



TLC scientists assessing the natural values of The Big Punchbowl. Photographer: Matthew Newton

The Big Punchbowl

We are more than half way there!

We are thrilled that, thanks to our wonderful supporters, we have raised over \$400,000, bringing us more than half way towards our target of \$750,000.

However, to permanently protect the precious plants and wildlife at The Big Punchbowl, many of which are threatened with extinction, we still need your help.

When considering a future TLC permanent reserve, our conservation scientists follow a rigorous reserve selection process to assess whether the property meets our strategic conservation priorities.

With the onset of the raptor breeding season, a magnificent pair of sea eagles

have taken up residence in one of the two identified eagle nests in The Big Punchbowl's coastal bays and are raising chicks. To gain a deeper understanding of The Big Punchbowl, we have established ecological monitoring sites. Images recorded on remote sensor cameras have captured a range of mammals including the Tasmanian devil and vulnerable spotted tailed quoll. Of particularly high conservation flora value are the vulnerable Hairy brooklime and the rare Tasmanian velvetbush.

The Big Punchbowl's unique ecosystems including ephemeral wetlands, heathland, threatened white gum and black peppermint woodlands, are home to these species and are in need of protection.

Would you consider making a further donation to help us reach our remaining target of \$325,000? Every dollar you give will be matched dollar for dollar by The Thomas Foundation and an anonymous donor, who have pledged, and already fulfilled, generous support.

Your donation of \$500 or more will be acknowledged on a plaque. Please complete the enclosed donation form and return it to us in the reply paid envelope or donate online at www.tasland.org.au/donations.

To find out more please contact us on (03) 6225 1399 or go to www.tasland.org.au/the_big_punchbowl.

Why not give a gift to nature for Christmas this year?

I am a Christmas gift

Go to www.tasland.org.au/donations or fill out the enclosed donation form and tick "I am a Christmas gift". Once you've made the donation, we will send you a blank Tasmanian Land Conservancy Christmas card to give to someone special. What a wonderful way to give!

TLC Christmas BBQ

Thursday 18 December
12.30 - 3.30pm at Tarooma Beach

It's that time of year again folks! We'd really love to thank you all in person for your tremendous support.

Please come along to help celebrate another fantastic year for nature conservation in Tasmania. Food and drinks provided for a gold coin donation.

To attend please RSVP by Thursday 11 December at <http://tlcchristmasbbq2014.eventbrite.com.au>

Back page briefs

Events

Annual General Meeting
Sunday 30 November, 2.30pm

The Banksia Room (in the Visitor's Centre) at the Royal Tasmanian Botanic Gardens.

The TLC annual general meeting promises to be a great afternoon, with Tasmanian wildlife expert, Nick Mooney, speaking about the importance of protecting The Big Punchbowl.

The AGM is also a good opportunity to learn about the strategic direction of the TLC and to provide valuable input. Afternoon tea will be provided. We hope to see you there.

The Big Punchbowl Open Day
Saturday 28 February, 2015

Would you like to become acquainted with The Big Punchbowl and its remarkable natural values? The TLC will be hosting an open day on the property on Saturday 28 February, 2015.

Please pencil this date in your diaries and stay tuned for more details.

Congratulations to the Midlands Conservation Fund

The Midlands Conservation Fund has scooped the prize in the Natural Capital section of the 2014 Banksia Foundation Sustainability Awards, recognising demonstrated leadership and innovation in the sustainable management of renewable and non-renewable resources.

The fund is a partnership between Bush Heritage Australia, the Tasmanian Land Conservancy and the farmers who safeguard the remnant native grasslands and grassy woodlands on their properties. The project was launched in 2013 with a landmark \$3.3 million conservation fund supported by philanthropic individuals and government.

The MCF is one of regional Australia's great success stories and this Banksia

Sustainability Award confirms for farmers that the coexistence of critical conservation work and productive farming is valued.

Volunteering

A big thank you to all of our fantastic volunteers who have been busy assisting with mailouts as well as out in the field at our Egg Islands, Vale of Belvoir, Liffey and Flatrock reserves.

Stay tuned for upcoming call-outs to join in some great volunteer working bees over the summer season at our Long Point, Five Rivers and Vale of Belvoir reserves. We will also need volunteers for working bees at our TLC Hobart office and our Central Highlands Revolving Fund properties.

If you would like to join our community of TLC volunteers, please register by visiting <http://www.tasland.org.au/about/volunteering>

We are grateful to the following organisations for their recent support:



Five Rivers Reserve

Five Rivers Reserve Photographer: Matthew Newton
Jane Hutchinson, CEO. Photographer: Matthew Newton

Issue 43 Summer 2014

- Five Rivers Reserve
- Revolving Fund
- The Big Punchbowl
- Christmas BBQ
- Back page briefs

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Ms Jane Hutchinson

Contact/Donate

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Jane Hutchinson Chief Executive Officer

This edition of the newsletter celebrates the establishment and permanent protection of the Five Rivers Reserve as the TLC's 13th permanent reserve. Even though the Five Rivers Conservation Project has been developing for over 18 months, we are thrilled to finally announce its completion!

