



TASMANIAN
LAND
CONSERVANCY

WINTER 2024

NEWSLETTER 78

Pine Tier Lagoon. Photo by Luke Tscharke.

There's no denying that Pine Tier is a special place. Looking over the plains from a basalt rise above the Nive River, I am always struck by the magnitude of what the Pine Tier campaign will achieve.

Everything in my gaze, in every direction will be protected – over 20,000 hectares. It's easy to feel awe in this landscape. Sprawling views give way to a sense of connection and the feeling you are part of something much bigger. Pine Tier isn't just about protecting land, it's an expression of hope from the community that we can achieve lasting conservation outcomes. I'd like to give a sincere thank you to everyone who has already supported this watershed campaign, we couldn't achieve what we do, on the scale we do, without your belief in our work.

As always, the Tasmanian Land Conservancy (TLC) team have been in our reserves and supporting landholders across the state. It has been a successful monitoring season for the Science Program with impressive outcomes, including extensive weed control. Thanks to all the dedicated volunteers who have been out deploying camera traps, processing monitoring images and removing old fence lines across the reserves. In this newsletter, you'll also read about our conservation prioritisation tool, much-deserved recognition for our communications and marketing team and one family's commitment to creating a private nature reserve through our Revolving Fund.

It has also been heartening to experience the community's response

to the Weeping Tree film screenings. We are proud to partner with award-winning filmmaker, Matthew Newton on this moving project about the cider gums in the Central Highlands. Thank you to all who attended the sold-out premieres across the state.

I feel privileged to work alongside a motivated community of supporters and experience landscapes like Pine Tier through their stories. Painters, photographers, scientists, there is always a common thread - a connection to place and a motivation to care for it. These quiet conservationists are always working hard in the background doing what they can, with what they have. It is a privilege to be a part of that.

**– James Hattam
Chief Executive Officer**

HIGHLIGHTS



Butterflies at Pine Tier. Photo by Luke Tscharke.

Page 2

Help us create the largest privately protected area in Tasmania



Revolving Fund property. Photo by Andy Townsend.

Page 3

Care for your own reserve with the Revolving Fund



Juvenile cider gum. Photo by Manderlee Anstice.

Page 4

Saving our precious wayalina/cider gums



PROTECTING PINE TIER



Pine Tier. Photo by Luke Tscharke.

Curling everlasting at Pine Tier. Photo by Luke Tscharke.

TLC is pleased to say that we are taking significant strides in our efforts to permanently protect Pine Tier.

Thanks to the generous support of the TLC community, we are moving ever closer to our goal of creating Tasmania's largest private conservation area and conserving this special piece of the Central Highlands, forever.

Sitting in the heart of Tasmania, Pine Tier's 1880 hectares support eucalypt forests along the ridgelines that give way to open grasslands traversed by crystal clear mountain rivers - it is a breathtaking haven for our precious native flora and fauna.

But it isn't just natural beauty driving our efforts to Protect Pine Tier - it is a crucial piece in the mosaic of Central Highlands conservation. Bordered to the east and west by TLC reserves Five Rivers and Skullbone Plains, and to the north by Trawtha Makuminya, a 6,878 hectare property managed for conservation by the Tasmanian Aboriginal Centre, Pine Tier opens vast corridors for our native animals to move through. Its critical placement between established reserves allows us to view the landscape holistically and boldly protect expansive tracts of land.

By connecting these properties, we will create 20,000 hectares of uninterrupted conservation land for our native wildlife to thrive well into the future.

Some of our most threatened and unique endemic species call Pine Tier home, including the Tasmanian devil, Tasmanian wedge-tailed eagles,

ptunarra brown butterflies and the eastern quoll.

With fragmentation and degradation of eastern quoll habitat accelerating their decline on the mainland, these beautiful creatures are now also at risk of disappearing in Tasmania. Recent studies conducted across the state have shown their vulnerability, with significant decreases in sightings in areas that once supported healthy populations, like the Central Highlands.

Pine Tier's eucalypt forests and large grasslands provide perfect habitat for these charismatic critters to hunt, forage and den and represent a critical opportunity to give quolls a helping hand. By safeguarding these important areas of habitat, we can ensure existing wildlife corridors are protected and mitigate the effects of human encroachment on Tassie's eastern quoll populations.

Pine Tier's sprawling environment also supports varied and unique vegetation communities that play an important role in maintaining ecological function. More than 70% of Pine Tier is made up of threatened vegetation communities including large parcels of highland Poa grassland and pockets of the nationally endangered highland Sphagnum peatland.

