



# TASMANIAN | Land | CONSERVANCY



Celebrating the past, present and future

Photo: Matthew Newton

John Young commands a whaling boat to Recherche Bay Reserve

## Issue 29 Winter 2011

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Nathan Males

## Contact/donate

PO Box 2112, Lower Sandy Bay, TAS 7005

Tel: 03 6225 1399 Fax: 03 6225 1394

[www.tasland.org.au](http://www.tasland.org.au) [info@tasland.org.au](mailto:info@tasland.org.au)

ABN 887 43 606 934

"It is difficult to describe my feelings at the sight of the solitary harbour situated at the extremes of the world, so perfectly enclosed that one feels separated from the rest of the universe." These were the thoughts of French Vice-Admiral Bruny d'Entrecasteaux as his two ships, Recherche and Espérance, dropped anchor in the waters we know today as Recherche Bay.

To celebrate the anniversary 219 years later, on Sunday 22 May we hosted a fun-filled education and activity day at the TLC Recherche Bay Reserve. Financial support was provided by the federal government as part of Australian Heritage Week 2011.

The sun shone as 100 TLC supporters mustered at Moss Glen to make the voyage across the bay in a flotilla of boats. From beautifully crafted traditional wooden boats provided and captained by Greg Guy, Peter Lunstead and John Young of The Living Boat Trust, to the 21<sup>st</sup> century amphibious marine craft supplied and skillfully manoeuvred by Adrian Dale and Allegra Biggs Dale of Bruny Island Experience, we navigated the water to set foot on the shore of the TLC Recherche Bay Reserve.

Short guided walks were expertly

narrated by Sib Corbett and Dr Andrew Cole, describing the natural values of the area and historical astronomical experiments conducted in 1792.

As the Ikin family, supporters of the TLC said, "It was a unique experience to go across by boat and land on the shores where history is written deeply."

Thank you to all involved in the events of the day, and to the local Moss Glen community, the Leprena Trust and the Tasmanian Parks and Wildlife Service for their on-going association and support of the reserve.

Since procuring Recherche Bay, with support from many quarters we have now permanently protected over two per cent of private land in Tasmania; a result that back in 2006 was beyond our wildest dreams. Now, as the financial year comes to a close, we are diligently working towards the \$3,000,000 target for our ambitious New Leaf Project.

This newsletter outlines our long-term vision for Tasmania and some examples of tangible conservation outcomes we have achieved over the last three months. With continued community support we can all make a positive difference to the conservation of Tasmania's special places.

'protecting Tasmanian land for biodiversity'



*Eucalyptus pauciflora* woodland at dawn, Skullbone Plains

Photo: Rob Blakes, Nature Photographers Tasmania

## Our vision for Tasmania

From space our planet has a jewel-like beauty and is a unique place of life amidst an infinite, empty, lifeless expanse. We live on a priceless, irreplaceable 'ark' and yet everywhere there are signs of stress, rapid extinction of species and loss of resilience in broad-scale systems like our climate, our water cycles and our landscapes.

Tasmania is one of planet Earth's great natural places. Hanging below the vast Australian continent, Tasmania is a verdant island which has, remarkably, retained much of its nature and wildness. A large proportion of this natural inheritance is protected in parks, public and private reserves and the internal conservation systems of public and private forestry companies. Altogether, the land in Tasmania classified for conservation amounts to almost 45 per cent; greater than almost any other place on the planet.

While our reserve system costs money to manage and delivers few dollars directly back to the economy, we believe it is also our greatest treasure and source of opportunities.

With hundreds of hours of community, partner and supporter input, the TLC recently completed a 2050 vision and strategic plan. Quite simply, our vision is for Tasmania to be a global leader in nature conservation and sustainability.

We believe that Tasmania is well placed to play a leading role in global conservation efforts by demonstrating leadership in protected area establishment, management and

planning, and by becoming a leader in sustainable farming, forestry, fishing and other natural resource sectors.

