

Lake Jasper too Magnificent to Mine

Media release - New Threat to Ancient Lake.

10 Oct 2018

Recent investigations have uncovered a newly approved application for a mineral sand mine on the banks of the ancient and sacred Lake Jasper on WA's south coast.

This contentious Mining Lease went through the Department of Mines Warden Court recently with no acknowledgement to historical community concerns.

This area has been the focus of major social, cultural and environmental conflict since 1988 when the then WA state government decided to excise land from D'Entrecasteaux National Park to facilitate exploration and a potential mine on the banks of the ecologically important Lake Jasper - WA's largest permanent freshwater lake.

After exploration licences were granted (back in 1988), major mineral sand mining companies such as Cable Sands and Bmax Mining tried to get a mine in operation on the banks and catchment zone of Lake Jasper. Finally in 2010 the last mining proponent withdrew their application citing the potential environmental disaster they could not overcome involving Acid Sulphate Soils (ASS). It was declared the acid sulphate soil issues of the area was never going to be overcome as is evident at the nearby Beenup environmental disaster site. Beenup was a nearby mine that BHP closed due to ASS contamination of the Scott River water shed and ASS damage to mining equipment. Environmental damage and health concerns are still an issue today at Beenup with acidic sulphates leaching into the water system. The government has confirmed that acid sulphate soils exist at the proposed mine lease adjacent to Lake Jasper.

So despite a history of community concerns and with no community consultation the Department of Mines and the Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions has allowed Strategic Energy Resources to have a mining lease within this sensitive and fragile lake system.

We are not aware of any consultation or notification with past stakeholders, local community, indigenous community, environmental groups, local tourism associations, Landcare groups about the resurfacing of this major contentious environmental issue.

With a history of countless mining court hearings, hundreds of past mine objectors, contentious state government policy changes, related High court decisions - it seems very suspect that no community group with past links to this issue was notified.

The State Government was elected promising environmental responsibility and owes it to the public of WA to readdress this approval, and once and for all return this land and the banks of Lake Jasper into D'Entrecasteaux National Park.

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