



TASMANIAN
LAND
CONSERVANCY

SUMMER 2023

NEWSLETTER 76

Pine Tier. Photo by Rob Blakers.

What a phenomenal year! The Tasmanian Land Conservancy (TLC) community established three new reserves across the state, from Sloping Main on the Tasman Peninsula, Silver Plains in the Central Highlands to Piano Coves in the northeast. This is not to mention launching the exciting conservation campaign to protect Pine Tier: if it's successful, it will create the largest contiguous area of privately protected land in Tasmania. Thank you to everyone who has enabled the protection of these special places. We simply could not do it without your support.

Our last newsletter of 2023 is full of TLC joy. There's some exciting news about the Revolving Fund, with new properties listed for sale for those dreamers hoping to look after a patch of their own. We've also got summer

volunteering opportunities for those who want to give us a hand looking after the TLC's reserves.

Involving people is critical to our purpose, and the recent suite of community events and activities have been key connectors for the TLC community to come together. From the highly successful Conservation Science Symposium to the Bruny Island Bird Adventure, it has been fantastic and enriching to spend time with so many supporters. I love it when we celebrate the successes, share stories and get inspired for the work that still needs to be done.

We are deeply grateful for the many and varied ways people contribute to our work, whether they are landholders, volunteers or donors. The TLC community continues to grow through programs like Land for

Wildlife and our engagement events and thought-provoking communications. I would like to say a special thank you to our Communications Coordinator, Jane Rawson, for her commitment and dedication to TLC and its communications. Jane has raised our eyes and broadened our reach through her carefully crafted messages, expertise and quiet leadership. Thank you, Jane: we wish you well on the adventures ahead and we can't wait to read the new book! We now employ 30 incredible people, representing 22.5 full-time equivalents with a collective contribution of over 92 years to the organisation: thank you to the whole TLC team for their efforts over the year!

On behalf of all of us at the TLC we wish you and your loved ones a safe, enjoyable and nature-filled summer.

– James Hattam, Chief Executive Officer

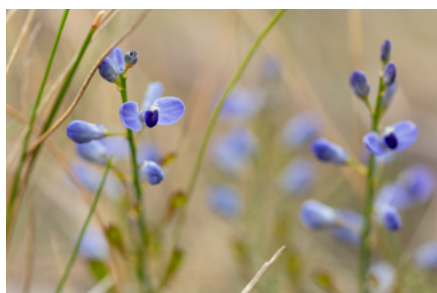
HIGHLIGHTS



Pine Tier. Photo by Rob Blakers.

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Help protect Pine Tier



Bruny Island Revolving Fund property. Photo by Eddie Safarik.

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Revolving Fund properties for sale



James Hattam at our Science Symposium. Photo by Eddie Safarik.

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Recap of our first Science Symposium



PROTECT PINE TIER

Pine Tier. Photo by Rob Blakers.

The TLC has embarked on a project to create the largest contiguous area of privately protected land in Tasmania. We are working to permanently protect Pine Tier in Tasmania's Central Highlands. Adding this 1,880 hectare property to the TLC's private reserve network creates 20,000 hectares of contiguous privately protected land that adjoins the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area, safeguarding numerous threatened species as well as an iconic Tasmanian highland landscape.

Pine Tier sits in the geographical centre of Tasmania. At an elevation of 800m on a crisp clear highland day, you can stand on the basalt dome above the Pine and Little Pine rivers and gaze south to the snow-capped peaks of the Franklin–Gordon Wild Rivers National Park and north into the Walls of Jerusalem National Park. This is the confluence of five beautiful highland rivers. The Little Pine and Nive rivers flow down from trawtha makuminya, lined with drooping pine, a dwarf alpine conifer that is endemic to Tasmania's central plateau, west and south-west. Kenneth Creek winds from Skullbone Plains through picturesque valleys cushioned with large sphagnum peat bogs. The Little Pine enters the Pine and flows into Pine Tier Lagoon.

Vital in the conservation landscape, Pine Tier is also important in its own right. There are three threatened vegetation communities here – Highland grassy sedge land, extensive areas of Highland Poa grassland and pockets of Sphagnum peatland. Elsewhere, these communities are frequently under pressure from degradation and agricultural development. Sphagnum

peatland, a nationally endangered vegetation community, plays a crucial role in the global carbon cycle, storing more carbon than all other forest vegetation types.