We also believe that by building a real reputation for excellence in the conservation and sustainability areas the Tasmanian 'brand' will underpin both our export and tourism sectors.

In addition, making conservation and sustainability a centre-piece of our state's vision has real potential to add value to the quality of life for all Tasmanians; and to provide long-term, stable, and rewarding business and employment opportunities across the conservation, farming, forestry and other natural resource sectors.

While the TLC is a small player in the Tasmanian community, we believe we have an important role to contribute towards achieving this vision. To this end the TLC has set itself an ambitious mission through which we aim to work closely with our supporters and our partners in government, community and other organisations to deliver. Over the next 40 years the TLC aims to:

- 1) take a leadership role in building a landscape scale approach to conservation, including a world class system of reserves complemented by innovative approaches to conservation and sustainable development;
- 2) demonstrate excellence in management for biodiversity conservation;

- 3) contribute to Tasmania becoming a centre for knowledge for biodiversity conservation and planning;
- 4) develop and implement innovative mechanisms for achieving sustainability and biodiversity conservation;
- 5) provide opportunities and mechanisms for communities and individuals to achieve conservation;
- 6) demonstrate organisational leadership through exceptional governance, independence, autonomy and self sufficiency.

We are dedicated to this vision for Tasmania and the TLC's mission. Both provide a road map for our long-term work and our day-to-day operational decisions.

I thank the hundreds of people, partner organisations (particularly the staff of the state government's Private Land Conservation Program), TLC staff, volunteer committee members and supporters who have contributed to developing these statements. I also thank Tony Ibbott who donated his time to facilitate many of the planning sessions.

We are excited about the future and look forward to working with groups and individuals to bring the vision closer to reality, and to playing a positive and important part in ensuring our beautiful planet lives on.

Nathan Males  
TLC CEO

'protecting Tasmanian land for biodiversity'



Emergent rushes at Skullbone Plains, late afternoon

Photo: Andy Townsend, Nature Photographers Tasmania

## Conservation management in action

The challenge is large but the future of the TLC's reserves looks bright.

Good land management comes from good planning, regardless of what the land is being managed for. The TLC has a history of developing, monitoring and reviewing conservation management plans that follow international standards, ensuring that actions are linked to conservation goals. With the addition of New Leaf properties to our portfolio - representing a ten-fold increase in area - the challenge is set to effectively manage our reserves into the future.

After much analysis and discussion of the TLC's 2050 vision for Tasmania and its mission in achieving that vision, it is refreshing to know that not much will need to change in our current on-ground operations. However, it has given us direction to strengthen our management planning with the aid of new tools to prioritise our tasks and ensure that we work effectively and efficiently across our reserves, bearing in mind that more reserves will inevitably come under our guardianship.

The management planning for our newest reserve - Skullbone Plains - is the first to benefit from our use of the new planning tools. 'Miradi' is one of these, being a software program that specialises in assisting conservation planners and land managers to visualise the connections between conservation targets and their threats. Developed by the Conservation Measures Partnership, a consortium of international conservation organisations, 'Miradi' is a very flexible tool and has

been used to plan many conservation projects across the planet.

One of the key threats to the conservation targets of Skullbone Plains is the introduction of pests, weeds and diseases. Some of these can be carried in by people, either intentionally or unintentionally; gorse seeds and root-rot fungus sneak in on muddy vehicles and shoes; and trout may be brought in intentionally by ultra-keen fly fishers looking for a private fishing location. Deer are also established in the area and controlling their populations is essential to maintain the conservation values of the grasslands.

To this end, the TLC has a Reserve Hygiene Policy which we implement to minimise the introduction and transfer of weeds and diseases, and we have also recently developed an 'access strategy' which facilitates the issuing and tracking of gate keys needed to access Skullbone Plains and the surrounding New Leaf properties. Visitors can gain access by request, and are provided with information regarding the threat posed by pests, weeds and diseases and how they can prevent their introduction. Signs are also being installed across our reserves which welcome visitors but restrict activities that threaten the conservation values of each property.

