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Dozers clear the way in Daintree
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DAINTREE landholders are bulldozing rainforest in a bid to lock in development rights and drive up the sticker price on their properties, a conservation organisation claims.

Swathes of the World Heritage listed rainforest in the Daintree, 100km north of Cairns, have been labelled conservation areas and are barred from development.

But up to 100 properties set aside as "rainforest residential" areas retain their development rights.

And owners of rainforest residential lots at Forest Creek Rd and adjacent to Cape Tribulation Rd, near Cape Kimberly are using earth moving equipment to clear rainforest from their blocks, Rainforest Rescue Daintree project officer David Cook said.

The clearings, while legal, are motivated by a bid to drive up the asking price for the land, Mr Cook alleged.

"It adds to the value of the property," he said.

"It proves there's a house site there and makes it easier in the mind of the potential buyer that there is a house site as opposed to looking at a jungle for trees on the hillside and wondering how you get a house on there."

Clearing also locked in council-granted development rights which expire after two years if no work is carried out on the land.

"The development authority can run out if you don't do something," Mr Cook said.

"So the obvious thing to is to get the bulldozer out."



Rainforest Rescue, which uses public donations to buy rainforest properties and turn them into nature refuges, is now calling for the State Government to step in and order a buyback of the remaining lots.

"We would like for no more trees to be cut down, for no more house sites to be created," Mr Cook said.

"If the Government extended a buyback, they'd become part of the national park."

Sustainability, Climate Change and Innovation Minister Andrew McNamara said the State Government appreciated Rainforest Rescue's efforts to preserve the Daintree.

But he said Government had already spent more than \$9 million on buying back properties in the Daintree, snapping up 173 allotments.

"A further 12 blocks totalling 22ha were purchased by the Australian Rainforest Foundation with State Government funding at a cost of about \$680,000," Mr McNamara said.

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About Rainforest Rescue

Not for profit organisation Rainforest Rescue protects and restores rainforests in Australia and internationally. Rainforest Rescue's projects re-establish rainforests through planting, maintenance and restoration programs, as well as purchasing and protecting high conservation value rainforest and preserving its biodiversity.

For more information about **Rainforest Rescue**, contact:
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