



Annual Reserve Report

Blue Tier Reserve 2015-16



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Introduction

The Tasmanian Land Conservancy (TLC) protects important natural areas as permanent reserves and aims to demonstrate excellence in reserve management for biodiversity conservation. To achieve this aim, the TLC has adopted an adaptive management framework – the Open Standards for the Practice of Conservation. The framework 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.

This report describes progress made towards delivery of the management plan in 2015-16, 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

Monitoring			
Target	Indicator	Status 2015/16	Trend
Rainforest	Floristic diversity		Baseline data collection is scheduled for 2016
	Structural complexity		
	Vertebrate fauna diversity		
Community connection to landscape	# volunteer days on the Reserve	0	Decrease
	# visitors to the Reserve	0	Decrease
Management Effectiveness			
Strategy	Indicator	Status 2016	Trend
Community engagement	# events at the Reserve	0	Decrease
	# of volunteer activities at the Reserve	0	Decrease
	# of research and education projects	0	Flat
Fire management	# unplanned fires	0	Flat


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


Monitoring Summary

Rainforest		Status: Very Good
Goal: Maintain the condition of rainforest		Outcome: On Track
<p>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>		 <p>Simson's stag beetle. Photo: Jane Keble-Williams.</p>
Ecological indicator	Current status	Trend
Floristic diversity	Data collection scheduled for 2016	Unknown
Structural complexity	Data collection scheduled for 2016	Unknown
Simson's Stag Beetle	Widespread	Unknown
<p>Key findings</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Management plan and background document was drafted and will be finalised in 2016-17. • The neighbouring property has a development application in place with the intention of building a house there, which may impact on the condition of the adjacent vegetation at Blue Tier Reserve through increased weed invasion and unplanned fires. 		
<p>Recommendations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Draft management plan text and background document • Finalise covenant • Establish long-term ecological monitoring program • Investigate the neighbouring boundary area for potential impacts 		

Community connection with the landscape		Status: Good
Goal: The community has opportunities to connect with the landscape through education, recreation, research and volunteering		Outcome: On Track
Target Description 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.		
An expert identifies fungi at Blue Tier. Photo: Chris Crerar.		
Community indicator	Current status	Trend
Volunteer days	0	Decrease
Visitors	0	Decrease
Research and education projects	0	Decrease
Key findings <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The remoteness of the Reserve means that very few people visit the Reserve except through being involved in TLC events and activities. No volunteers or visitors were recorded to the Reserve in 2015-16. 		
Recommendations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to encourage community connections to the reserve by providing opportunities for research, education, recreation and volunteering Consider removing this from individual reserve management plans and reporting all relevant TLC activities across Tasmania in a separate report. This approach will be easier to report, more reflective of changes over time, and is a goal of TLC's Strategic Plan. 		

Management Effectiveness Summary

Community engagement and neighbour relations		
Key objective(s) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> TLC provides opportunities for the community to experience or benefit from the Reserve 		Status 2015-16 On-track
Strategy description <p>The TLC provides opportunities for the community and individuals to achieve conservation. The local community, volunteers, the indigenous community and other stakeholders are encouraged to participate in planning and land management activities. TLC Reserves provide excellent opportunities for education and scientific research. Sustainable economic development may be supported at some reserves where appropriate.</p>		 <p>A naturalist investigates a snail at Blue Tier. Photo: Chris Crerar.</p>
Indicator	Current status	Trend
# TLC events and activities	0	Decrease
Progress in 2015-16 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Blue Tier is the site of a biannual open day. The next open day is planned for 2017. No volunteer activities were undertaken this year. 		
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 Review the objective of this strategy, as visitation to the Blue Tier Reserve is difficult when 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) OR Consider removing reporting on this from individual reserve management plans and reporting all relevant TLC activities across Tasmania in a separate report. This approach will be easier to report, more reflective of changes over time, and is a goal of TLC's Strategic Plan. 		

Fire management		
Key objective(s)		Status 2015-16 On-track
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No unauthorised fires occur on the reserve (ongoing) 		
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 2015-16		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There were no unauthorised fires on the Reserve in 2015-16 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. 		
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 implement a fuel stove only policy for the Reserve. 		