



Annual Reserve Report

Lower Liffey WHA 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.

Lower Liffey Reserve was acquired by the TLC in 2010 and protects 14 hectares of wet eucalypt forest on the slopes of the Great Western Tiers in northern Tasmania. The Reserve adjoins Liffey Forest Reserve (WHA) and forms part of recent extensions to the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area. The management of the Reserve is guided by the Lower Liffey WHA 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.


Lower Liffey WHA Reserve Scorecard

Monitoring			
Target	Indicator	Status 2015-16	Trend
Wet eucalypt forest	Floristic diversity		Baseline data collection is scheduled for 2016
	Structural complexity		
	Canopy recruitment		
	Vertebrate fauna diversity		
Community connection to landscape	# volunteer days on the Reserve	20	Increase
	# visitors to the Reserve	Unknown	Unknown
Management Effectiveness			
Strategy	Indicator	Status 2015-16	Trend
Community engagement	# events at the Reserve	0	Flat
	# of volunteer activities at the Reserve	1	Flat
	# of research and education projects	0	Flat
Weed management	Weed extent (ha)	14 ha	Flat
	Weed density	Very low	Improving


Cover image: Spotted-tailed quoll captured on TLC’s fauna cameras. Credit: TLC


Monitoring Summary

Wet eucalypt forest		Status: Good
Goal: Improve the condition of wet eucalypt forest		Outcome: On Track
<p>Description The vegetation of Lower Liffey WHA Reserve is regenerating wet eucalypt forest that is dominated by mature silver wattle (<i>Acacia dealbata</i>) over a sub-canopy of eucalypt saplings. As the forest continues to regenerate eucalypts will form the dominant strata. The understorey is dominated by broadleaved shrubs, rainforest species and ferns.</p>		 <p>Tall eucalypt forest. Photo: TLC</p>
Ecological indicator	Current status	Trend
Floristic diversity	Data collection scheduled for 2016	Unknown
Structural complexity	Data collection scheduled for 2016	Unknown
<p>Key findings</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A history of logging has had a significant impact on the Reserve's vegetation. • Long-term conservation management should see the forest regenerate to a natural condition over time. 		
<p>Recommendations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Install TLC's long-term ecological monitoring program. 		

Community connection with the landscape		Status: Very Good
Goal The community has opportunities to connect with the landscape through education, recreation, research and volunteering		Outcome: On Track
Description Lower Liffey WHA Reserve provides the community with a range of recreational, educational, research and volunteering opportunities. The upper Liffey River valley is a hotspot for private land conservation. The TLC Reserve adjoins protected areas managed by the Parks and Wildlife Service and Bush Heritage Australia. Several other neighbouring properties are protected with conservation covenants.		 <p>The Reserve adjoins a public campsite. Photo: Chris Crerar.</p>
Community indicator	Current status	Trend
Volunteer days	20 volunteer days	Increase
No. of visitors to the Reserve	Unknown	Unknown
Key findings		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A team of 13 volunteers worked for two days on foxglove and blackberry weed control in December 2015. 		
Recommendations		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to encourage community connections to the reserve by providing research, education, recreation or volunteering opportunities. 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 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>TLC volunteers on a weeding working bee. Photo: Chris Crerar.</p>	
Indicator	Current status	Trend
# of events at the Reserve	0	Flat
# of volunteer activities at the Reserve	1	Flat
# research activities on the Reserve	0	Flat
Progress in 2015-16 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Signs were checked. TLC maintained a good relationship with PWS. Access to the Reserve was maintained. Volunteers participated in two days of weed management activities. 		
Key recommendations for future management <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintain access to the Reserve Continue to provide opportunities for people to connect with the Reserve. Continue to maintain relationships with neighbours Consider dividing this strategy into “community engagement” and “neighbour relations”, with the community engagement section to be reported across all of TLCs 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. 		

Weed management		
Key objective(s)		Status 2015-16 On-track
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Weeds are eradicated from the Reserve by 2017 		
Strategy description		
<p>The aim of this strategy is to eradicate existing infestations of weeds on the Reserve. Blackberry, foxglove and elderberry were widespread on the Reserve at the time of its acquisition, but ongoing weed control work has greatly reduced their extent. Weed mapping and control is continuing.</p>		
Volunteers pull foxglove. Photo: Chris Crerar.		
Indicator	Current status	Trend
Weed extent (ha)	14 ha	Flat
Weed density	Very low	Improving
Progress in 2015-16		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Scattered infestations of weeds were treated by volunteers across the Reserve Weed control is continuing and weeds have almost been eradicated from the Reserve. The weed control program continues to provide volunteers with opportunities to connect with the Reserve and be actively involved in its management 		
Key recommendations for future management		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue the successful weed control program 		