

Cape York land returned to Aborigines

by UPI

CANBERRA, Australia -- A large area of tropical rain forest on Cape York in northern Australia is being returned to the management of the country's indigenous people. The 772-square-mile area contains about one-fifth of the tropical rain forests in Australia. David Claudie told the Australian Broadcasting Corp. his family and 22 other clans will be involved in managing the refuge, doing their best to preserve rare species such as the green tree python and the wenlock frog. "It has to have its own people there to manage it, that way it can be sustainable for everybody outside of it," he said. "Very exciting because on our homelands, with all this stuff here, each people, each Indigenous mob whether young or old will have their autonomy inside the homeland." Ownership of Cape York was returned to the indigenous people in 1999, but the area has continued to be managed by the government. The area to be formally handed over Wednesday is the first in a number of proposed refuges.

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