Sphagnum peatlands play an important role in the global carbon cycle, storing more carbon than any other vegetation type.

Due to active harvesting, peatlands are at risk all over the globe, restricting

their ability to store and release water into catchments, sequester carbon and support biodiversity. By protecting the local hydrology of Pine Tier, we're allowing these peatlands to remain as intact, hydrated carbon sinks and contribute to fighting climate change by continuing to capture carbon.

As the effects of climate change become more apparent, private land conservation, like Pine Tier is becoming increasingly important for protecting fragile ecosystems and ensuring cherished landscapes endure for future generations to enjoy.

Although our campaign has gained significant momentum, we cannot reach our target alone. We need your support to raise the funds necessary to ensure Pine Tier is protected forever.

Join us on our journey towards protecting Pine Tier by making a donation today. Visit our website at tasland.org.au/donate or call us on (03) 6225 1399.

Let's tip the scales back in nature's favour and ensure the places we value today are protected long into the future.



GIVE

To donate to Pine Tier scan the QR code above.



REVOLVING FUND

Kristan and Summer with their children. Photo by Kristan Laemmle-Ruff.

Location, location might sound like a tired real estate cliché, but when Kristan Laemmle-Ruff and his family were considering a TLC Revolving Fund property, it was exactly what drew them in.

Perched on a Turrakana/Tasman Peninsula mountain top near Roaring Beach, is the beautiful Mt Communication Revolving Fund property. Like all Revolving Fund properties, Mt Communication is protected with a conservation covenant, a legally binding agreement under the *Nature Conservation Act 2002* (TAS) that assures permanent protection. Covenants attach to the land title, not the landholder, so no matter who purchases the property, protection is guaranteed.

Once protected, Revolving Fund properties are on-sold and the new owners become the custodians of their own private conservation reserves, with funds from the sale re-invested to purchase and protect more properties of high conservation value.

For Kristan and Summer, the opportunity to buy such a property in 2019 was too good to pass up. ‘We saw the Mt Communication property and I was speechless – I just thought, this is spectacular,’ he said.

Many of our special native animals live alongside Kristan and his family - Tasmanian wedge-tailed eagles, echidnas, fairywrens and galahs all share the coastal views. They’ve even seen devil and quoll scats around the property.

But it wasn’t just the beauty of the property that hooked them, it was a dual

feeling of opportunity and responsibility to care for the land.

‘The world can feel overwhelming, but this seemed like a tangible way to do something positive. It felt hands-on and real,’ he recalled. ‘I thought that if we buy a conservation covenant, that puts me and my family in a position of looking after the place, not just for a day or a week, but for a lifetime.’

The results of this protection are real. Through the stewardship of landholders like Kristan and Summer, the Revolving Fund has protected over 30 properties across the state, making up 6,700 hectares, including 1,138 hectares of old growth forest and priority habitat for 55 threatened flora and fauna species including Tasmanian devils and Tasmanian wedge-tailed eagles.

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The TLC thanks the Australian Government for supporting the Revolving Fund Program through the Forest Conservation Fund.


ACT
If you'd like to sign up for Revolving Fund updates and see properties as they become available, visit tasland.org.au/rf

Echidna. Photo by Andy Townsend.

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SUBMIT YOUR WILDTRACKER PHOTOS

To celebrate National Science Week, we are hosting a WildTracker Exhibition in Launceston and Hobart, showcasing exceptional camera trap images collected by WildTracker citizen scientists and the TLC community.

Unlike traditional photography exhibitions, where image quality and composition are key, we're looking for rare or threatened species, unique behaviours, humorous moments, or images that tell a story of nature that is special to you.

The best submissions will be selected based on four themes:

Behaviour: Think special interactions between animals – maternal care, unusual partnerships, conflict and parasitism, or anything weird and wonderful.

Threatened Species: Beautiful and intriguing photos of Tasmania's threatened wildlife, including devils, quolls, wedgies and barred bandicoots, even something that depicts a threat to our native wildlife?

Comedy: Any photo that has made you giggle!

Firsts: Share the first record of a species on your property or local region, or images that introduced you to a species.

For more information on how to enter, see the What's On section on the last page. This National Science Week project is supported by the Australian Government.



SAVING THE CIDER GUMS

Caged cider gums. Photo by Manderlee Anstice.

