

SUMMER 2018

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Little Swanport. Photo: Rob Blakers

Protecting land is the most effective step to giving the critically endangered swift parrot a chance of survival, and in this newsletter we share how close we are to securing a safe haven for this species, and so many others, at Little Swanport.

We also explore the achievements of the Midlands Conservation Fund (MCF). While the ecological change occurring in this landscape is significant, the MCF's ability to work alongside landholders has been unprecedented and we look forward to building upon this momentum.

I am continually inspired by the wealth of knowledge amongst our supporters, and an event that truly exemplifies this is our annual Natural

Guardians trip. This year the TLC's Natural Guardians were treated to exploring the Vale of Belvoir – a reserve which we later honoured the 10-year anniversary of at our Annual General Meeting (AGM) in November.

The AGM was a time for us to celebrate yet another impressive year, which included securing a new reserve, extending an existing one, and commencing a campaign for another. The TLC has also achieved remarkable results across our programs, including a record number of Revolving Fund property sales and doubling the area protected through the MCF - all within one year.

The TLC took centre stage at the annual National Private Land

Conservation Conference in Brisbane in October where Dr Sally Bryant launched the Five Rivers Environmental Account - the first of its kind anywhere in the world.

On behalf of everyone at the TLC, I want to express our deep gratitude to the organisations, landholders and individuals who willingly share their skills and resources. Our successes are built on the generosity of the TLC community, and I thank everyone who has supported us during 2018 by donating, volunteering and spreading the story of our work, so that together we can achieve greater results for nature conservation.

James Hattam
Chief Executive Officer

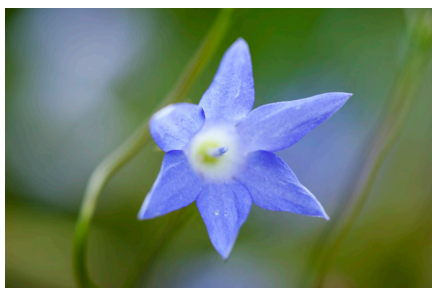
HIGHLIGHTS



Swift parrot (*Lathamus discolor*). Photo: Chris Tzaros

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Each spring, the world's entire swift parrot population returns to Tasmania. Discover how close we are to providing many of them with a place to land, forever.



Bluebell (*Wahlenbergia* sp.). Photo: Andy Townsend

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Explore how engagement with farmers to protect the Tasmanian Midlands through the Midlands Conservation Fund has recently doubled its impact.



TLC ecologist Matt Taylor leads supporters at our East Coast Discovery Weekend. Photo: Eddie Safarik

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Our East Coast Discovery Weekend took supporters to two critically important conservation landscapes.



Aquatic and terrestrial habitats meet at Little Swanport. Photo: Rob Blakers

Thanks to the generous support of so many people we are very close to protecting the critical habitat of Little Swanport, home to unique Tasmanian plants and animals, and one of the remaining strongholds of the critically endangered swift parrot (*Lathamus discolor*).

Each spring, the world's entire swift parrot population returns to Tasmania. They travel from the winter feeding grounds of mainland Australia to the south-east coastal fringe of our island state. Some of them travel up to 5,000 kilometres to reach their breeding grounds.

When they arrive in Tasmania they are seeking forests for food, shelter and breeding hollows to raise their young in the months ahead. But each year the search gets harder with old trees being lost and breeding habitat on the decline. That's why the TLC seized the opportunity to purchase and protect 150 hectares of critical forest and woodland fringing the Little Swanport River—an area that provides mature trees with abundant nesting hollows.

The Little Swanport property is already showing good signs of recovery from past logging and stock grazing, with the emergence of new growth spurred by recent rains. Early surveys have revealed plentiful wildlife, including the Tasmanian devil (*Sarcophilus harrisii*), Tasmanian bettong (*Bettongia gaimardi*) and spotted quail-thrush (*Cinclosoma punctatum*), as well as water rats, which use the river corridor. We are also thrilled to welcome a host of returning woodland birds, including the prime mover of

our fundraising campaign so far: the critically endangered swift parrot (*Lathamus discolor*).

With approximately 2,000 swift parrots left in the wild, the TLC's Head of Science Dr Sally Bryant emphasises that the threats to this precious bird are enormous and now is the time to make a real difference.

"The swift parrot could very quickly become extinct before our eyes. Protecting habitat in its core range is the most important thing we can do now to secure its future. Little Swanport provides healthy mature trees with exceptional nesting hollows to make that possible." - Dr Sally Bryant

Protecting this habitat is the most effective first step to give the swift parrot every chance of survival - and with your valued support, the TLC's Little Swanport Reserve will further build upon the conservation estate in this important landscape.

