



TASMANIAN | Land | CONSERVANCY

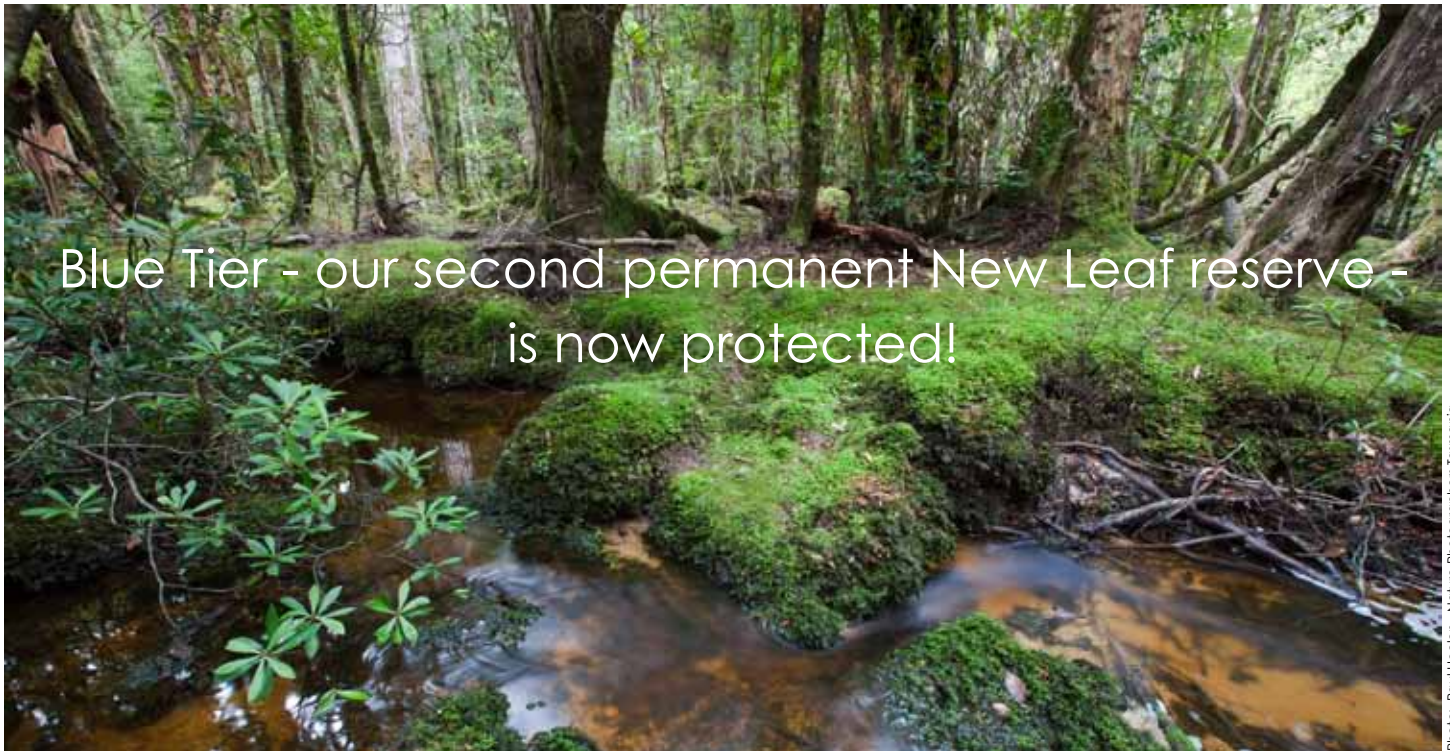


Photo: Paul Hoelen - Nature Photographers Tasmania

Blue Tier - our second permanent New Leaf reserve -
is now protected!

The Great Musselroe River begins as a small, sandy stream flowing beneath old-growth rainforest on the Blue Tier

Issue 34 Spring 2012

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We are very pleased to announce that our latest project to create our eleventh TLC permanent reserve - Blue Tier - has been successful!

Thank you to everyone who has helped to protect this very important remnant rainforest and animal refuge in the north-east highlands of Tasmania.

Raising the funds to purchase properties of significant ecological value is the first step in a long-term and ongoing relationship we form with the land. This issue takes a 'behind the scenes' look at what the TLC does to ensure that all the permanent reserves we create are managed and maintained to protect biodiversity. We also highlight some of our major activities and achievements in the 2011 - 2012 financial year.

Leigh Walters, TLC Reserve Manager, explains the process now underway in our wonderful Blue Tier permanent reserve, to demonstrate our commitment to the land purchase, the maintenance of its natural values and the useful connections that can be made with a wide range of community members.