In talking with neighbours and local groups, we are not alone in realising the importance of managing these threats. Partnering with locals increases the efficiency for everyone involved, by reducing individual financial costs

and efforts but increasing the overall outputs.

Managing the deer population has in the past been carried out by local shooting groups. In many cases these groups have been visiting the New Leaf properties for decades and have an intimate knowledge of the deer populations. The TLC is working with these groups to further our understanding of the deer populations and how to control them. To add to the local knowledge we have also been talking with Landcare Research New Zealand, who have extensive global experiences in controlling feral animals in conservation areas. These local and international partnerships strengthen the TLC's capacity to excel in land management planning and practice.

Whilst our vision and mission may be bold, we are building upon the TLC's ten years of experience and we are using cutting-edge, international standards to strive for excellence in the management for biodiversity conservation on our reserves.

**Denna Kingdom**  
TLC Reserves Manager



Common wombat at TLC's Skullbone Plains

Photo: Andy Townsend, Nature Photographers Tasmania



Forty-spotted pardalote

Photo: Chris Taros, Birds Australia

*Poa* tussock grassland transects (in the distance) at the Vale of Belvoir

Photo: Grant Dixon, Nature Photographers Tasmania

## Woodland birds

The Commonwealth funded Woodland Bird Project that commenced in late 2009 is nearing completion. This national project, administered by Birds Australia and involving Victoria, NSW and the TLC, has been an outstanding success with a total of over 660 hectares of priority woodland bird habitat now protected by permanent covenants.

The TLC secured five significant properties for the project, three on Bruny Island and two on the east coast. Over 360 ha of woodland was covenanted, of which 180 contained either known breeding sites or foraging habitat for the nationally endangered Swift parrot or Forty-spotted pardalote.

In late May 2011, Matt Taylor and I escorted Michelle Hutchins and Don Thomson from the Commonwealth's Environment Department and Chris Taros from Birds Australia around these properties. All were thrilled with their woodland values and excited that the funding had translated into such significant 'on ground' protection.

An additional private donation, from Maria Island Walks through Ian and Bronwyn Johnstone, will enable the two Bruny Island properties to increase their woodland bird values into the future. This generous donation will be provided once the final stage of the covenanting documentation is complete. The national project team is now working on a second stage proposal for the Commonwealth. We do, after all, have the best looking birds!

Dr Sally Bryant

TLC Manager Reserves and Research

## Butterfly monitoring at the Vale

It's mid-March, and we've arrived at the Vale of Belvoir at a very respectable 10am. The sky is clear and a quick check of the thermometer reveals that it's 15 degrees Celsius. For a sub-alpine area it's the perfect time to be doing fieldwork and, this time at least, it's no coincidence.

We're looking for Ptunarra brown butterflies (*Oreixenica ptunarra*), an unassuming orange-brown butterfly that is listed as vulnerable to extinction. The behaviours of this butterfly don't help its predicament – Ptunarra browns only fly for three weeks each year and only on warm, sunny and still days that, as any bushwalker can attest, rarely occur here in March.

Ptunarra brown butterflies are endemic to Tasmania and its only habitat is *Poa* tussock grasslands. In Tasmania, the extent of these grasslands has been reduced significantly, leaving little habitat left for this species. To add to their plight, Ptunarra browns are poor flyers, don't disperse well, and don't tend to leave *Poa* grasslands. These factors combine to make it easy for their populations to become locally extinct and difficult for them to colonise new areas.

The Vale of Belvoir is one of the strongholds of the Ptunarra brown butterfly – around 1000 hectares of relatively continuous *Poa* grassland has allowed populations of this invertebrate to thrive. The TLC established a Ptunarra brown butterfly monitoring program in 2010, in partnership with Cradle Coast NRM and the Tasmanian Government's

Threatened Species Unit.

Permanent monitoring transects have been established at the Vale along which staff and volunteers annually record the Ptunarra brown populations. Preliminary results indicate similar patterns in the butterflies' populations across the transects, and we will use this information to monitor how our management of the Vale might affect the populations of this species.

