TRENDING

Australia Returns Huge Daintree Rainforest to its Aboriginal Owners on the Border of the Great Barrier Reef

By bestfolkmedicine · 05/10/2021 · 2 min read



Some of the most beautiful natural sites in Australia have gone back into Aboriginal ownership, including the Daintree rainforest in Queensland.

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This area that spans more than 160,000 hectares is now co-managed by the government and the Eastern Kuku Yalanji people.

The hope is for the area to eventually transition to full ownership and management by the indigenous owners.

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The official acknowledgment ceremony happened on the 29th of September in Bloomfield.

Indigenous Culture Is One of the Oldest Living Cultures

According to the Minister for the Environment and the Great Barrier Reef, indigenous culture is one of the oldest and by giving back the land, their right to ownership and management of their country is recognized.

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Chrissy Grant who has been a member of the Kuku Yalanji's negotiating committee for the past four years explains that their goal is to establish a foundation and provide confident and competent individuals with chances for training, mentoring, apprenticeships, employment, and work experience.

This will help Kuku Yalanji people to fill various positions from hospitality and tourism to land and sea management.

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The Importance of the Daintree Forest

The lowland tropical rainforest of Daintree is believed to be the oldest in the world. It's located around 78 miles north of Cairns and borders the Great Barrier Reef.

It's also on the UNESCO World Heritage site as part of the Wet Tropics of Queensland.

This designation was awarded in 1988 and UNESCO then wrote that this amazing area is pivotal because of its rich and one-of-a-kind biodiversity.

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A large number of rare flora and fauna called the Daintree home are found there and nowhere else on the planet. Some of them are the waterfall frog, the southern cassowary, the tube-nosed insectivorous bat, and Bennett's tree kangaroo.

The Aussie non-profit organization *Rainforest Rescue* that focuses on environmental conservation notes that the Daintree is home to 30 percent of the marsupial species and 20 percent of the reptile species.

Interestingly, this is the second time in as many weeks that the state government of Queensland has acknowledged the Aboriginal owners of a destination.

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Namely, recently, a place known as Fraser Island was restored to the traditional name K'gari that means 'paradise' in the Butchulla language.

This moment was recognized with a traditional Butchulla smoking ceremony on 19th September.

Sources:

CNN

BBC

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