Leigh says, "As with all TLC reserves, one of the first actions that needs

to occur is for the land to have a conservation covenant attached to the land title. This covenant will mean that the area is counted as part of Australia's National Reserve System and will be added to the ever-growing number of hectares of private land managed for conservation in Tasmania, and indeed throughout Australia. The covenanting process will occur over the next twelve months with our initial inspections of the property forming the basis for future investigations of the natural values which will include flora and fauna surveys, no doubt lots of fossicking around in rotting logs, and the installation of sensor cameras.

The information gathered from these activities forms part of the requirements for a conservation covenant application to be considered by the Minister for the Environment, Parks and Heritage under the Tasmanian Nature Conservation Act 2002.

The TLC has been a partner in the Tasmanian Government's Protected Areas on Private Land (PAPL) Program since 2002. The program is a joint initiative between the National Reserve

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Photo: Claire Needham - Nature Photographers Tasmania

Some members of Nature Photographers Tasmania. L to R: Andy Townsend, Paul Hoelen and Richard Williams on assignment for the TLC in the Blue Tier Reserve



Photo: Paul Hoelen - Nature Photographers Tasmania

Coral lichens and moss at TLC's Blue Tier Reserve

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System Program, the Department of Primary Industry, Parks, Water and Environment (DPIPWE) and the TLC. The program focuses on covenanting private land across Tasmania. Since its inception, the program has facilitated the permanent protection of over 8216 ha of private land through the registration of conservation covenants. The TLC has been directly involved in 5941 of those hectares, with over 3160 ha in the last twelve months receiving protection.

This same covenanting process also applies to all TLC permanent reserves, with the information gathered forming a key element in our permanent reserve management planning.

The TLC has recently adopted the use of a software tool called *Miradi*. The software streamlines the management planning process by identifying key conservation targets; the threats and risks to these key targets and activities to ameliorate the threats. In the longer term, *Miradi* will also be used to allocate TLC expenses associated with management activities and report the information in a format that can also incorporate work plans. All TLC reserves will be managed with the aid of *Miradi* in the future. This will ensure a science-based approach to reserve management across all TLC reserves that is also cost-effective.

As reported in our previous newsletter, we were surprised when a sensor camera we had positioned on the

Blue Tier property confirmed the presence of eastern quolls (*Dasyurus viverrinus*). Spotted-tailed quolls (*Dasyurus maculatus*) are usually more common in this rainforest environment. This led me to a discussion with University of Tasmania (UTAS) PhD candidate Bronwyn Fancourt who is undertaking her research on quolls. Bronwyn provided me with the latest research results on quolls in Tasmania, confirming that both quoll species in Tasmania have suffered a significant decline in recent times. Therefore securing known habitat such as our Blue Tier Reserve has even greater value given the apparent situation for the species.

We are keen to make available other TLC permanent reserves and New Leaf properties to Bronwyn to conduct surveys. The TLC has a wide range of connections in the rural community and we have obtained permission for Bronwyn to visit a northern midlands property where the landowner has noticed a significant decline in the number of quolls seen on his property.

The TLC's network of supporters help to make connections with researchers such as Bronwyn. This not only adds to our knowledge of TLC reserves but also helps to contribute to a wider knowledge of species such as the eastern quoll.

In addition, TLC Conservation Scientist Matt Taylor is collaborating with another UTAS researcher to conduct further

investigations into the invertebrates found on our Blue Tier Reserve.

In the near future we will arrange field trips to the Blue Tier Reserve with local biologists and other specialists to document ecological values across the reserve. The information gathered from these processes and partnerships will provide input into the Blue Tier management plan; the next milestone in our long-term relationship with the reserve.

We use this science-based approach to ensure that all our reserves benefit the wider community through increased knowledge and contribute to a more robust reserve system across Tasmania.”

Congratulations to Paul Hoelen (front page image, above and centre page left) for being awarded Australian Master of Photography and a prestigious Gold Award at the Australian Professional Photography Awards in May 2012 and also Runner Up Emerging Landscape Photographer of the Year at the Top Emerging Photographers in Australia Awards as published in Capture Magazine May 2012.

Thank you to Paul and all Nature Photographers Tasmania for the stunning images taken on TLC permanent reserves and for their permission for the TLC to publish free of charge.

