



# Annual Reserve Report

Gordonvale World Heritage Reserve 2017-18



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

## Introduction

The Tasmanian Land Conservancy (TLC) protects important natural areas as permanent reserves and aims to demonstrate excellence in reserve management for biodiversity conservation. The TLC has adopted an adaptive management framework – the Open Standards for the Practice of Conservation which comprises 5 key steps – planning, implementing, monitoring, reporting, review/adaptation and communication.

Gordonvale was acquired by the TLC in 2013 and protects 80 hectares of wet eucalypt forest, moorland on the site of Ernie Bond’s historic homestead in the Vale of Rassellas in southwest Tasmania. The Reserve is surrounded by and included within the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area. The management of the Reserve is guided by the Gordonvale World Heritage Reserve Management Plan which is implemented by TLC staff through an Annual Work Plan and Monitoring Plan. Details of ecological monitoring methods can be found in TLC’s Ecological Monitoring Procedures Manual on [www.tasland.org.au](http://www.tasland.org.au).

This report describes progress made towards delivery of the management plan in 2017-18, and is divided into three sections:

1. Reserve Scorecard – a table summarising the results of management effectiveness and ecological monitoring to date;
2. Management Effectiveness Summary – providing details of the implementation of key management strategies and making recommendations for plan improvement;
3. Ecological Monitoring Summary – providing details of the status of conservation targets and trends of key ecological indicators

The recommendations made in this report are used to adapt and improve management of the Reserve, update the management plan, and revise work and monitoring plans for the coming year. Key findings of this report are communicated to TLC Board, supporters and other stakeholders.

## Gordonvale World Heritage Reserve Scorecard 2017-18

<b>Ecological Monitoring</b>			
<b>Target</b>	<b>Indicator</b>	<b>Status 2016-17</b>	<b>Trend</b>
Native ecosystems	Floristic diversity	34 species	Baseline data collected in April 2017, trend data due to be collected in 2020
	Structural complexity	5.7 strata/site	
	Canopy recruitment	1.6 cohorts/site	
	Terrestrial mammal diversity	6 species detected	
	Bird diversity	16 species 2 ha homestead zone	
Wilderness value	Not yet identified	Good On Track	Good On Track
<b>Management Effectiveness</b>			
<b>Strategy</b>	<b>Indicator</b>	<b>Status 2017-18</b>	<b>Trend</b>
Community connection to landscape	# events or projects at the Reserve	1	Flat
	# of volunteer activities at the Reserve	0	Flat
	# of visitors via log book	166 people – 103 nights	Baseline data
Cultural heritage preservation	Ernie Bond’s legacy preserved	0	Deteriorating
Fire management	# of unauthorised fires at the Reserve	0	No change
Weed and disease management	Weed control (m2)	0	No Actions Undertaken
	Disease status	Unknown	Unknown

Cover image: Gordonvale Monitoring Vimeo 2017. Available on TLCs web site.

## Monitoring Summary

<b>Native ecosystems</b>		<b>Status: Very Good</b>	
<b>Goal:</b> Maintain the condition of native ecosystems		<b>Outcome: On Track</b>	
<p><b>Target Description:</b> Tall, wet eucalypt forest occupies a fire-protected, south-facing slope and the riparian zone along a small creek that crosses the property. Open woodland dominated by Smithton peppermint occupies much of the property and is in excellent condition, with high species richness, no weeds and complex vegetation structure. Buttongrass moorlands with emergent shrubs are widespread on Gordonvale and form part of a vast extensive moorland system in very wet situations with poor drainage on nutrient poor rock types such as quartzite.</p>		 <p>Velvet furred rat skin collected from a monitoring site April 2017:photo S Bryant.</p>	
<b>Ecological indicator</b>	<b>Current status</b>	<b>Trend</b>	
Floristic diversity	34 species total	Baseline data collected in 2017, trend data due in 2020	
Structural complexity	5.7 strata/site		
Canopy recruitment	1.6 cohorts/site		
Terrestrial mammal diversity	6 mammal species detected		
Bird Diversity	16 species detected in homestead precinct		
<p><b>Key findings</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A preliminary assessment has shown that native vegetation at Gordonvale is in excellent condition and has remained largely unmodified since European settlement except for the E Bond precinct.</li> <li>• Trend data due to be collected in 2020 unless notified of impacts</li> </ul>			
<p><b>Recommendations</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Repeat TLC's long-term ecological monitoring in 2020</li> </ul>			