If you have been fortunate enough to encounter the beautiful Tasmanian cider gums (*E. gunnii* subsp. *gunnii*) and Miena cider gums (*E. gunnii* subsp. *divaricata*), you will understand their preference for harsh conditions.

Thriving in frost hollows on treeless flats or on the edges of freezing marshes, cider gums stand proudly in a landscape where other species lay hunched against the inhospitable conditions. The high sugar content in their sap, acts like antifreeze, meaning they can survive the harshest of highland winters, withstanding blizzards, bitter frosts and biting Antarctic winds.

Colloquially, wayalina/cider gums have assumed the title of the Weeping Trees, most obviously for the sugary sap they secrete which ferments into a light alcoholic liquid, traditionally enjoyed by the Aboriginal people of Tasmania. But it has also been known to evoke a strong emotional response from those who come across it. Many of those who've stood at its base and gazed up at the gnarled intersection of limbs have been moved to the point of tears.

You might think such a rugged and specialised tree could shrug off any of nature's harshest challenges, but that isn't the case. The truth is climate change, fire, grazing from natives and pests alike and fragmentation of stands are just some of the threats to this tree's survival.

The Great Pine Tier Fire of the 2018-2019 summer burnt through many highland marshes, damaging stands of cider gums, including those on TLC's Five Rivers Reserve.

Like many eucalypts, cider gums have fire adaptations like resprouting from lignotubers in their base and seedlings germinating post fire.

But handy as this may be, it brings unwanted attention from the abundance of herbivores (particularly deer) seeking out a sugar hit. TLC's cameras have shown an increase in deer distribution across the highlands and research coming from the University of Tasmania has shown they're partial to the high sugar content of new cider gum growth.

To give cider gums respite from grazing herbivores, TLC, with the help of volunteers, encased around 70 post-fire saplings in cages. Initially these were closed across the top, but as they've begun to outgrow their roofs, we have converted the cages to floppy tops so they can continue to grow while protected from hungry mouths.

This year's monitoring at Five Rivers has shown outstanding results, with caged saplings growing 10 times larger than their uncaged counterparts (80cm vs 8 cm). These fantastic results provide hope for the future of these endangered trees and show their population can be safeguarded with careful intervention.



EXPLORE

If you missed TLC's recent screenings of *The Weeping Tree*, watch at [youtube.com/@ausgeo](https://www.youtube.com/@ausgeo)



Tim Boyle during the relay race. Photo by kunanyi Mountain Run.

TLC TEAM TRIUMPHS

It's no secret that there is talent among the TLC ranks, but this quarter saw our team excel in new areas.

The kunanyi Mountain Run took place in late March with runners converging from across the globe to traverse the beautiful mountain on Hobart's doorstep. As official charity partner of the event, TLC staff Elise Jeffery, Aimee Bliss and Dan McMahon, along with two volunteers entered the relay race and took out the top spot. Not only did they demonstrate their physical prowess on the challenging course, they raised over \$2,400 for TLC conservation work, with kunanyi Mountain Run raising an additional \$1,965 through runner donations. We would like to thank everyone that donated to our team, and to the event organisers, for your generous support.

Our team also shone at the 10th Annual Diemen Awards, Tasmania's leading design industry award, taking out the top prize in the Creativity for Good category with our 2023 fundraising campaign, *The Future is in Our Nature*. Designed by Manderlee Anstice, Jessie Bodor and former Communications Coordinator, Jane Rawson, this beautiful campaign highlighted the ongoing challenges and opportunities for TLC's nature conservation and positioned people's actions and attitudes as inextricably linked to the future of the planet.

Congratulations to everyone involved for your outstanding work and proudly flying the TLC flag.



UPGRADING OUR CPT

Nationally endangered highland sphagnum peatland at Pine Tier. Photo by Rob Blakers.

TLC staff at Five Rivers Reserve. Photo by Elise Jeffery.

TLC is pleased to announce that we will be working with Barbara Thomas Fellowship recipient, Anne Boothroyd to finalise and share our conservation prioritisation tool (CPT). The CPT enables us to strategically prioritise our conservation and guides our work from acquisition to landholder programs.

The Barbara Thomas Fellowship for Excellence in Conservation was launched in 2006, when the Thomas Foundation awarded a \$500,000 grant to The Nature Conservancy's (TNC) Australia Program. Its focuses on furthering education and enhancing the skills of those within Australian environmental organisations.