In the remote Central Highlands of Tasmania an innovative global partnership between Conservation International and BHP Billiton has helped the TLC create and manage an 11,000 hectare private nature reserve. The Five Rivers Reserve is named for the Serpentine, Pine, Little, Little Pine and Nive rivers that traverse the property, and it will be managed both for the plants and animals that depend on the habitat and for community to use and enjoy.

Formerly owned by logging company Gunns Limited, the land was purchased by the Tasmanian Land Conservancy with the support of gifts and loans from the Elsie Cameron Foundation. The Five Rivers Reserve boasts open grassland valleys, old-growth forests and woodlands, native grasslands, cushion plants, endangered sphagnum moss beds, and five natural river systems. It is habitat for endangered wildlife like the Tasmanian devil and Tasmanian

wedge-tailed eagle, and threatened species like the Spotted-tailed quoll and grassland paperdaisy. It is also home to important endemic species, such as the *Clarence galaxias* fish... found nowhere else on earth.

Much of the land is in, and adjacent to, the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area. An adjoining property of 6,500 hectares (over 16,000 acres), trawtha makuminya, meaning Big River Country, is owned and managed by Tasmanian Aboriginal people for its natural and cultural values.

The Five Rivers Reserve also has multiple community benefits. These include





Waratah, Skullbone Plains. *Photographer: Matthew Newton*
Pine River *Photographer: Grant Dixon*

Five Rivers Reserve

Jane Hutchinson cont...

ecosystem services such as carbon sequestration, water catchment protection, recreation for artists, fishers, walkers and bike riders, nature education, seed banks and income for businesses arising from these services.

Incorporated in the project design is a long-term finance mechanism – the Five Rivers Endowment Fund. One third of the project establishment cost has been set aside, and the interest will be directed to manage and monitor the Five Rivers Reserve in perpetuity.

However, the really innovative part about the Five Rivers Conservation Project is not just that it protects habitat for threatened species and ecosystems at a landscape scale and is surrounded by other protected areas, nor that it provides multiple community benefits. It is not just that there is a long-term finance mechanism supporting conservation management and monitoring in its design.

The innovation is not any one of those things... the innovation is ALL of those things.

The Five Rivers Conservation Project truly is for nature, for the community and forever.

I hope you enjoy reading more about this globally innovative project along with other exciting news, updates, and events for the TLC summer ahead. Thank you to everyone for all of your kind words, letters, emails and Facebook posts of support over the past months. I look forward to seeing and hearing from you again very soon!

Conservation science and planning

Sally Bryant

Over the past 12 months a wide range of ecological programs have been undertaken on the Five Rivers Reserve, and the information collected just gets better and better! While much has been achieved, three programs in particular deserve special mention.

During 2014, 100 monitoring sites were installed across the Five Rivers Reserve as part of the TLC's long term ecological monitoring program. Data collected from vegetation photos, floristic transects, mammal and bird surveys was analysed to provide a snapshot of the health of the reserve. While it's too soon to predict trends, the reserve scored a very good viability rating for the ecological health of its highland marshes, streams and wetlands and its highland forest and woodland. Sphagnum peatland was mapped at 100.8 ha in extent and more than three age cohorts were present for Miena cider gum recruitment. Community connection with the landscape increased for nearly every indicator measured.

In February 2014 over 30 scientists and volunteers spent a week surveying the Five Rivers Reserve as part of the national Bush Blitz program. While much of this work is still being analysed, some amazing new taxonomic discoveries have been predicted by invertebrate experts Rob Raven (QLD Museum) and Gerry Cassis (University of NSW). A number of important plant

specimens were collected for storage in the Millennium Seed Bank and an impressive collection of day and night flying moths was gathered by Cathy Young from the Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery. These lesser known plants and animals are often overlooked in science yet comprise the rich diversity of this unique reserve.

A grant from the Save The Tasmanian Devil Program UTAS Foundation enabled the purchase and installation of fifty surveillance cameras across the Five Rivers Reserve to monitor carnivorous mammals. 24 vertebrate species were captured from 4,375 fauna images collected over 1,669 trap nights. Tasmanian devils were recorded at 35 sites with animals at six sites displaying signs of the fatal devil facial tumor disease. Eastern quolls were more detectable and widespread than spotted-tailed quolls and 14 individual feral cats were identified at 14 different camera sites. This work highlights the importance of the Five Rivers Reserve in protecting Australia's most intact guild of large carnivorous marsupials, and their close ecological association with feral cats. This program is due to be repeated in 2015 and should continue to yield important results.

TLC's interaction with the research community is an ongoing and valuable part of our work. We are also planning to undertake surveys for Ptunarra brown butterfly on any areas that are likely habitat, building on the knowledge gained by the various individuals and organisations that have contributed to our knowledge of the values of the Five Rivers Reserve.