Thanks to those who have already donated, we have achieved three quarters of our fundraising target. Will you help us raise the remaining \$250,000 needed to acquire, protect and manage this important property to secure vital habitat for so many of our rare and threatened species?

GIVE.....

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



Swift parrot (*Lathamus discolor*). Photo: Chris Tzaros

ALCA CONFERENCE

Across Australia 280 million hectares of private land is being managed for conservation by Australian Land Conservation Alliance (ALCA) members.

The alliance, of which the TLC is a member, consists of over 50,000 supporters, 3,000 landholders, employs 500 staff and has a turnover of \$200 million. Each year ALCA delivers the National Private Land Conservation Conference, bringing members, landholders and partners from all corners of the country together to explore and celebrate the importance of conservation on private land.

This year the event was coordinated by Queensland Trust For Nature and held in Brisbane. The conference theme 'accelerating connection' highlighted the importance of working together, and was addressed by landholders, businesses and conservation professionals - including the TLC.

Over three days, delegates from across the country celebrated the role that private land conservation plays in strengthening the natural, social and cultural fabric of Australia. From providing ecosystem services to galvanising community connections through case studies of innovation and collaboration, ALCA continues to grow and acknowledge the significant contribution that private land conservation makes at a local and national level.



MIDLANDS CONSERVATION FUND

Midlands Conservation Fund participant and program ecologist. Photo: Annette Ruzicka

The Tasmanian Midlands at first seems an unlikely contender for the title of 'National Biodiversity Hotspot'. Fringed by mountains and situated in a distinct rain shadow, the area was one of the first in Australia to be cleared for agriculture following European arrival.

Today, the landscape is one that for many people has been framed from car windows while travelling the Midland Highway. The pace of the drive doesn't do justice to the complexity of the regions abundant plant species – including a variety of lilies, orchids, daisies and other wildflowers and herbs in between patches of native tussocks. Instead, the Midlands has a reputation as well-worn farmland. Yet as stewards of the land, Midlands farmers are perhaps the most attuned to the area's diversity – and those who wish to protect the land, while at the same time making a living off it, have historically faced a predicament.

As the climate changes and farming practices intensify, less than 10 percent of the Midlands original native grasslands and 30 percent of all its vegetation remain, much of it degraded in some way. These factors have culminated in the Midlands becoming one of the most threatened ecosystems in the world, with more than 180 threatened plant and animal species (32 of national significance) in a landscape that is poorly represented in the public reserve system. Hence, there is a pressing need to secure these precious remnants.

In 2012 the Midlands Conservation Fund (MCF) was established to formally protect and manage these areas. The fund is a partnership between the TLC and Bush Heritage Australia (BHA) who facilitate stewardship agreements with farmers to safeguard native grasslands and grassy woodlands on their properties. The agreements are up to 10 years initially and provide annual payments in exchange for meeting key conservation outcomes which are determined and monitored by a project team. Meeting goals means landowners may be reducing grazing, rehabilitating native grasslands, eradicating weeds or controlling feral animal populations.

The MCF was launched at the Midlands property of TLC Board member and farmer Julian von Bibra, who is now conserving 755 hectares of endangered grasslands and woodlands. Julian explains that for the landholder, conservation stewardship becomes a key priority when it reliably contributes to farm business income and is no longer a management liability or risk.

"Farming can often be very isolating and external assistance from organisations like BHA and the TLC helps the land owner feel that the broader community is also contributing to the cost of protecting our natural values," Julian said, adding that the MCF is as much about cultural changes as it is about ecological ones.

Accordingly, a key success of the MCF program is its ability to bring a diverse groups of people into close

partnerships that share conservation objectives and recognise each other's circumstances and needs. In this way, the MCF is an innovative tool that goes beyond the social, economic, and ecological conditions of the Tasmanian Midlands - factors that saw the program win a national Banksia Sustainability Award in 2014 for leadership and innovation in sustainable management of resources.

Now, what started as a \$3 million fund – generously donated by the Sidney Myer Fund, The Myer Foundation, John T Reid Charitable Trusts, the Vincent Fairfax Family Foundation and others – has a value of \$4.17 million and allows for stewardship payments to continue in perpetuity. Yet it is the MCF's contribution to the cultural change occurring in the Midlands community that outweighs its financial status. This year, engagement with a range of farmers saw the program double its size, with a further six agreements signed, meaning 4,505 hectares are now covered by MCF stewardship agreements for enduring, landscape-scale conservation.

