



TASMANIAN
LAND
CONSERVANCY

AUTUMN 2019

NL 57



Common wombat (*Vombatus ursinus*). Photo: Matthew Newton

On behalf of all of us at the Tasmanian Land Conservancy (TLC), our thoughts are with those individuals and communities suffering the effects of the devastating bushfires that burned throughout Tasmania this summer.

The TLC's Gordonvale and Five Rivers reserves have been directly impacted by the fires in the south-west and Central Plateau. Our team has been working alongside relevant agencies and local communities contributing to firefighting efforts. We wish to sincerely thank the fire crews, volunteers and local landholders who have given their time, expertise and efforts to bring the fires under control. In this newsletter we provide an update on how TLC reserves have been affected and how our Reserve Management and

Science Teams are responding to such unprecedented events.

While our response to the fires has dominated the field season, our teams have also been busy with important on-ground works; managing key threats across our estate with the completion of annual weeding programs, and the continued roll out of our ecological monitoring program across TLC reserves.

We are thrilled to announce a number of exciting new initiatives that will increase our reach in working with landholders across Tasmania. Through the WildTracker project and the TLC's recently announced involvement in the highly successful Land for Wildlife program,

we look forward to growing our support of private landholders who make such important contributions to the protection of Tasmania's natural values.

I am continually inspired by the dedication of our staff. In this edition, we introduce you to, and update you on, some of our staff members and their critical contribution to the work of the TLC.

A special thanks to all of you for your continued support and commitment to nature conservation. We are excited by the opportunities that will enable us to continue protecting important areas like Little Swanport and grow the conservation community across Tasmania.

James Hattam
Chief Executive Officer

HIGHLIGHTS



Little Swanport. Photo: Andy Townsend

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Read the update on our Little Swanport campaign.



Post-fire discoveries. Photo: Matthew Newton

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Discover how bushfires have affected the TLC's reserves.



Scarlet robin (*Petroica boodang*). Photo: Sarah Lloyd

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Learn more about Land for Wildlife.



LITTLE SWANPORT

Swift parrot (*Lathamus discolor*). Photo: Andrew Browne

Thanks to those who have already generously donated, we have raised \$615,000 to purchase, protect and manage 150 hectares at Little Swanport on Tasmania's east coast.

Our current conservation campaign will protect an important stand of old-growth blue gum (*Eucalyptus globulus*) forest in Tasmania's south-east. With significant pressures on the endangered swift parrot (*Lathamus discolor*), this property provides important habitat, including mature eucalypts with essential nesting hollows. A variety of other fauna species are known to occur on the property, including the eastern quoll (*Dasyurus viverrinus*), Tasmanian devil (*Sarcophilus harrisi*), eastern barred bandicoot (*Perameles gunnii*), Tasmanian bettong (*Bettongia gaimardi*) and spotted quail thrush (*Cinclosoma punctatum*).

Additionally, motion sensor cameras deployed in November 2018 have picked up three undocumented species at Little Swanport: the spotted-tail quoll (*Dasyurus maculatus*), southern brown bandicoot (*Isodon obesulus*) and European hare (*Lepus europaeus*).

As the species list grows and as we inch closer to raising the funds to secure the property, the TLC is drafting a management plan for Little Swanport. Collated maps will identify key vegetation communities, threats to conservation values, and priorities for on-ground management. Like many properties acquired by the TLC, some weed control and restoration will also be involved.

TLC's Operations Manager, Leigh Walters, has been considering the management requirements for Little Swanport and explains that, despite large stands of healthy mature blue gums, a history of timber-cutting and grazing has worn the fringes of the property.

"Our initial management objectives will be to treat weeds and remove internal fences to allow the free movement of wildlife on the property."

- Leigh Walters, TLC Operations Manager

"If the Little Swanport campaign is successful, the TLC's Reserves and Science teams will determine the best methods of aiding the regeneration of the property's edges," he says, adding that volunteers will be an invaluable aid to staff on the ground.

The Little Swanport fundraising target includes a contribution towards the TLC Foundation to support ongoing annual conservation works, implementing on-ground activities, and monitoring ecological change through our science program.

Will you help us secure the remaining \$135,000 needed to protect Little Swanport, in perpetuity?

GIVE.....

