Tara Cameron.

“This forest is a publicly-owned area of conservation and recreational importance. The community expects state forests to be protected from destruction in perpetuity. If the NSW Government’s *Strategic Regional Landuse Policy* is to mean anything for sensitive, natural lands, then the Gardens of Stone must be protected from destructive mining operations,” says Keith Muir, Director of Colong Foundation for Wilderness.

“This landscape is biodiversity hotspot, characterised by rich old-growth forests. Our iconic Lyrebirds use the sides of pagodas to nest and raise their young. Mining will completely remove their food habitats as well as the habitats of at least 32 threatened native animals” says Belinda Fairbrother, Campaigns Manager for The Wilderness Society NSW.

“Water management and impacts over such a large, exposed open-cut area are of great concern. The large open cut will also create significant dust and air quality issues which will impact directly on local residents” says Caroline Graham, Vice President of Rivers SoS.

“Environment groups are calling on the government to reject this mining proposal and act to protect the region within a State Conservation Area. We are coming together at this event to send a clear message that ‘We say No to open cut mining!’ in this iconic area of our state” says Kevin Evans, EO of National Parks Association of NSW.

“Across NSW, areas of high conservation value and great beauty are under threat from the rapid expansion of the coal and coal seam gas industries. During this time of transitional arrangements on the regulation of coal mining, the State government has an opportunity to deliver on its promise of better protection of water resources and the environment by rejecting further mining at the iconic Gardens of Stone,” says Pepe Clarke, CEO of the Nature Conservation Council of NSW.

C/- Blue Mountains Conservation Society – P.O. Box 29 WENTWORTH FALLS NSW 2782

www.bluemountains.org.au

Media Opportunities:

- Photo/footage of large group of people, holding a large protest banner with a backdrop of spectacular rock formations and wilderness.
- Interviews with community leaders and supporters.
- Photo/footage of the Gardens of Stone and the Ben Bullen State Forest, NSW.

Assistance can be provided to travel to and access the site by contacting Justin McKee – see below.

Media Contacts:

Tara Cameron, Vice President of Blue Mountains Conservation Society (Morning)	M: 0419 824 974
Lachlan Garland, President of Blue Mountains Conservation Society (12pm onward)	M: 0415 317 078
Keith Muir, Director of Colong Foundation for Wilderness	M: 0412 791 404
Caroline Graham, Vice President of Rivers SoS	Ph: (02)4630 9421
Kevin Evans, Executive Officer of National Parks Association of NSW	M: 0457 797 977
Pepe Clarke, CEO of Nature Conservation Council of NSW	M: 0402 325 471
Belinda Fairbrother, Campaigns Manager of The Wilderness Society NSW	M: 0405 082 909

Event Coordinator: Contact Justin McKee on 0404 824 020

Event Information: Go to <http://bitly.com/hmyp3f>