Five Rivers Reserve. *Photographer: Matthew Newton*
Clarence galaxias. *Illustration: Margaret Vandenberg*

Five Rivers Reserve

All these programs have collected significant new information about the reserve, not just its threatened values but also about its more common and widespread species, which are equally as important. This information has been communicated through numerous reports and several published papers and will stand as an important reference point in the future. The success of this work would not have been possible without the generous assistance of a number of grants and a large number of fabulous volunteers who continue to give willingly of their time. Thank you to everyone involved.

Reserve services

Leigh Walters

Five Rivers Reserve management and maintenance varies from season to season; tasks vary from summer to winter depending on accessibility and urgency. Winter has provided the perfect time to embark on critical tasks such as tending to security measures. This has involved fence repair, trenching, gate and lock repair and, after a particularly heavy wind storm, tree clearing from roads and fence lines.

The TLC is formulating plans to make the Five Rivers property more accessible to our supporters. An increased presence on the reserve has multiple benefits, such as building a connection with communities and having conservation-minded people on the ground as a visible presence.

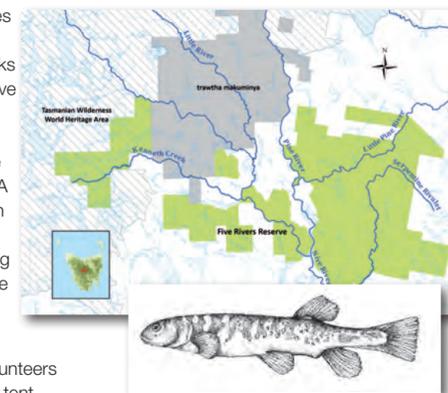
During 2014, the Reserves team have been exploring the potential of general public access for bushwalking and potential

mountain bike tours. These types of activities fit well with the TLC Strategic Plan, which in part seeks to provide opportunities to achieve sustainability and biodiversity conservation. It also leads to further people having knowledge of and interaction with the TLC. A great example of setting this plan in motion is the four-day visit by TAFE Tasmania adventure guiding staff and students that took place during September.

Our Reserves Officer, Tim Devereux, and several skilled volunteers have been installing a number of tent platforms and other camping infrastructure. The tent platforms will provide a good base from which to explore the surrounding area, as well as providing an increased presence on the property. If you are interested in accessing the reserve, please contact Leigh Walters for access arrangements at lwalters@tasland.org.au.

Winter also offered the opportunity to plan for the Central Highlands Weed program. This program has been supported by the Australian Government through the Community Environment Grants program.

It was evident last year that the incidence of weeds across Five Rivers and other central highland properties is much reduced. We are confident that, with continued, dedicated effort, we will be moving into a phase of maintenance rather than continual weed assessment and eradication. We would encourage any potential volunteers to keep an eye out for our advertised



schedule as, not only do volunteers make a huge contribution to the weeding effort, but it is also a great way to experience the Five Rivers Reserve.

As summer approaches our major focus is on ensuring we are ready for the coming fire season. Being fire-ready includes ensuring that key management roads are open and traversable, gates are in good working order, water points are mapped and our equipment is checked and tested. To ensure this happens we will again be dedicating many days to road management; ensuring table drains, culverts and roadside vegetation are controlled and in working order. This is a continuation of our roading strategy which aims to close roads not required for management purposes while still providing good all-weather access to our properties for management, supporters and visitation in general.



Revolving properties featuring dry sclerophyll forest. *Photographer: Matthew Newton*
Below: Silver Plains at sunrise. *Photographer: Matthew Newton*

Revolving Fund

Revolving Fund for Forest Conservation

The Revolving Fund concept is one of elegant simplicity. The TLC selects property primarily for its high ecological value and protects the natural areas with a conservation covenant.

Each property offers an existing home or an attractive home site, and the property is then sold on to new owners committed to managing the conservation values. We then use the proceeds of sales to purchase and protect further important properties and to fund critical activities, such as managing TLC's permanent reserves.

We are delighted to share the news that the Australian Government has extended support for the Revolving Fund for Forest Conservation for a further five years. We

have also been offered the opportunity to expand the scope of the programme to include the purchase of non-forested ecological communities.

In partnership with the Tasmanian Government, through the Revolving Fund we facilitate the protection of high conservation value areas, while also working with conservation-minded members of the community who wish to own land that they can help to protect. Since 2004 the TLC has sold 17 properties with enhanced protection for precious Tasmanian fauna and flora, including threatened species such as the beloved Tasmanian devil and Spotted-tailed quoll.

In the last 18 months the Revolving Fund has made three new purchases, resulting in the protection of over 2,500ha of private land for nature. We have finalised the sale of

five properties and have another five under contract.

2015 promises to be equally busy. Proposed changes to the Launceston City planning scheme will allow residential development at Mt Arthur, which will result in a range of covenanted blocks becoming available for sale at Nunamara. The TLC will also make six properties ranging from 90 to 150 hectares available for sale near Swansea before Christmas.

If you are interested in learning more about the Revolving Fund or would like to browse our list of properties, visit our website at www.tasland.org.au/revolving or phone Jim Mulcahy on 03 6225 1399