<b>Wilderness values</b>		<b>Status: Good</b>
<b>Goal:</b> The wilderness character of the region is maintained.		<b>Outcome: On Track</b>
<b>Description:</b> The Gordonvale WHA Reserve is surrounded by the Franklin-Gordon Wild Rivers National Park, is within the TWWHA and is designated as having WHA status: its world heritage context and its wilderness values are therefore significant.		 <p>Rasselas valley on route to Gordonvale. Photo: S Bryant</p>
<b>Indicator</b>	<b>Current status</b>	<b>Trend</b>
Not yet defined	No change in activities detracting from wilderness values	Stable
<b>Key findings</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The wilderness character of the area is of outstanding universal value as recognised by the Reserve's listing in the recent WHA extensions.</li> </ul>		
<b>Recommendations</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Activities that detract from the wilderness character of the Reserve and surrounding landscape should not be permitted.</li> </ul>		

## Management Effectiveness Summary

Fire management		
<b>Key objective(s)</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No unauthorised fires occur on the reserve (ongoing).</li> </ul>	<b>Status 2017-18</b> <b>On-track</b>	
<b>Strategy description</b> TLC recognises the threat posed by unplanned fires to human life and the environment but acknowledges the difficulty of responding to fire in this remote location. The TLC will implement the restrictions of a 'fuel stove only' policy. The TLC will work with Parks and Wildlife Service and the Tasmania Fire Service in the event of a bushfire in this area and keep up to date with any changes to fire policy, any fire restrictions or management burns being undertaken in the wider region.	Gordonvale photosphere 2017. Photo: TLC monitoring. 	
<b>Indicator</b>	<b>Current status</b>	<b>Trend</b>
No. reported or unauthorised fires at the Reserve	0 fires reported	Flat
<b>Progress in 2017-18</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No visit to the reserve made by TLC staff during this period but no evidence of fires at Gordonvale, reported or detected by Google Earth during this period.</li> <li>A fire risk assessment was completed for all TLC reserves, Gordonvale is a low risk.</li> <li>A fire management policy for all TLC Reserves is being implemented.</li> <li>A fuel stove only policy is in place, in keeping with the surrounding World Heritage Area.</li> <li>A whole-of-TLC fire management strategy is being developed to ensure all TLC properties are effectively managed from threats relating to fire, and that fire is used appropriately as a tool to manage the values of TLC properties.</li> </ul>		
<b>Key recommendations for future management</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continue to implement a fuel stove only policy for the Reserve.</li> <li>Continue to develop the whole-of-TLC fire management strategy.</li> </ul>		

<b>Weed and disease management</b>		
<b>Key objective(s)</b>		<b>Status 2017-18</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Existing weeds are eradicated by 2017 and any new outbreaks are addressed in a timely manner.</li> </ul>		<b>No Actions Undertaken</b>
<b>Strategy description</b>		Spring bulbs near Ernie Bond's house site. Photo: M Taylor
<p>The aim of this strategy is to eradicate existing infestations of Californian thistle on the reserve by 2017 and recommend biosecurity procedures to prevent or minimise the infestation of any new pest, weed or diseases in the future. Annual monitoring as part of the annual reserve assessment will ensure that any follow-up control can be undertaken.</p> <p>The exotic plant species associated with Ernie Bond's settlement (e.g. spring bulbs and Rhododendron etc.) will be conserved for heritage purposes but their current distribution will be mapped and monitored to ensure they do not spread beyond this precinct.</p>		
<b>Indicator</b>	<b>Current status</b>	<b>Trend</b>
Weed control (m2)	0	Flat
Disease status	Unknown	Unknown
<b>Progress in 2017-18</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No visit to the reserve made by TLC staff during this 2017-18 period hence no works were undertaken due to accessibility and time constraints when weeds are emergent.</li> <li>PWS continue to provide a boot-wash down station and soil hygiene information at the bushwalker access point.</li> <li>Long-term monitoring photographs in 2017 recorded increasing size of the rhododendron plant/s.</li> </ul>		
<b>Key recommendations for future management</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Map all weeds and heritage plants.</li> <li>Treat infestations of California thistle.</li> <li>Maintain sign at access point.</li> <li>Monitor heritage plants to ensure they don't spread, especially the rhododendron.</li> </ul>		

## Community engagement and neighbour relations

### Key objective(s)

- TLC provides opportunities for the community to experience or benefit from the Reserve.

