



Annual Reserve Report

Recherche Bay 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.

Recherche Bay Reserve was acquired by the TLC in 2006 and protects 144 hectares of coastal forest and sites of international cultural heritage significance in the far south of Tasmania. The Reserve adjoins the Southport Lagoon Conservation Area. The management of the Reserve is guided by the Recherche Bay 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.


RECHERCHE BAY RESERVE SCORECARD


Monitoring			
Target	Indicator	Status 2014	Trend
Coastal forest	Floristic diversity Structural complexity Canopy recruitment Vertebrate fauna diversity	8 species per site 5 strata per site 4.6 species per site	Baseline data collection scheduled for 2016
Cultural heritage sites	Intactness	Intact	
Target	Indicator	Status 2015-16	Trend
Community connection to landscape	# volunteer days on the Reserve	8	Flat
	# visitors to the Reserve	28	Increase
Management Effectiveness			
Strategy	Indicator	Status 2015-16	Trend
Protecting cultural heritage sites	Cultural heritage sites are documented and mapped	Cultural heritage sites are partly documented.	Flat
Community engagement	# events at the Reserve	1	Increase
	# of volunteer activities at the Reserve	2	Increase

Cover image: Recherche Bay Reserve bequest trip Oct 2015: Phillip Roach


MONITORING SUMMARY


Coastal Forest		Status: Very Good
Goal The condition of coastal forest is maintained		Outcome: On Track
Description Coastal forest and woodland occupies the entire Reserve. Features of special interest include a sea eagle nest overlooking Black Swan Lagoon, and areas of rainforest, which is unusual in coastal southeast Tasmania. Monitoring has shown that the vegetation is in excellent condition and supports a diverse community of native animal species. While cats are present on the Reserve they are in low numbers and do not pose a major threat at present.		 <p>The sea eagle nest overlooking Black Swan Lagoon. Photo: TLC.</p>
Ecological indicator	Current status	Trend
Floristic diversity	8 species per site	Baseline data collected in December 2015
Structural complexity	5 strata per site	
Canopy recruitment		
Vertebrate fauna diversity	4.6 species per site	
Key findings <ul style="list-style-type: none">• An active white-bellied sea-eagle nest was confirmed.• Spotted-tailed quolls are present on the Reserve. Devils are present in good numbers.• Cats are present on the Reserve.• Superb lyrebird calls were detected on the Reserve.• Species richness is relatively high for wet forest.		
Recommendations <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Repeat ecological monitoring in 2020, or earlier if there is a significant ecological event such as fire.		

Cultural Heritage Sites		Status: Excellent
Goal Sites or areas of heritage significance are conserved		Outcome: On Track
Description A significant area of the Reserve is listed under State and National Heritage Registers for its important cultural heritage values. The most pertinent of these values include the French exploration in 1792 and 1793 led by Bruni D'Entrecasteaux, involving botanical collections, astronomical observations, the planting of a vegetable garden and peaceful contact with Aboriginal people. Other values include extensive use of the land for convict coalmining, whaling, ship building, timber harvesting and milling.		 <p>The 'southern wall'. Photo: TLC.</p>
Cultural heritage indicator	Current status	Trend
Intactness of sites	Intact	Flat
Key findings <ul style="list-style-type: none"> TLC are working towards a visitation management plan, in response to the increase in visitation to the Reserve over the past 10 years. This plan will identify what levels of visitation are appropriate, and recommend ways that any visitation can be managed to minimise the impacts on natural and cultural heritage values. 		
Recommendations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to seek funding for and develop a visitation management plan in consultation with cultural heritage experts, to ensure that any visitation has minimal impacts on natural and cultural heritage values. 		

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
Target 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>Supporters visit the Reserve on a bequest trip. Photo: Phill Roach.</p>	
Community indicator	Current status 2015-16	Trend
# volunteer days on the Reserve	8	Flat
# visitors to the Reserve	28	Increase
Key findings <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People continue to visit the Reserve for recreation, numbers are not currently recorded. • Two volunteer activities were held at the Reserve, and one visit with 28 TLC supporters. • One volunteer assisted with installing ecological monitoring. 		
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		
Key objective(s) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> TLC provides the community with ongoing recreation, education and volunteering opportunities. 	Status 2015-16 On-track	
Strategy description Public interest in the Reserve remains high and TLC aims to provide the community with opportunities to experience its outstanding natural and cultural values.	 <p>Supporters on a visit to the Reserve. Photo: Phill Roach.</p>	
Indicator	Current status	Trend
# events at the Reserve	1	Increase
# of volunteer activities at the Reserve	2	Increase
Progress in 2015-16 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> TLC hosted a bequester field trip to the Reserve in October 2015 with 28 supporters attending. Expert guides helped groups of visitors to experience the Reserves natural and cultural values. Volunteers helped with the bequester trip and ecological monitoring. 		
Key recommendations for future management <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to provide opportunities for people to connect with the Reserve. Consider dividing this strategy into “community engagement” and “visitor management”, 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. 		

Cultural heritage protection		
Key objective(s) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> By 2016, cultural heritage sites and knowledge are fully documented 		Status 2015-16 On-track
Strategy description <p>The remoteness of the Reserve makes it easier for TLC to protect cultural heritage. Cultural heritage sites have been mapped and documented. TLC occasionally provides the community with opportunities to visit sites of public interest, such as the Observatory and French Garden.</p>	 <p>Cultural heritage site at the Reserve. Image: Jo Naylor.</p>	
Indicator	Current status	Trend
Cultural heritage sites are documented and mapped	Cultural heritage sites are documented.	Flat
Progress in 2015-16 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Visitors on TLC supporter trips to the Reserve were escorted by a historian and TLC staff member who ensured that cultural heritage sites were not disturbed. The value of cultural heritage sites was communicated to visitors. An architectural practice, Circa Architecture Morris-Nunn, developed a high-profile vision to create a floating hotel at Recherche Bay, which would involve visitation to heritage sites. TLC did not provide or withhold support for this project, given that it is only a vision with no actual plans for development at this stage. 		
Key recommendations for future management <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to provide visitors with opportunities to appreciate the Reserve's unique cultural heritage in ways that minimise impacts on those sites. Keep a watching brief on the Circa Architecture Morris-Nunn hotel project, and consider a response based on the conservation targets identified in the Management Plan if the project develops further. 		