The TLC thanks the landowners who have committed to the MCF stewardship agreements to make nature conservation in the Midlands possible. We also look forward to continuing to build relationships that support landowners to conserve habitat on their farms, with our aim for the MCF to reach \$10 million by 2020 and protect more than 8000 hectares of native grasslands and grassy woodlands in the Midlands. To find out more visit: tasland.org.au/programs/midlands-conservation-fund/



Supporters at the Vale of Belvoir. Photo: Heath Holden

The Vale of Belvoir Reserve. Photo: Matt Newton

As more people recognise the power of leaving a lasting legacy to nature conservation in Tasmania, the TLC's Natural Guardian community continues to grow. To thank our Natural Guardians for their profound commitment, each year we invite this group to explore one of our reserves, led by Bequest and Supporter Relations Coordinator Sophie Marshall.

In November, a group of Natural Guardians gathered under a dramatic Cradle Valley sky to spend the day at the Vale of Belvoir. Together they learned about the diversity of habitats; including native grasslands rich in threatened plant species, wetlands, old-growth rainforests and one of Tasmania's only subalpine karst systems.

"Each TLC reserve is unique and on every trip we aim to be joined by experts in the field who have skills or connections to particular landscapes, either personally or professionally," Sophie explained.

"There is such a wealth of knowledge amongst our supporters that it never ceases to amaze us how enriched and enhanced our experiences are each time Natural Guardians gather on these properties."

Hence, the importance and wonder of uniting the Natural Guardian community and embracing the natural values that they help protect cannot be underestimated. While exploring the reserve by foot, this year's group was fortunate to be joined by renowned and respected

geologist Keith Corbett and botanist Sib Corbett, who helped bring the reserve's myriad of natural values to life.

"I absolutely treasure those bequestor days because it is a great opportunity to connect to places and also the wonderful community of Natural Guardians. I find it so reassuring that there is good in the world," - Sue Lovegrove, artist and Natural Guardian.

The contribution that the TLC's Natural Guardians make to nature conservation is paramount to so many aspects of the TLC operations – including the ongoing management of reserves such as the Vale, which the TLC recently celebrated the 10 year custodianship of. However, behind these powerful achievements a more humble milestone has been reached, and that is by Bequest and Supporter Relations Coordinator Sophie Marshall, who this year also celebrated 10 outstanding years with the TLC. Thank you Soph!

There are many ways to leave a gift in your will to ensure the important work of the TLC continues. If you would like to learn more about the program, or to let us know that you have already left a gift to the TLC in your will, we would love to hear from you.

ACT

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

AGM & 10 YEAR VALE OF BELVOIR CELEBRATION

In 2008 Professor Jamie Kirkpatrick highlighted the significance of protecting the Vale of Belvoir.

"I think that if we pull off the conservation of the Vale of Belvoir it will be the conservation triumph of the 21st century in Tasmania," he said.

Fast forward 10 years and not only has the TLC protected the Vale, but we continue to explore the cultural narrative that underpins its status as one of the most important places for nature conservation in Australia. This was highlighted at our Annual General Meeting (AGM) in November, when we celebrated the reserve's tenth anniversary by inviting people key in the landscape's protection and management to share their insights on what makes the area so unique.

The AGM was also a time to present our 2017-18 Annual Report and consider challenges and opportunities in realising the TLC's vision for Tasmania to be a global leader in nature conservation - including emerging ways we are working with landholders to identify and protect conservation values on their properties.

EXPLORE

To read our Annual Report online visit tasland.org.au/about-the-tlc/newsletters-and-annual-reports



Supporters at Little Swanport Reserve for our East Coast Discovery Weekend. Photo: Eddie Safarik

Tasmania's East Coast is a significant place for nature conservation. Many identify this while visiting the iconic Freycinet National Park or while travelling the Great Eastern Drive. Yet for TLC supporters, attending our East Coast Discovery Weekend in September meant looking beyond the conventional postcard-perfect scenery and instead exploring two lesser known yet critically important conservation landscapes.

First was The Big Punchbowl Reserve, followed by our current conservation campaign property at Little Swanport. Located between the pristine sandy beaches of Wineglass Bay and the dramatic dolerite cliffs of Maria Island, both properties exemplify the type of landscapes that help piece together Tasmania's reputation as a state of rich naturalness.