Please join us to protect Little Swanport by making a donation via tasland.org.au

AUSTRALIA'S FAUNA EXTINCTION CRISIS

A senate committee investigating Australia's faunal species crisis was addressed by the TLC's CEO, James Hattam, and Head of Science, Dr Sally Bryant, when they presented on the importance of private land conservation in protecting threatened species in February.

The inquiry is examining issues including the country's alarming rate of species decline, the adequacy of laws that are designed to protect threatened wildlife, and the effectiveness of funding for threatened species.

The TLC's presentation highlighted that protecting habitat is critical to prevent species extinction, and that the National Reserve System (Australia's network of protected areas on public and private land) is paramount to enable effective conservation.

The important role played by landholders to protect nature on private land was emphasised by the TLC's CEO James Hattam.

"Securing habitat is fundamental for wildlife, and private landholders are crucial to achieve this," he said.

"Our protected areas must be comprehensive, adequate and representative across Tasmania and we need to complement existing reserves by providing strategically important links in the landscape to assist with species movement and ecological functions."

To read the TLC's submission to the inquiry, visit: tasland.org.au/news



BUSHFIRE UPDATE

TLC Reserves Officer, Angus Robinson, and TLC Conservation Programs Officer, Anna Povey, help fires crew in the Central Highlands. Photo: Heath Holden

Bushfires across the TLC's reserves are now under control. Our small team has been working alongside various agencies and the local community, and we wish to sincerely thank fire crews from the Tasmanian Fire Service, Parks and Wildlife Service, Brady's Lake brigade, local landholders and the Central Highlands community.

Since December 2018, over 200,000 hectares of land has been burnt across Tasmania by bushfires caused from hundreds of dry lightning strikes.

The bushfire that started on January 15 in the state's Central Highlands is estimated to have burnt approximately 6,000 of the TLC's 11,000-hectare Five Rivers Reserve, much of which is in, or adjacent to, the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area (TWWHA). Thankfully, the fire did not extend to Skullbone Plains and much of the area burnt was dry eucalypt forest. Generally, such vegetation responds well to fire, depending on the fire intensity, frequency, conditions and other considerations.

Further south, the Gell River fire that started in December has burnt through Gordonvale Reserve, an 81-hectare property surrounded by the Franklin-Gordon Wild Rivers National Park and included within the TWWHA. It is understood that most of the fire on the property was in buttongrass moorlands, a vegetation community that is highly fire-adapted. The full extent of damage to this remote, wild and unique reserve will not be known until a post-fire assessment is completed.

Our ecological monitoring program will now come into its own with pre-fire monitoring data capturing flora and fauna in various locations across both properties. For example, 100 fixed monitoring sites have been established in the Five Rivers Reserve to provide a detailed picture of the rate of change across this high country landscape. Motion sensor cameras record fauna, while vegetation is documented on set transects. Since 2014, the condition of the reserve has been closely monitored, creating robust baseline data from which to measure post-fire changes and ecological recovery. Special values, such as Tasmanian devil (*Sarcophilus harrisii*) and quoll populations, eagle nesting sites and the extent of cider gum (*Eucalyptus gunnii*) communities, will be closely monitored.

Our repeatable and robust monitoring methodology captures important data, and this will provide a critical lens through which we can assess ecological regeneration and better understand the impacts of fire in the landscape.

We will post updates from our ecological monitoring on fire-affected properties in future newsletters. In the meantime, both Gordonvale and Five Rivers reserves are closed to visitors as hazardous trees are assessed and fences and other infrastructure are reinstated.

ON THE RESERVES

The TLC has been incredibly active across our reserves during the field season.

Flora data collected from Long Point Reserve in February is currently being collated by a team of trained volunteers, with initial reports indicating the saltmarshes are in good health despite dry conditions. Staff and volunteers also reported reasonable numbers of healthy Tasmanian devils (*Sarcophilus harrisii*) and spotted-tail quolls (*Dasyurus maculatus*) at the east coast reserve!

Motion sensor monitoring cameras were deployed across the Vale of Belvoir Reserve for the sixth year running in January. With a low intensity spring burn performed in 2018, our science team is now eager to interpret findings from the cameras that have recently been collected. This was also the first year that song meters were used at the Vale. The acoustic recorders come on every morning and evening for half an hour to record bird and frog calls and have been resourced through the Bird Conservation Fund.