Our second day at the Vale produces perfect butterfly weather. In the autumn sunshine, clusters of Ptunarra browns dash from tussock to tussock, the males chasing prospective mates and the females dropping vivid green eggs. With any luck, we'll be back again next year to count the success or otherwise of their offspring, working towards securing the survival of this species.

Denna Kingdom

TLC Reserves Manager



Ptunarra brown butterfly at the Vale of Belvoir

Photo: Denna Kingdom

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Photo: Matt Taylor

*Doodia aspera* discovery at Ironhouse Point

## Fern discovery

In 2009 I discovered *Doodia aspera*, a species of fern previously unknown in Tasmania. We were very excited when on 1 April 2011 this fern was added to the Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery's Tasmanian Vascular Plants Census 2011.

This population of *Doodia aspera*, or Prickly rasp fern, is confined to the riparian forest understory, which also supports a population of the threatened fern *Blechnum cartilagineum* - another extremely restricted species.

In November 2009, I was conducting a property survey in north-east Tasmania as part of the covenanting process under the Protected Areas on Private Land Program.

I was fossicking about on a property at Ironhouse Point on the coastal foothills of Mount Elephant when I discovered these two threatened fern species.

The landowner, Greg Unwin, initially sought a conservation covenant for the site to protect its Blue gum forest and habitat for Swift parrots and Sea eagles. "I have always considered it to be a special place for native ferns as well", Greg said. "So I was extremely gratified when Matt Taylor of the TLC identified *Doodia aspera* at the site."

Greg has reported that the regeneration of this forest site has been prolific since widespread defoliation by wildfires. Following on from natural disturbance events, and now protected in perpetuity by the Ironhouse Point covenant, these two threatened fern species are flourishing.

Matt Taylor  
TLC Conservation Officer



Photo: Diana Cameron

Anthony Smith in his "Smithfield" forest reserve

## The Midlands Conservation Fund

April 13<sup>th</sup> 2011 marked an important milestone for the Tasmanian midlands with the official company registration of the Midlands Conservation Fund (MCF), limited by guarantee and jointly owned by the TLC and Bush Heritage Australia (BHA).

The MCF is a new innovation in private land conservation funding in Australia that would never have come to fruition without the foresight and generosity of donors and encouragement of landowners who have supported its establishment.

Through BHA, \$2.6 million has been raised as start-up capital for the fund and we aim to increase this to at least \$10 million by 2020. The fund will be managed as a perpetual fund and its earnings will be used to establish long-term agreements with landowners to manage critically important conservation assets in the midlands.

MCF stands as an incorporated entity through which TLC and BHA can work together on achieving lasting conservation outcomes in the midlands. It provides a dedicated governance structure that demonstrates to the community and donors our long-term commitment to the midlands.

Anthony Smith of Powranna in the northern midlands has 55 hectares of threatened Black peppermint forest on gravel deposits. It is rich in heaths and wildflowers, and he has a stewardship contract with TLC to help with the costs of maintaining and managing this area in its excellent condition. He remarked:

"It (the MCF) means that incentives

and options for looking after our good patches of bush and native grassland are available permanently - year on year. Also, in the future we can renew our stewardship contracts if we are prepared to keep providing good biodiversity management. Looking after these unique areas of native habitat is too important to be left to the whims of government funding cycles and the threat of neglect."

The Midlands Conservation Fund gratefully acknowledges the very generous support of the Myer Foundation and Sidney Myer Fund 2009 Commemorative Grants Program, John T Reid Charitable Trusts and private donors.

Andrew Cameron  
TLC Midlandscapes Coordinator

Thank you !  
Nature Photographers Tasmania

For four frosty days in April, the dedicated folk of Nature Photographers Tasmania braved harsh conditions for the second time to capture magnificent images of TLC reserves.

We are incredibly grateful to each of the photographers, who are among Tasmania's finest landscape photographers, for their invaluable support.