The CPT addresses the challenge of complex landscape conservation prioritisation, while remaining flexible as new data becomes available, from our team in the field and state-wide updates. Built within Marxan: Conservation Solutions desktop software, it is based on the reserve planning framework principals of Connected, Adequate, Representative and Efficient and utilises over 1,000 conservation layers. It empowers TLC and partners to create and compare conservation scenarios that can be updated with new data.

The CPT guides conservation investments and ensures we can strategically protect areas of high conservation value. By working with Anne, we will ensure it is used to its full potential and shared with other environmental organisations across Australia.

Key outputs from the project include a comprehensive manual for TLC staff to ensure critical decision points are outlined and TLC staff can use and update the tool moving forward, workflows automated where possible, streamlined version of the CPT in online Marxan (MaPP) platform setup, and preparation of a guidebook for TNC Australia to allow replication of the CPT in other regions.

The findings and progress from this project will then be presented by Anne at an Australian conference.

Although TLC is the primary end user of the CPT, the approach will have a broad user base including other conservation NGOs, NRM groups, government agencies and private landholders. Its adaptability will also extend its application to other TLC initiatives like WildTracker and the Land for Wildlife program.

This project aligns seamlessly with the goals of TLC and TNC and represents an unprecedented opportunity to safeguard Tasmania's remarkable ecosystems for generations to come.

Fellowship recipient, Anne Boothroyd is a PhD candidate at the University of Tasmania, researching conservation planning, design and management for Antarctica's Marine Protected Area system. Anne's PhD has been submitted for review and she is currently waiting for comments.

IN THE FIELD

Our Conservation Science team have finished the extensive summer monitoring program, assessing Key Conservation Targets for the ongoing management of our reserves.

At the Vale of Belvoir Reserve, we undertook our annual ptunarra brown butterfly survey, counting 3,999 individuals - an exciting increase from 3,200 in 2023. We also completed our burn monitoring at the Vale of Belvoir and Rubicon Sanctuary, while transitioning our sites at Five River to the new vegetation assessment method.

At Sloping Main Reserve, Nature Glenelg Trust (NGT) completed the draft eco-hydrology report for Burden's Marsh that collates management actions since the 1820s and outlines the 'goal-state' for this beautiful saltmarsh. NGT and TLC hosted neighbours and key stakeholders on the reserve to discuss findings and restoration recommendations. It was a fabulous day for all with a guided tour producing constructive conversations.

Our Reserves management team have been weeding at Kelvedon Hills and Long Point reserves, managing roadside vegetation at Five Rivers Reserve and handling gorse at Prosser River Reserve. With help from a group of volunteers we've made significant headway at Prosser, having treated 100 metres, while another group removed around 300 metres of fencing at Pine Tier, opening up the landscape. A big thanks to the volunteers involved.



WHAT'S ON

Mountain rocket at Pine Tier. Photo by Luke Tscharke.



Black-faced cuckoo-shrike at Pine Tier. Photo by Luke Tscharke.

PHIL AND NED'S EXCELLENT ADVENTURE

Now - 31 July, Hobart to Darwin

Our LFW Coordinator (South), Phil Wise is riding from Hobart to Darwin with his son, Ned to raise money for TLC and the Thin Green Line Foundation. You can donate to their ride here mycause.com.au/p/331609/phil-and-neds-ride-for-nature and follow their journey on Instagram here [@ridefornature24](https://www.instagram.com/ridefornature24)

MIDLANDS REVEGETATION PROJECT

1 - 3 July at Fosterville and 15 - 17 July at Somercotes, Ross

Our Midlands Revegetation Project is calling for volunteers to help plant 15,000 plants across three properties near Ross. Accommodation, snacks and dinner will be provided. If you're interested in undertaking some conservation work in this beautiful part of Tasmania, please see the dates above and contact gdyke@tasland.org.au

WILDTRACKER PHOTO COMPETITION

Closing Thursday 1 August

Submit your photos for the WildTracker exhibition with a brief description via tasland.org.au/blog/wt-ex

All successful entrants will receive a printed copy of their photo and category winners announced at the Exhibition's opening night will receive a special gift. Good luck and happy camera trapping!

TLC CONSERVATION SCIENCE SYMPOSIUM

Thursday 22 August

Save the date for our second Conservation Science Symposium as we take a deep dive into the science-work being done by the TLC team and our partners across our reserves and conservation programs.

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.

Tasmanian Land Conservancy

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