Take for example the view that is often admired from Cherry Tree Hill or Devil's Corner Lookout. While the weathered granite peaks of Freycinet National Park are easily recognisable in the background, it is the vitality of private land in the vista's foreground that truly adds to its picturesque charm. Accordingly, between Tasmania's most popular national park and Moulting Lagoon Ramsar wetland, 18 privately protected areas flourish. A very significant one of these is the TLC's Big Punchbowl Reserve.

The Big Punchbowl is a landscape shaped by water, or a lack thereof. On day one of our Discovery Weekend supporters were treated to guided discovery walks throughout this ephemeral landscape, featuring

immersive ecological and cultural interpretation from the TLC's Dr Sally Bryant, Andry Sculthorpe from the Tasmanian Aboriginal Centre, fire ecologist Dr Jon Marsden-Smedley, ecology and biodiversity experts Janet Smith (DPIPWE) and Nicky Meeson (Glamorgan Spring Bay Council), and celebrated Tasmanian painter Sue Lovegrove.

Day two of the Discovery Weekend took supporters to our next vital conservation success story in the making: Little Swanport. Supporters were able to discover first-hand why the landscape is critical for the survival of the swift parrot and many other animals. This was heightened by conversations with neighbouring landowner Tom Tenniswood, in addition to Glamorgan Spring Bay Council Catchment to Coast Coordinator Terry Higgs, who shared their own insights into what makes the area significant for conservation.

While all natural environments are precious, so many critical elements must align for the TLC to decide upon a conservation property. Little Swanport meets a plethora of essential criteria, and we hope that with your help we can soon include it alongside The Big Punchbowl as a TLC reserve.

The East Coast Discovery Weekend would not have been possible without the dedication and support of our volunteers. Their commitment, expertise and generosity underpin the success of our discovery events and what we are able to collectively achieve for nature conservation.



Tasmanian devil (*Sarcophilus harrisii*). Photo: Heath Holden

ENVIRONMENTAL ACCOUNTING

The TLC has developed the first case study on a private reserve that has converted ecological monitoring data into a common unit of measurement, called Econd.

The methodology used – created by the Wentworth Group of Concerned Scientists – has been gaining attention Australia-wide, with the possibility that Econd could become a tradable commodity, similar to carbon credits. As is the case with carbon credits, Econds have the potential to underpin future biodiversity markets and return financial benefits for effective conservation management.

After two years of applying the methodology to Five Rivers Reserve, in 2017 the TLC converted monitoring data into Econds. The Environmental Account has been featured in the Australian Government's National Environmental and Accounting Strategy Action Plan – a first for a conservation organisation.

The TLC's Head of Science Dr Sally Bryant has showcased the Five Rivers Reserve Environmental Account at several national forums.

"Environmental accounting is a global way of thinking about conservation and rewarding good management in market driven systems," she said.

The TLC intends to apply the methodology to its other reserves and stay at the forefront of environmental accounting innovations.



WHAT'S ON

Long Point Reserve. Photo: Heath Holden

TLC END OF YEAR BBQ 2018

Thursday, 13 December 2018

12:30pm to 4:30pm

TLC Hobart office

It has been a truly successful and innovative year for private land conservation in Tasmania and we have you to thank for that! Let's get together and celebrate! For more information and to register, visit:

<https://tlcbbq2018.eventbrite.com.au>

SAVE THE DATES: FIVE RIVERS RESERVE & CENTRAL HIGHLANDS WEEDING

15 - 19 January 2019

29 January - 1 February 2019

12 - 15 February 2019

We need three big teams of volunteers for three successive working bees. This approach will enable us to work efficiently to remove weeds across 20,000 hectares of beautiful highland landscape. It's also bound to be a lot of fun and a great chance to meet like-minded people, so come join us! For more information and to register, visit:

<https://tlccentralhighlandsweeding2019.eventbrite.com.au>

LAKE MALBENA STATEMENT

To read our statement and submission to the Department of the Environment regarding the Lake Malbena proposal, visit tasland.org.au/news

PUBLICATIONS

To read our 2017-18 annual report, visit:

tasland.org.au/about-the-tlc/newsletters-and-annual-reports

To discover more about our Five Rivers Environmental Account, visit:

tasland.org.au/reserves/five-rivers-reserve

To watch a short clip celebrating 10 years of the Vale of Belvoir, visit:

tasland.org.au/reserves/vale-of-belvoir-reserve



Volunteers weeding at Egg Islands Reserve. Photo: Rob Blakers

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Devil's Corner
TASMANIA