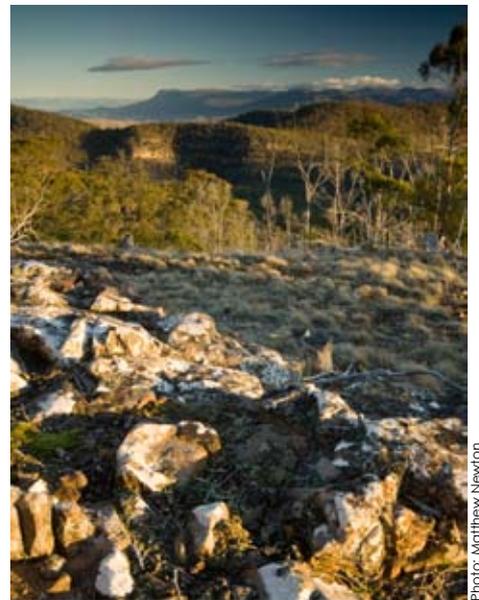
The images will be curated in an exhibition to be shown later in the year and some will also be posted on the TLC website and blog so please visit :

[www.tasland.org.au/blog/](http://www.tasland.org.au/blog/)

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Peter Cosier



TLC Flat Rock Reserve

Photo: Jane McDonald

Photo: Matthew Newton

## Board profile and changes

We are very pleased to announce that Peter Cosier has been appointed to the TLC board.

Peter is the Director and a founding member of the Wentworth Group of Concerned Scientists, an institution established in 2002 with the aim of connecting science to public policy.

He was born in rural NSW and has a background in science, specialising in natural resources management and urban and regional planning. His expertise is in environmental policy.

He has worked at all levels of government - federal, state and local - and also in private business. He established one of Australia's first Landcare groups, is passionate about the conservation of the world's biodiversity, and gave his first paper on climate change in 1989.

In Peter's words: "A modern industrial economy can provide the means for protecting life on earth and still deliver great advances in human wellbeing, but if humanity is to live in harmony with nature, this requires a fundamental transformation of our economic and political institutions."

Peter was delighted to be invited to join the TLC board because he believes that the conservation of Australia's biodiversity can only be achieved by working with and providing support to

the many thousands of farmers and other landholders who integrate conservation into their every day land management.

After three years of active board membership, John Ramsay has reluctantly resigned. John has had a long and distinguished career in the Tasmanian public sector and extensive experience in environmental, conservation and land management issues in Tasmania. We thank John for his excellent contribution to the board.

We also thank Dr Karina Potter for her tremendous expertise as Secretary since 2005. Karina has generously donated hundreds of hours of time to the role and has also provided very valuable scientific input to all aspects of the TLC's work. Karina will remain as a board member and we are fortunate to have Stuart Barry take over the office of Secretary. Stuart joined the board in 2009 and he and his family have been very active TLC supporters for over seven years. During his time on the board Stuart has assisted in establishing the TLC Foundation.

We are grateful to John, Karina, Stuart and all board members past and present for their invaluable time and expertise in guiding the TLC through our first ten years of operation.

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



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## Party time!

Please join us to celebrate our tenth anniversary on the weekend of 29 and 30 October at Chauncy Vale Wildlife Sanctuary and our Flat Rock Reserve, 50 minutes drive north of Hobart.

We will be organising a range of fun family activities throughout the weekend. The event is in the planning stages at present and will include music, food, dancing, talks and walks, and the option of overnight camping.

More details will follow in the September newsletter and on our web-site. Please pop the dates in your diary now as we would love as many of our wonderful supporters as possible to help celebrate this tremendous milestone for the Tasmanian Land Conservancy.

If you would like to be kept up to date with the very latest information about the TLC and how you can be involved, please let us know your email address, if we don't already have it or if you have changed it recently.

We will then add you to our fortnightly email notification service.

All you need to do is email us at [info@tasland.org.au](mailto:info@tasland.org.au) and we will keep you informed.