'Pine Tier's grasslands offer perfect habitat for eastern quolls, providing insects and small mammals for their nightly foraging trips before they retreat to the adjacent woodlands to den. Secluded river valleys wind through the subalpine grasslands, supporting large Sphagnum peatlands and endemic conifers. Pine Tier is a remarkable landscape that has the ability to protect some of our most threatened ecosystems, forever.' – Dr Cath Dickson

Since the creation of the nearby Five Rivers Reserve in 2014, we have been aware of Pine Tier's natural values and its potential for conservation. Its significance is heightened by its critical position in the spectacular highlands landscape. Colloquially it is referred to as the 'hole in the doughnut' because it is surrounded by several existing reserves. We have worked with the landholder and property manager for over 10 years and now have the opportunity to purchase and protect this crucial piece of the jigsaw.

The Central Highlands have a special place in the TLC story. Here, the TLC expanded the scale and scope of our organisation. Our ambitious vision for Tasmania to be a global leader in nature conservation became a possibility and the TLC community expressed its commitment to achieving lasting conservation outcomes, establishing some of our largest and most ecologically significant reserves. We went from simply protecting parcels

of land to boldly embarking on the conservation of whole landscapes: Skullbone Plains, Five Rivers Reserve and – working with the Tasmanian Aboriginal community – the return of trawtha makuminya to Aboriginal ownership and management.

Private land conservation is critical in protecting Tasmania's unique landscapes and many of our rare and threatened species. We've seen the results at Skullbone Plains, Five Rivers and trawtha makuminya. Now you can help us make a difference at Pine Tier.

With your help, we can take this once-in-a-generation opportunity to create a huge nature corridor across Tasmania's Central Highlands, safeguarding threatened species' future and ensuring the places we value today are protected long into the future.



GIVE

Help us create a legacy for nature at a landscape scale. Every gift goes directly to the purchase and permanent long-term management and ecological monitoring of Pine Tier. Join us in protecting Pine Tier by making a donation today. Donate online at tasland.org.au/donate or call us on (03) 6225 1399.



YOUR OWN NATURE RESERVE

Revolving Fund property Barren Plains. Photo by Rob Blakers.

Is 2023 the year you buy your own private nature reserve? The TLC's Revolving Fund has two properties freshly on the market, looking for owners keen to conserve habitat and threatened species long into the future.

Every Revolving Fund property is protected with a conservation covenant, a legally binding agreement under the Tasmanian Nature Conservation Act (2002). A property-specific covenant is registered on the land title in perpetuity, giving an assurance that important natural values are protected and managed for generations to come. Each property covenant includes an area where you can build a house or shed.

Apollo Bay is a 62 hectare property at Mulcahys Road, Bruny Island, just a five-minute drive from the Bruny Island ferry. The property features Tasmanian blue gum forest and woodland, essential foraging and breeding habitat for critically endangered swift parrots. You'll also find white peppermint and stringybark forest and woodlands. The property and nearby areas also contain extensive records of threatened species including swift parrot, eastern quoll, Tasmanian wedge-tailed eagle, white-bellied sea eagle and forty-spotted pardalote. The exclusion zone and potential building site is on the northern boundary, offering privacy, views and access to Mulcahys Road.

Barren Plains, near Miena in the Central Highlands, is a 212 hectare property that protects threatened vegetation, including native grasslands

and sedgeland, and which fronts onto Shannon Lagoon. Barren Plains sits amid a network of conservation properties, with over a dozen areas protected by conservation covenants within 20km. Scattered cabbage gum and occasional Miena cider gum occur along the southern boundary and there is a patch of woolly tea tree along a small stream that enters the lagoon. The potential building site is along the property boundary, allowing simple road access and options for privacy and expansive views across the entire property.

Mark Savage, who bought a Revolving Fund property at Little Swanport in 2022, says about owning his own nature reserve, 'By purchasing through the TLC Revolving Fund I benefit from the environmental assessment undertaken by the TLC, and the covenant and management plan that give me guidance on how to protect and enhance the property. I have no intention of selling, but if I did it is pleasing to know that the covenant will continue to protect the natural values of the property. I have met some neighbours who have established environmental covenants on their properties and it feels good to be part of community who value the natural environment. In my early explorations, I found quoll scats, orchids, and listened to frogs in the creek. At night I could hear devils. There are some stunningly beautiful trees and places to sit. I don't feel as if I am an owner of the property, more a custodian.'

To find out more, visit
tasland.org.au/properties-for-sale



Jane and author Peter Timms at Prosser River Reserve. Photo by James Hattam.

FAREWELL

Since Newsletter 60, in the summer of 2019, I've been the keyboard behind the TLC newsletter.

It's been my pleasure and privilege to report the successful protection of so many reserves: Tall Trees, Tinderbox Hills, Prosser River, Kelvedon Hills, Eagle Rock, Sloping Main, Silver Plains, Piano Coves and Diana's Basin. I've let you know about the TLC's eastern quoll reintroduction program, landholders looking out for eastern barred bandicoots, the invertebrates of Tinderbox, the first years of Land for Wildlife under the TLC banner, the launch of WildTracker and blue gum restoration at Little Swanport.