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Myrtle beech (*Nothofagus cunninghamii*) in TLC's Blue Tier ReserveCoral fungus (*Clavaria miniata*) in TLC's Blue Tier Reserve

2011 - 2012 year in review

The last financial year has been one of organisational change and growth for the TLC. It began with the retirement of Peter Bosworth and Nathan Males, in the roles of President and CEO, respectively. Both Peter and Nathan gave many years of dedicated service to the TLC. We are fortunate that Nathan continues to work with us on strategic projects and Peter remains on the Board and is the inaugural chair of the newly formed Conservation Science and Planning Advisory Council, reporting to the Board.

Under Nathan's guidance as the first President and first CEO of the organisation, the TLC has grown from a fledgling organisation to one of great strength, with an ambitious but achievable vision supported by incredibly committed donors, volunteers, partners and staff.

The Conservation Science and Planning Advisory Council is an advisory body to the TLC board ensuring that the TLC's conservation programmes are based on sound scientific principles. Members of the council include eminent scientists from the University of Tasmania, government departments and private practice.

The Council has contributed to the further development of Focal Landscapes planning across Tasmania. These landscapes form the focus of most of our conservation programmes.

The TLC has this year made important progress on implementing our Strategic Plan. This document guides the implementation of the TLC's vision for Tasmania to be a global leader in nature conservation and sustainability.

The long-term sustainability of our permanent reserves is funded through the TLC Foundation which was formally launched in April this year. The Foundation, stewarded by a dedicated sub-committee of the TLC Board chaired by Susan Gough, is the primary mechanism by which the TLC will ensure our permanent reserves are properly funded for biodiversity conservation in the future. It is a capital fund, the interest from which is used to cover the essential reserve management costs of our conservation jewels, the TLC's permanent reserves, such as the Blue Tier, Skullbone Plains and the Vale of Belvoir.

Strong governance and financial management underpin our business processes. This measured and thorough approach is applied across all our conservation activities. With the help of our supporters we have created two new permanent reserves this year, Skullbone Plains and Blue Tier, both part of our New Leaf project. Thanks to the generosity of our supporters we now own 11 permanent reserves covering 3483 hectares.

A significant amount of work was

undertaken on TLC's properties during 2011 - 2012, largely due to the generous support of partner organisations and our passionate volunteers. While Skullbone Plains was the main focus of effort, management across all TLC reserves was ongoing. On-ground work included treatment of gorse at Long Point, Spanish heath on Egg Islands, blackberry and foxglove at Liffey Reserve and the delivery of stage one ragwort removal on New Leaf properties. Over 20 cubic metres of rubbish including 170 vehicle tyres, was collected from Flat Rock Reserve with the help of international student volunteers.

Over 200 volunteers contributed 677 days of work on TLC reserves, equating to \$162,480 value in labour, which is a huge contribution to the organisation.

An exciting range of scientific programs was undertaken on TLC land, foremost being the Australian Biological Resources Study (ABRS) Bush Blitz at Skullbone Plains in February 2012. Over 20 scientists participated in a five-day program of discovery.

Other key programs included surveys of the nationally endangered miena cider gum, funded by the BK Dhal Trust and NRM South, long-term monitoring of the Clarence galaxiid at Skullbone Plains, Tasmanian bettong surveys at Flat Rock, ptunnarra brown butterfly and threatened plant surveys at the Vale of Belvoir, and population assessments



Eastern quoll (*Dasyurus viverrinus*) at TLC's Blue Tier Reserve

Photo: Leigh Walters



TLC CEO Jane Hutchinson attaching an infra-red sensor camera to a tree in the TLC's Skullbone Plains Reserve

Photo: Matthew Newton - Nature Photographers Tasmania

continued

of the Tasmanian devil and wedge-tailed eagle across New Leaf properties.

Two programs with DPIPWE specialists on aging sphagnum peatlands and monitoring dwarf conifers have only just begun and promise to yield significant results. Monitoring for management across all TLC properties is and will be a continued focus in the coming year.

We also completed an additional phase of the multi-year Woodland Bird Habitat Protection Program. This project, in partnership with BirdLife Australia, Trust for Nature (Vic) and Nature Conservation Trust (NSW) commenced in 2010. Over the two phases of the project the TLC has secured 16 covenants on private land protecting 702 ha of priority grassy woodland. We are grateful to the staff of DPIPWE for their tremendous support in this and all TLC's covenanting work.

A major result was achieved in February with the award of a Caring for Our Country grant to complete on-ground works and establish conservation agreements over the next two years as part of our Midlandscapes partnership with Bush Heritage Australia and DPIPWE.

Over the next year we will continue to implement the TLC's 2050 Strategic Plan and focus on creating a solid platform for Tasmania to lead globally in nature conservation and sustainability.