Lastly, a huge thanks to our amazing volunteers, who had the commitment to stay on-call for the right conditions to be part of our annual summer weeding program in the state's Central Highlands.



LAND FOR WILDLIFE

Echidna (*Tachygllossus aculeatus*) at Daisy Dell Reserve. Photo: Heath Holden



TLC Conservation Ecologist Rowena Hamer with supporters at the 2018 Skullbone Plains Reserve Discovery Weekend. Photo: Chris Crerar

Private landholders own and manage some of the most important areas for nature conservation in Tasmania, including critical habitat and wildlife that is under-represented on public land.

Across the state, there are 880 properties with on-title conservation covenants, which protect the natural values onsite, in perpetuity. The TLC's permanent reserves are included in the 109,000 hectares that have a legally binding, on-title conservation protection. Landholders who place a covenant on their land to safeguard its values, are making an extraordinary commitment to nature. Covenanting, however, is just one way landholders can protect the conservation values on their property.

The Land for Wildlife program is a non-binding voluntary scheme which encourages, supports and recognises private landowners who are taking a positive approach to land management by incorporating nature conservation on their properties. The Tasmanian branch of Land for Wildlife was established in 1998 and has been successfully delivered by the Department of Primary Industries, Parks, Water and Environment (DPIPWE) since inception. However, as of 1 February 2019, the TLC has been responding to new Land for Wildlife inquiries.

The TLC's involvement with Land for Wildlife continues a long relationship working with DPIPWE to support landholders in their conservation efforts. We are honoured to be able

to further promote community participation in caring for nature via the delivery of this program.

By registering property with Land for Wildlife, landholders can be formally recognised for their conservation efforts while accessing information and support for land management.

LAND FOR WILDLIFE MEMBERSHIP BENEFITS:

- On-site assessment to provide information on habitats and species;
- Practical advice and technical notes on land management;
- A regular newsletter; and
- A durable, attractive sign to indicate your membership in the scheme.

LAND FOR WILDLIFE PROPERTY CRITERIA:

- Intact vegetation or re-vegetated land which is generally greater than two hectares in size;
- Land which conserves native species and habitats;
- Land which provides continuity of habitat across landscapes.

ACT

To register or find out more about Land for Wildlife, visit tasland.org.au/programs/land-for-wildlife/

TLC STAFF UPDATE

From the on-ground management of our reserves to ecological research and community engagement, the TLC's small yet diverse team is behind some of Tasmania's big conservation successes.

As the TLC's network of reserves grow, so too does the time and resources required to protect them. The TLC's Science Team has been joined by Conservation Ecologist Rowena Hamer who is soon to submit her PhD thesis focusing on restoring resilience in native carnivore populations of the Tasmanian Midlands.

From building fences, weed control, road maintenance and ecological burning, our Reserves Team works hard to ensure TLC land remains in good ecological condition. After a decade of working across the state as Reserves Manager, Denna Kingdom has taken on a different kind of challenge - motherhood! We congratulate Denna and Granger on the arrival of their son Kieran and look forward to Denna's return in May. We have also farewelled Reserves Officer Tim Devereux and have been joined by Angus Robinson.

In our Fundraising and Engagement Team, Margie Jenkin brings a wealth of experience to the role of Philanthropy and Engagement Manager, following James's appointment to CEO. Finally, we have a newly employed Business Development Manager, Shane McHugh, who we warmly welcome to the TLC's dynamic staff team.



NATURAL GUARDIANS

Leaf litter at Five Rivers Reserve. Photo: Arwen Dyer

For the TLC, long-term planning is essential to ensure that the magnificent natural places we value and protect today remain intact and managed for conservation, forever.

Our Natural Guardians (Bequests) program plays a critical role in ensuring the TLC's ongoing operations into the future.

Each year, approximately 140,000 people die in Australia, and around 10,000 leave a gift to a charity (The Support Report, 2018). The average size of each gift is \$40,000-50,000 and this is usually the largest gift that a person will give in their lifetime. With an ageing population and rising house values, the \$450 million given each year in Australia from bequests is forecast to grow.