But it's not all good news. Remember when all our reserves were closed by Covid, and we couldn't run events? At least we got to produce a few fun little newsletters, like 'Film night with the TLC'.

In the TLC's 20th year I was lucky enough to commission and edit, along with Ben Walter, 20 wonderful pieces for the book *Breathing space*. I'm proud to have been part of a project that published new writers, started conversations about conservation and also managed to be downright beautiful.

Newsletter 76 is my last – I'm off to write a book about (what else?) nature – but it has been a delight to read and write so many wonderful stories. Thanks for having me.

– Jane Rawson
Communications Coordinator

2023 IN REVIEW

Satin flycatcher.

With 2023 about to become a memory, we're reflecting on all the wonderful work you've helped us achieve for nature in the past year.

When we published our Strategic Plan in 2020, we committed to protecting an additional 30,000 hectares of land for nature by 2025. This year we've added 9,595 hectares to the overall tally, with 10,606 hectares still to protect. Three new reserves made a substantial contribution to that total: Silver Plains, Sloping Main and Piano Coves. You'll have read about Silver Plains Reserve in the Spring newsletter, and Sloping Main Reserve was protected thanks to the many contributions made by our community since 2022.

The third of those reserves is Piano Coves, on the beautiful north-east coast. It conserves state and nationally threatened ecological communities, including nationally critically endangered black gum woodland. The 79 hectare property was gifted to the TLC by the Elsie Cameron Foundation.

The vegetation at Piano Coves Reserve is predominantly heathy shrub- and woodland, dominated by black peppermint coastal woodland and coastal scrub. Heathy vegetation grows on low-nutrient soils and tends to include a diverse range of shrubs. The result is a place where there are splashes of colour from wildflowers blooming across the seasons, including orchids, spikey heath plants and mature grasstrees. Thanks to the flowers, the birds are busy all year. The spectacular

coastline is habitat for the nationally vulnerable hooded plover: Tasmania is a stronghold for the species, with approximately 20% of the estimated 3,000 individuals occurring along north-east Tasmanian shorelines.

Over the year, our science team's monitoring program revealed how important our reserves are for threatened species. Eastern quoll density on Five Rivers Reserve's spotlighting transects is seven times higher than the statewide average, and trapping revealed a density of 3.4 quolls per square kilometre.

More than 4,000 ptunarra brown butterflies were counted over 96 transects at the Vale of Belvoir Reserve: this area is a stronghold for the insect. And we want to keep it that way! Long-term monitoring sites at the Vale have been expanded, because we want to better understand the relationship between the reserve's threatened vegetation, the ptunarra brown and our program of planned burns. That program was successfully enacted this year, after three years of damp weather that precluded fire. A highlight of our management calendar was burning the landscape at both the Vale of Belvoir and Rubicon Sanctuary, where disturbance is essential for threatened plants to flourish.

In 2023 the TLC hosted its first-ever photo residency. Three emerging photographers spent time at Daisy Dell, the Vale of Belvoir, Eagle Rock and Skullbone Plains Reserve, and the results of their visits were exhibited at Wild Island Tasmania in Hobart.

From early December, they'll be on show at Hive Ulverstone, in a larger exhibition than that held down south.

This year's Discovery Day was a Discovery Weekend, with 50 intrepid campers spending a night under the stars at Five Rivers Reserve, joined by a host of other visitors for a daytime visit exploring the science of cider gums, climate change and eastern quolls. We've also taken you on travels to Tinderbox Hills Reserve and Silver Plains Reserve, and you've joined us at the John Glover Prize, Hadley's Art Prize and for an evening of tales about paddling Bass Strait. To make sure you don't miss out on future events, sign up for our email updates at tasland.org.au/subscribe



ACT

Download your copy of the 2022-23 Annual Report to find out more about what your support enables us to do for nature tasland.org.au/about-the-tlc/annual-reports



Elise Jeffery and Alice Robbins at our Science Symposium. Photo by Eddie Safarik.

Orchids at Sloping Main Reserve. Photo by Hayley Kingsley.

TLC's first Conservation Science Symposium was held in September in Hobart. It was a hugely informative afternoon of presentations, panel discussions and networking as we deep-dived into the science work being done by the TLC and its research partners across our reserves.

The TLC has long been committed to contributing to global best practice in nature conservation through science, innovation, collaboration and open communication. Previously we've shared what we've found by publishing research papers (you can see those at tasland.org.au/science/publications-and-reports), through presentations at events and conferences, and on our website, social media and in this newsletter. We knew there was an appetite for the TLC's research findings, but even we were very pleasantly surprised that our first dedicated science event booked out in a couple of hours, with 275 tickets sold and the event space at CCAMLR packed to capacity. The TLC community certainly loves to see the evidence!