Conservation monitoring

To learn more about the natural values of our permanent reserves our team of conservationists and volunteers spend thousands of hours each year performing important land management and conservation activities.

Each reserve is unique and its values are identified in specific management plans that include long-term monitoring programs. The TLC's conservation work is science-driven and many of the exciting programs link into conservation programs statewide or nationally.

Gathering monitoring data is critical to our ability to monitor fauna, flora and changes to the habitat over time. Fortunately in recent years the cost and durability of sensing devices such as infra-red motion sensor cameras and high resolution static image cameras are now within the reach of conservation organisations.

Infra-red sensor cameras are especially useful when gathering data on fauna. This equipment reduces the need and stress of trapping and provides a range of other invaluable fauna information over a longer period of time. We now plan to monitor fauna diversity across our reserves with such cameras and use this information to ensure our management continues to provide these species with the highest level of protection. We plan to share this valuable information more widely with educational and scientific bodies and, of course, our TLC supporters.

In addition to sensor cameras for fauna surveillance, we are also establishing permanent posts or 'photo points' on our reserves. These will be sites where we visit to take a high resolution photograph and then use the photo to measure changes in plant diversity and vegetation changes over time.

To make both programs a reality, the TLC will purchase infra-red sensor cameras and cameras to take the static monitoring photographs, and software for analysis. Additionally, each photo point for the static camera locations will need posts permanently fixed into the ground with a stainless steel plate with camera instructions.

These photo points are a really useful technique – and in fact, once installed, we will be encouraging TLC supporters to visit them, take a picture (according to the directions on a metal plate on the post) and then upload their picture onto our web-site and hence contribute to our monitoring program.

We are very grateful to the Purves Environmental Fund and the Purryburry Trust for providing multi-year grants to assist with conservation and land management at Skullbone Plains Permanent Reserve.



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Photo: Denna Kingdom

Volunteers carrying their tools through the wetlands after a long day of cutting and painting gorse



Photo: Matthew Newson

Long Point saltmarsh overlooked by The Hazards in the distance

The Long (Point) road to recovery

Our first permanent reserve, Long Point Reserve at Swansea, is in the most spectacular part of Tasmania, according to TLC's Reserve Manager, Denna Kingdom. Nine years after its purchase by TLC supporters, Denna takes us along the TLC's journey of Long Point.

"My first visit to Long Point Reserve was in 2005 as a volunteer accompanying the TLC's co-founder Jim Mulcahy. We were visiting the neighbour John Cotton, who was finalising a conservation covenant over part of his farm, The Grange. Long Point had been a part of The Grange, which was owned by several generations of the Cotton family, and their sensitive management of their 'back paddock' had preserved much of its wetland conservation values.

Having listened to John's childhood memories of Long Point with its numerous banksias and white gums, Jim and I drove along the rough eight kilometre track across The Grange. About half-way along, at the top of a steep hill, a jaw-dropping view simply burst from the paddock. The blue sky reflected in the vast waters of Moulting Lagoon, an internationally important wetland, while the massive granite rock outcrops of The Hazards rose up behind the lagoon. Almost an island within Moulting Lagoon, Long Point appears as a small fish-hook of grasslands and woodlands, surrounded by a flush of colour – the vibrant lime-green of the saltmarsh plants' new growth contrasting with the deep scarlet of last year's leaves. I still pinch myself every time I see the view from this point, despite having seen it nearly 100 times.

As we walked around the newly

declared Long Point Reserve, several observations have left a lasting impression in my memory. There were the frequent footprints and scats of Tasmanian devils in the mud of the wetlands; the discovery of a threatened saltmarsh plant; the gentle and constant honking of the black swans on the water surrounding us; and the gorse.

The gorse! Often head-high, this very prickly environmental weed seemed to be nearly everywhere that wasn't wetland. Gorse isn't tolerant to salt, so it doesn't grow in the wetlands, but it had invaded 80 per cent of the property's coastal grassland and woodland areas.

Jim talked about the options for controlling it and I vividly remember thinking that he had a big job ahead of him. Little did I know then that I would be the person responsible for managing this very large, prickly task.

Over the subsequent seven years and using internationally recognised conservation planning methods to guide us, the TLC's reserve management team has surveyed Long Point for its conservation values and the threats to those values, mapped the vegetation and other important features, researched strategies to deal with the threats, and collated this research into a conservation management plan.

The Long Point Reserve Management Plan was finalised in 2007 and has been implemented and revised annually to ensure that the lessons we learn each year are remembered the following year. Key among the management strategies at Long Point has been the rehabilitation of the coastal grasslands and woodlands, which aim to return these areas to the

condition that John Cotton recalls from his childhood memories. The nuts-and-bolts of this project has involved contractors, staff and more than 150 volunteers who have put in a total of 1200 days of work on seemingly endless gorse control, and a revegetation project to assist natural regeneration.