Our Natural Guardians program recognises and brings together those TLC supporters who have made a profound commitment to nature in Tasmania by leaving us a gift in their will. The number of Natural Guardians has steadily grown to 192 and we are deeply grateful to those people for entrusting us to facilitate their powerful legacy for nature.

Since its inception in 2001, the TLC has received 12 gifts to this program, totalling over one million dollars. Currently, all bequests (unless otherwise specified) are held in the TLC Foundation and invested using an ethical screening process. Gifts are honoured and preserved to ensure the highest return on investment with the lowest possible risk. The TLC Foundation, an endowment

fund, was established to secure the independent, long-term resourcing required to ensure the effective and crucial management of our reserves. In essence, a gift in one's will, is a gift that keeps giving.

“Our contribution to the TLC is, in a small measure, an attempt to maintain those elements that remind us of our dependence on nature and encourage us to include its consideration in our future plans for the planet.”

- Sharyn Yelverton & Herman Mouthaan, Natural Guardians

Our Natural Guardians receive exclusive invitations to join special guided trips within our magnificent reserves, so they can see, first-hand, the places that their gift is helping to secure for future generations. If you would like further information on how to become a Natural Guardian, how to establish a Foundation Fund, or to let us know that you have already included the TLC in your will, please contact Sophie Marshall by phoning the TLC or emailing smarshall@tasland.org.au.

**Sophie Marshall
Bequest and Supporter Relations**

ACT

To become a Natural Guardian visit tasland.org.au/bequests-to-the-tlc



Tasmanian bettong (*Bettongia gaimardi*). Photo: Joe Shemesh

WILDTRACKER

Ever wondered what wildlife is on your property?

Motion sensor cameras and smartphone applications have revolutionised the way we can monitor wildlife. Incorporating these technologies with citizen-science can bring out the inner scientist in all of us, while providing researchers with access to new data.

In 2016-17, the TLC embraced citizen-science to answer large-scale scientific questions by trialling WildTracker, a community-based wildlife monitoring program led by the TLC's Conservation Ecologist, Matt Taylor.

Continuing this work, the TLC is now partnering with NRM North to roll out workshops in northern Tasmania – the first of which were held in Deviot and Westbury in December 2018 and attracted 43 landholders.

“The workshops were hands-on, with people practicing setting up a wildlife monitoring site and taking selfies of themselves pretending to be bandicoots,” Matt explains.

“Participants have since been collecting data on eastern barred bandicoots and feral cats at 55 sites in the Tamar and Meander Valleys. This data will be used to identify target areas for ongoing conservation works to protect bandicoots and other species.”

To learn more about WildTracker, contact Matt: mtaylor@tasland.org.au



WHAT'S ON

Egg Islands Reserve. Photo: Rob Blakers

SAVE THE DATE: DAISY DELL RESERVE DISCOVERY DAY

Saturday, 6 April 2019

A stone's throw from Tasmania's iconic Cradle Valley and the TLC's Vale of Belvoir Reserve lies a hidden glade filled with rich floristic diversity and unique Tasmanian wildlife. Discover why the TLC's Daisy Dell Reserve is an important ecological link within a priority highland landscape at this year's Daisy Dell Reserve Discovery Day!

Registration details and more information about the day to come.

SAVE THE DATE: THE BIG PUNCHBOWL RESERVE FOUNDATION FUND FOUNDERS VISIT

Saturday, 11 May 2019

Since its establishment in 2009, the TLC Foundation has grown to \$12 million, with more than 50 named funds. The very generous founders of these named funds are invited to join TLC staff and special guests for a day at our east coast reserve, The Big Punchbowl.

Invitations will be sent to Foundation fund founders with more information and registration details. To learn more about the TLC Foundation visit tasland.org.au/the-tlc-foundation/

SAVE THE DATE: NATURAL GUARDIANS INFORMATION EVENING - SYDNEY

Friday, 31 May 2019

Leaving a gift to the TLC in your will is one of the most powerful and lasting ways you can help protect Tasmania's beautiful plants, wildlife and important natural places, forever. Now, we're taking our Natural Guardians information evening to Sydney - please join us to learn how to create a legacy to reflect your values.

Registration details and more information to come.



Tea tree (*Leptospermum* sp). Photo: Andy Townsend

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