We are so grateful to all those research partners who presented. We heard from Prof Mark Hovenden about the future of carbon storage in peaty grasslands, Dr Fernanda Alves on protecting forty-spotted pardalote nestlings with feather dispensers, Dr Sebastien Comte and Prof Chris Johnson on the growing problem of fallow deer, Alice Johnson on mapping subalpine vegetation with high-resolution images, and scholars funded by the TLC's Bird Conservation Fund about their

work on pardalotes, shearwaters and orange-bellied parrots.

The TLC's scientists presented findings so far from our eastern quoll restoration project, the WildTracker citizen science program, vegetation management projects at the Vale of Belvoir and Little Swanport Reserves, and investigations into the relationship between potoroos, devils and cats on TLC reserves.

With each speaker only getting six minutes on stage, many questions were left unanswered, so it was good news that we had time to gather afterwards in the TLC office for wine, snacks and extremely lively conversation. It was heartening and inspiring to see so many community members energised by and invested in conservation science research, and the application of an evidence base to conservation management.

It was such a successful afternoon that we plan on adding this to our annual calendar of events, so keep an eye out for it late next year.



EXPLORE

Relive the TLC's inaugural Conservation Science Symposium, or see it for the first time by watching the recording at vimeo.com/tasland

IN THE FIELD

Summer is field season, when we get out on reserves and check the status of the species and habitats we're protecting. Monitoring and management are vital to conservation – if any of the plants and animals we care for are declining, we need to find out why and take action to improve their situation.

In 2022-23, 332 sites across 11 reserves were monitored. This summer we are setting up long-term monitoring at Eagle Rock Reserve. The reserve provides habitat for threatened species such as the orange-bellied parrot, wedge-tailed eagle, spotted-tailed quoll and Tasmanian devil. We're particularly interested in the status of 16 threatened flora species, including endangered orchids.

At Sloping Main Reserve we'll establish monitoring of ten threatened vegetation communities, and look out for migratory waders who will be visiting Burden's Marsh during warmer weather. Our first round of fauna camera monitoring revealed a fantastic surprise, spotted-tail quoll on the peninsula! This is a first for this region, and we are looking forward to analysing the data to find out more.

At one of our newest reserves, Silver Plains in the Central Highlands, summer is the time to check the numbers of eastern quolls. And we will also pay a visit to Five Rivers Reserve to establish the condition of threatened vegetation there.



WHAT'S ON

Pine Tier. Photo by Rob Blakers.



Pine Tier. Photo by Rob Blakers.

WEEDING ACROSS TLC RESERVES

Summer 2023-24

Summer is upon us and as we all know, that means weeds are making the most of the warmer weather!

The reserves team are hard at work all year around, but sometimes they need an extra hand in the summer months to keep on top of things. This summer we will be holding volunteer weeding events at Five Rivers Reserve, Silver Plains Reserve, Prosser River Reserve and Kelvedon Hills Reserve. As the new Community Engagement Coordinator, I am excited to head out with a fantastic team of volunteers in early 2024, to get my gloves dirty during a few solid weeks of weeding.

We do have an existing group of experienced volunteers but are welcoming new volunteers interested in spending time outdoors working on reserves. Please note there will be activities for all fitness levels.

Please contact me, Gemma Dyke, at gdyke@tasland.org.au for more information.

A NEW EYE ON NATURE AT HIVE TASMANIA

2 December 2023 - 17 March 2024, Ulverstone

In 2023, the TLC hosted its first photo residency, with three emerging photographers interpreting TLC reserves. The beautiful, conversation-starting results by Kelly Slater, Nick Green and Karen Keefe are exhibited throughout summer at Hive, 50 Main Street, Ulverstone. More information hivetasmania.com.au/events

GET THE LATEST FROM THE TLC BLOG

'I was moved recently by a conversation with one of our TLC supporters, describing a story from another supporter, about the drunkenness of blue butterflies on cider gum sap. It reminded me of the complex relationships between some of the blue (*Lycaenid*) butterfly species and ants, where the ants will sometimes take responsibility for the rearing of *Lycaenid* larvae. And this set me to thinking about a word I had only just learned from another storyteller...' Thoughts on symbiosis and sympoiesis on TLC reserves this month on 'In Our Nature', the TLC blog – read more at tasland.org.au/blog

We acknowledge the Tasmanian Aboriginal people as the traditional custodians of the lands on which we work and recognise their continuing connection to land, waters and culture.

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