Seven years on, the changes at Long Point are obvious. Back in 2005, scientific transects through these areas recorded gorse present in over 95 per cent of sites, with very few other plants noted. I worked with volunteers in one of these areas last month and it is now dominated by native grasses and shrubs. As well, many of the native seedlings that were planted in 2008 are now taller than me and are producing seeds of their own. In these areas, the TLC has turned a significant corner and the big job of long-term rehabilitation is becoming a reality.

Long Point was the original test of the TLC's determination to manage its permanent reserves successfully. The land management ethos that the small TLC team developed in 2005 for Long Point has been carried over into all our subsequent permanent reserves, and is now being delivered equally across all of our properties.

The more time we spend at Long Point Reserve, the more it is cemented in my mind as being the most spectacular part of Tasmania, without a doubt."

If you are interested in purchasing a large conservation lifestyle property adjoining the TLC Long Point Reserve with spectacular views of Moulting Lagoon and the Hazards, please call Jim Mulcahy on 0424 505 184.



Fletcher in action



Superb fairy wren



Students participating in their Free Dress and Wacky Hair Day

Fundraising Fun - creative ways to protect the Blue Tier

Our Blue Tier project inspired some wonderful young supporters in two Tasmanian schools to invent creative ways to raise money and help purchase and maintain our Blue Tier permanent reserve.

Fletcher McCormack is a student at Tarremah Steiner School (www.tarremah.tas.edu.au). Fletcher used his skills and passion for bird photography to create and sell greeting cards.

The students of Taroona Primary School (<http://www.schools.education.tas.gov.au/taronaprimery/default.aspx>) had lots of fun being sponsored to have a crazy hair-do and dress-up for a day.

Thank you all very much for your terrific support and creativity!

Here are their stories:

Fletcher says, "In Year 8 we are asked to work independently on a project that we are passionate about. I am passionate about birds, photography and bushwalking, so I combined the three to do a project on bird photography. I spent a bit of time making and selling woodwork to earn the money to buy my camera and lenses.

As part of my project I wanted to do something to protect a bird habitat. Working with my mentor, accomplished bird photographer Els Wakefield, we decided that the TLC would be the best way to do that. I met with TLC's Sally Bryant to discuss which TLC project I

should fundraise for. While many TLC reserves protect birds, we chose the Blue Tier project because of the high numbers of woodland birds in this area, and because it is a current fundraising focus of the TLC.

By this time I had taken a few good bird photos that I thought might look good on greeting cards. I chose five images and had them professionally printed. I've been selling these cards in packs of five for \$8. All the profits go to the TLC Blue Tier project. The first print run of 250 cards (50 packs) has almost sold out, so I've just started selling a second print run of different bird photos. I'm happy to keep printing cards to raise funds for the Blue Tier project, now to help to fund sensor cameras, as long as people are happy to keep buying them.

They can be bought at Tarremah Steiner School's front office (Nautilus Drive, Huntingfield, Tasmania). I am happy to mail two packs or more for \$8 per pack plus postage. I can be contacted at themacs@skymesh.com.au.

I have gained more out of this project than I ever thought I would. It's allowed me to develop skills in bird photography, fundraising, digital imaging and printing. I've enjoyed working with many talented and supportive people. I hope to continue to fundraise for the Blue Tier monitoring project and see this area protected for birds and

photographers alike."

Taroona Primary School is close to the TLC Hobart office and we were very pleased to learn of the students' enthusiasm to support our Blue Tier project.

Venus Palmer Bock and Emily Evans are two students at the school. Along with their friends, they recently held a fundraising event. Venus and Emily tell us about the day.

"On Friday 20th July Taroona Primary School had a *Free Dress and Wacky Hair Day* to raise money for the Tasmanian Land Conservancy. We also had mystery envelopes given to each student to take home to their parents. If they wished they could also donate money to the TLC. With around 350 students in our school we managed to raise \$800. We saw pictures of the land which our money could buy and were given a talk about the TLC."

A tremendous effort - well done!

In memory of Stephen Blanden

Stephen Blanden was passionate about the TLC's Vale of Belvoir Reserve near Cradle Mountain in north-west Tasmania. Stephen spent much of his time in the Vale exploring and mapping the caves and karst there. We are very grateful to Stephen for his wonderful support over many years.

We are grateful to the following organisations for their support in recent months

