



Annual Reserve Report

Blue Tier Reserve 2016-17



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.

Blue Tier Reserve was acquired by the TLC in 2013 and protects 100 hectares of ancient rainforest on the slopes of the Blue Tier in northeast Tasmania. The Blue Tier Reserve is surrounded by a public reserve of the same name. The management of the Reserve is guided by the Blue Tier Reserve Management Plan. The plan 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.

This report describes progress made towards delivery of the management plan in 2016-17, 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.

Blue Tier Reserve Scorecard 2016-17


Ecological Monitoring			
Target	Indicator	Status 2015-16	Trend
Rainforest	Structural complexity	5 strata	Baseline data
	Native mammals	5 species	Baseline data
Management Effectiveness			
Strategy	Indicator	Status 2016-17	Trend
Community engagement	# events / activities	1 activity (monitoring)	Increase
	# of volunteers / vol days	2 vol / 4 vol days	Increase
	# of research and education projects	0	No change
Fire management	# unplanned fires	0	No change


Cover image: Tree ferns at Blue Tier Reserve. Credit: Matthew Taylor TLC.

Monitoring Summary

Rainforest		Status: Very Good
Goal: Maintain the condition of rainforest		Outcome: On Track
Target Description: The Blue Tier Reserve protects 100 hectares of old growth rainforest on the slopes of the Blue Tier plateau in northeast Tasmania. The rainforest is ancient, with huge myrtles dominating the canopy. The understorey is unusually diverse for temperate rainforest, with montane species such as celery top pine and waratah, along with rainforest regulars such as sassafras and tree ferns. The threatened Simson's Stag Beetle is the largest beetle in Tasmania and is found in leaf litter and decaying logs on the forest floor.		 <p>Eastern quoll were surprisingly common on cameras</p>
Ecological indicator	Current status	Trend
Structural complexity	4 strata	Baseline data
Mammal diversity	5 species	Baseline data
Key findings <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Baseline ecological monitoring data was collected in May 2017. Three camera traps were installed to collect data on mammals and 10 photosphere sites were installed to monitor vegetation structure. • Eastern quoll and southern brown bandicoots were recorded – an unexpected bonus! 		
Recommendations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Finalise management plan • Finalise covenant • The remoteness and inaccessibility of the site makes regular monitoring difficult. Remote sensing should be adopted as the primary means of monitoring the reserve in the future. 		

Management Effectiveness Summary

Community connection and neighbour relations		
Key objective(s) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The community has opportunities to connect with the landscape through education, recreation, research and volunteering 		Status 2016-17 On-track
Strategy description The TLC provides opportunities for the community and individuals to achieve conservation. Blue Tier Reserve and surrounding focal landscape provides the community with a range of recreational, educational, research and volunteering opportunities. The ancient rainforests and threatened invertebrate species of the Reserve are a focus of research interest. While the TLC's Reserve is difficult to access, the surrounding public reserve has a network of walking and mountain biking trails.		Volunteers on way to Blue Tier Reserve Photo: M Taylor. 
Indicator	Current status	Trend
# TLC events and activities	1 activity (monitoring established)	Increase
Volunteers / vol days	2 vol / 4 vol days	Increase
Research and education projects	0	No change
Progress in 2016-17 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Blue Tier is the site of a TLC open day every 2-3 years. The next open day is planned for autumn 2018. The remoteness of the Reserve means that very few people visit the Reserve except through being involved in TLC events and activities. Two volunteer students from France spent 2 days each helping establish monitoring on the Reserve. 		
Key recommendations for future management <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to provide opportunities for people to connect with the Reserve, both directly and indirectly. Continue to progress a formal right of footway through public land to the Reserve to ensure TLC has legal access into the future. Continue to encourage community connections to the reserve by providing opportunities for research, education, recreation and volunteering using the wider Blue Tier landscape. Ensure that visitation to the Blue Tier Reserve remains difficult as there is no physical track leading to the Reserve and visitation increases the likelihood of threats that will impact on the condition of the rainforest (e.g. fire, disease, weeds, etc) 		

Fire management		
Key objective(s)		Status 2016-17
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No unauthorised fires occur on the reserve (ongoing) 		On-track
Strategy description		 <p>Fire has not impacted the Blue Tier region for a long time. Photo: Chris Crerar.</p>
<p>An inappropriate fire regime will reduce the condition of the natural values at Blue Tier Reserve. The impact of fire on local communities also needs to be considered.</p> <p>The vegetation at the Blue Tier Reserve and the surrounding area is old-growth rainforest, which is very fire sensitive. A fire risk assessment has determined that the Reserve presents a low risk to local communities due to the distance from nearby built assets and residences.</p>		
Indicator	Current status	Trend
No. of unplanned fires	0 unplanned fires	Flat
Progress in 2016-17		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There were no unauthorised fires on the Reserve in 2016-17. A fire risk assessment was completed for all TLC reserves. A fire management policy for all TLC Reserves is being implemented. A fuel stove only policy is also being implemented. 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. 		
Key recommendations for future management		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Liaise with fire agencies through the TFS Fuel Reduction Unit to develop a strategy to mitigate the impacts of wildfire to the Blue Tier region. Continue to develop the whole-of-TLC fire management strategy. 		