

Threatened Plants Tasmania Newsletter

June 2010

From the President

Your new executive was elected at the General Meeting held at the Vale of Belvoir in February; contact details are included at the end of this newsletter. An important shift of emphasis will be evident this year as we strive to improve safety and hygiene on our field trips to precious places, some of which are remote with limited visibility. New policies are in draft, additional funding is being sought, equipment is being purchased, and training opportunities are being offered. As I write, I am mid-way through a 2-day first aid course in Devonport.

Our botanical project work has an important new foundation with the publication of "Prioritisation of Threatened Flora and Fauna Recovery Actions for the Tasmanian NRM Regions". Richard Schahinger gave us a preview of this report at the November 2009 General Meeting at Ross. Meanwhile we have received about \$20 000 from a Caring for Country Community Action Grant proposal to support TPT work in the Midlands. Our project with Cradle Coast NRM is also on-going and very active. We are also starting to develop a similar relationship with NRM South.

While the list of existing and new projects is ever expanding, it's also nice to report successful completion of the TSN-funded project on threatened orchids. We still have not quite finalised the two DVDs even though we launched the orchid monitoring DVD at the May General Meeting. Our DVD producer has been hit with computer problems just at the point where he was about to finalise everything.

The web site project is proceeding slowly as our volunteer coordinator settles into his new life and new job in Tasmania; I am hopeful that this will come to fruition in the second half of the year. With generous support from Cradle Coast NRM, we now have a TPT logo in final draft (see page 8). All feedback so far is very positive.

In an effort to be on the front foot, we have been working on a forward program for 2010-11 for all our projects; details are included on page 7. Please slot dates of interest tentatively in your diaries. Details for each field trip will be published about two weeks in advance when you will have a chance to register your interest.

With so much going on, we continually need to find new members to bring us renewed energy. We are planning a display on Threatened Species Day, 7 September, and at the Australian Plants Society Wildflower Spectacular in Hobart 8-10 October. If you can help in some way, please contact Geoff Curry who is coordinating these events for TPT.

I would like to conclude by offering thanks to the outgoing executive for their invaluable planning and leadership over the previous year. Also a very big thank you to all our volunteers in the field, whose efforts we have highlighted in this newsletter.

I always try to make this column shorter to provide more space for trips reports etc. But there always seems to be so much important news that I can't manage it. Long may the positive news continue, but I am trying to be briefer even I don't succeed!!

Phil Collier 30 June 2010

Reports of recent activities

Orchid monitoring Surrey Hills Friday 22 January 2010

Adapted from: P.A.Collier (2010). *Population monitoring of the threatened Prasophyllum crebriflorum, Surrey Hills grasslands, Northwest Tasmania 2010 update*

The purpose of this year's visit to the Surrey Hills grasslands was to re-visit the population of the endangered crowded leek orchid, *Prasophyllum crebriflorum*, in the transect set up in 2009 and to search in nearby recently burned grasslands for additional populations. The transect also includes specimens of the highland leek orchid, *Prasophyllum mimulum*, which TPT is monitoring as well. The date of our visit, January 22, proved to be an ideal date for the flowering of *P. crebriflorum* but a little late for *P. mimulum*.

Four TPT volunteers and two staff from Gunns Ltd North West Resource Management Team checked out the orchids tagged in 2009 and added new tags for orchids flowering this year. We now have 40 plants of *Prasophyllum crebriflorum* and 22 plants of *Prasophyllum mimulum* tagged and will monitor their growth and reproduction in future years.



Figure 1 (Left to right) Phil Collier, James Dick (Gunns), Geoff Curry, Ann Mount and Bronnie Grieve (Gunns) monitor rare orchids in Surrey Hills grasslands (photo Robin Garnett); Pollinator visiting *P. crebriflorum* (photo Phil Collier)

TPT at the Vale of Belvoir on February 6, 7 and 8 by Robin Garnett

There are only 32 fine, sunny days a year at the Vale of Belvoir we were told — and we were lucky enough to score three of them in succession for the combined TPT–Tasmanian Land Conservancy (TLC)–Cradle Coast NRM survey trip. Twenty eight volunteers from TPT and TLC conducted the first large-scale survey of threatened plants at the Vale of Belvoir since it was purchased as a private conservation reserve by the Tasmanian Land Conservancy in 2008.

The planning and coordination of so many volunteers was impressively managed by Belinda Colson (Cradle Coast NRM), Denna Kingdom (TLC), Richard Schahinger (Threatened Species Section) and Phil Collier (TPT). Once at the Vale, we volunteers split into small groups, each led by an expert, to comb the hills and valleys, systematically looking for nine threatened plant species that had been recorded there previously.