Status 2017-18

No change

### Strategy description

The TLC recognises the remoteness of Gordonvale, its wilderness setting and the designated 'self-reliant recreation' zoning in the TWWHA Management Plan (Parks and Wildlife Service 1999). Foot access to Gordonvale involves crossing the Franklin – Gordon Wild Rivers National Park and many visitors may be on-route to Lake Rhona with Gordonvale as a temporary stopover site.

Party leader's name	Party leader's postcode or country of origin	Contact phone number or vehicle registration	Number of people in your group	Route numbers or description of walk	Walk START date	Walk END date	Where did you START your walk?	Actual END date	How many NIGHTS did you camp at Mount Rhona or elsewhere in the Denton Range
For example P/owner	7000	042 345 678	2	I	1 Jan 2017	3 Jan 2017	Here	4 Jan 2017	2
W. Hill	7100	02 85552	2	WESTALL GLEN	18/1/17	22/1/17	Here	20/1/17	3
J. Hill	7100	02 85552	9	WESTALL GLEN	16/1/17	22/1/17	Here	22/1/17	1
J. Hill	7100	02 85552	2	LAKE RHONA	21/1/17	23/1/17	Here	21/1/17	0
M. Hill	7008	02 85552	5	LAKE RHONA	21/1/17	22/1/17	Here	21/1/17	100 deep to cross
S. Hill	7100	02 85552	3	LAKE RHONA	23/1/17	23/1/17	Here	21/1/17	0 too high
H. Hill	7005	02 85552	2	LAKE RHONA	22/1/17	24/1/17	Here	24/1/17	2
P. Hill	7000	02 85552	2	LAKE RHONA	22/1/17	24/1/17	Here	24/1/17	2
M. Hill	7000	02 85552	2	LAKE RHONA	24/1/17	26/1/17	Here	26/1/17	2

Names in PWS logbook at the start of track. Photo: Sally Bryant.

### Indicator

### Current status

### Trend

# events or projects at the Reserve

1

Flat

# of volunteer activities at the Reserve

0

Flat

# of visitors via log book

Unknown

No data

### Progress in 2017-18

- Visitors continue to access the Reserve on route to Lake Rhona.
- No visit to the reserve made by TLC staff during this period
- The 'Gordonvale Monitoring' video by Crowsnest media is regularly used to promote TLCs monitoring program and increase awareness about this remote reserve

### Key recommendations for future management

- Maintain access to the Reserve
- Continue discussions to promote restoration of promotion of Ernie Bonds legacy. Encourage a skilled volunteer to map and document the cultural heritage features.

<b>Cultural heritage preservation</b>		
<b>Key objective(s)</b>		<b>Status 2017-18</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ernie Bond's legacy is preserved.</li> </ul>		<b>Deteriorating</b>
<b>Strategy description</b>		Collapsing post and rail fence at Gordonvale 2017. Photo: S Bryant
<p>The legacy of Ernie Bond and his settlement at Gordonvale has been documented in various sources but the settlement physically has deteriorated to scattered remnants of huts, tracks, fences and farming implements which will continue to disappear over time. Community knowledge and a willingness to be involved with oral or physical preservation are essential if we are to retain any of these last fragments. A preservation strategy is needed on how best to proceed with undertaking this, however, in the immediate term the existing remnants of Ernie Bonds settlement will not be disturbed and the current distribution of the spring bulbs and Rhododendron will be mapped to ensure they do not spread beyond their former precinct.</p>		
<b>Indicator</b>	<b>Current status</b>	<b>Trend</b>
Not yet identified	Unknown	Deteriorating
<b>Progress in 2017-18</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No visit to the reserve made by TLC staff during this period and no further developments on preserving cultural heritage.</li> <li>WHA Statement of Significance updated for the Commonwealth</li> </ul>		
<b>Key recommendations for future management</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Encourage a skilled volunteer to map and document the cultural heritage features.</li> <li>Continue discussions with Mountain Hut Preservation Society on potential of protecting or reinstating Ernie Bond's dwelling</li> </ul>		