By the end of three days we felt tired but successful. Richard Schahinger went home with a plant press full of interesting specimens for identification under a microscope. The threatened

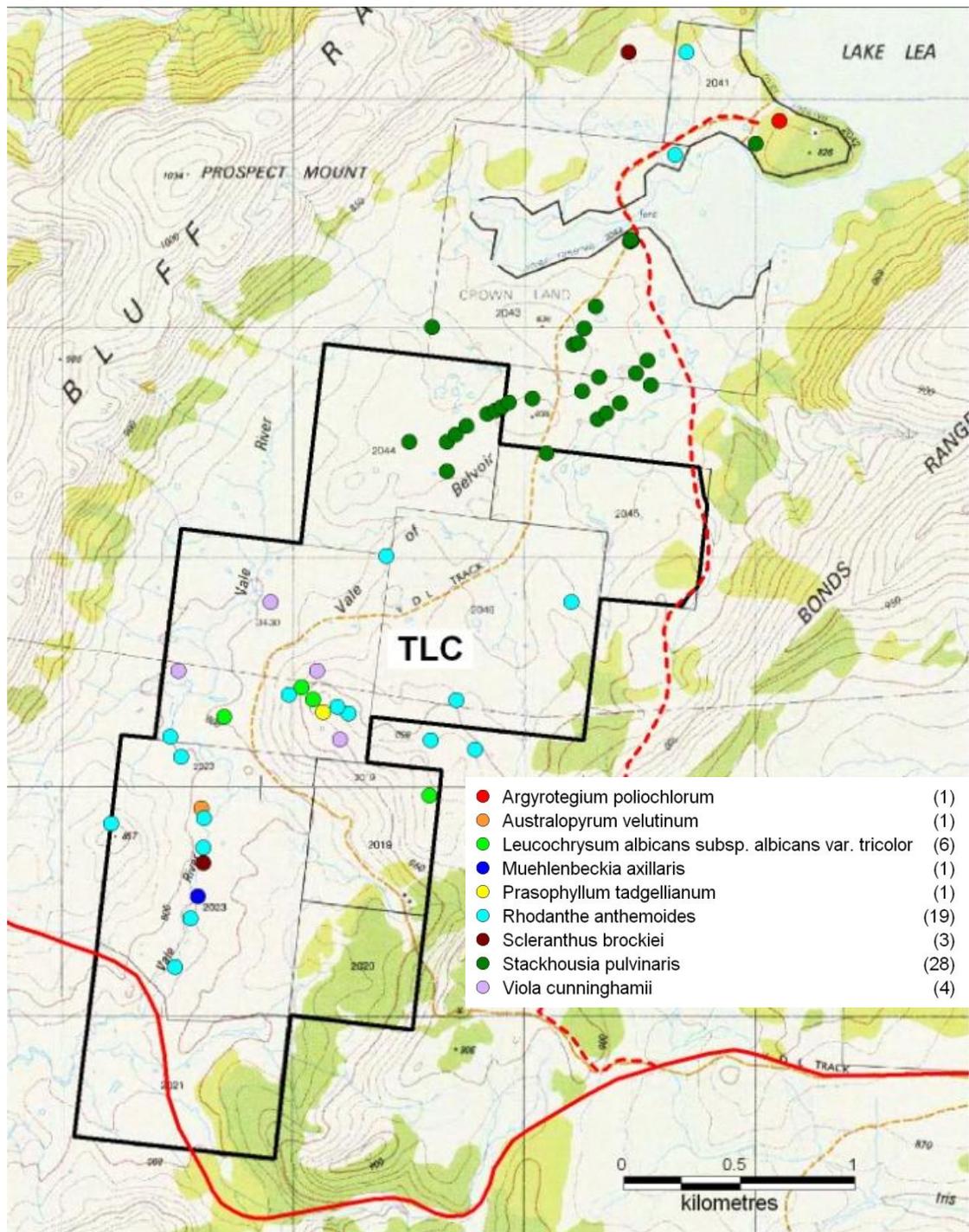


Figure 2 Records of threatened flora from the Vale of Belvoir prior to TLC/TPT field trip 6–8 February 2010 (map by Richard Schahinger)

flora data gathered over the long weekend was transferred from field sheets into spreadsheets by Denna Kingdom and TLC volunteers, and was subsequently checked by Richard and entered into DPIWPE's Natural Vales Atlas. The result of the weekend's endeavours is a much improved understanding of the Vale's botanical values (see Figure 2, Figure 3 and Table 1). The information will enable the Vale's land managers to formulate a meaningful monitoring program to determine the impact of cattle grazing on a range of species, with a particular focus on the vulnerable alpine candles (*Stackhousia pulvinaris*) and the endangered grassland paperdaisy (*Leucochrysum albicans*).

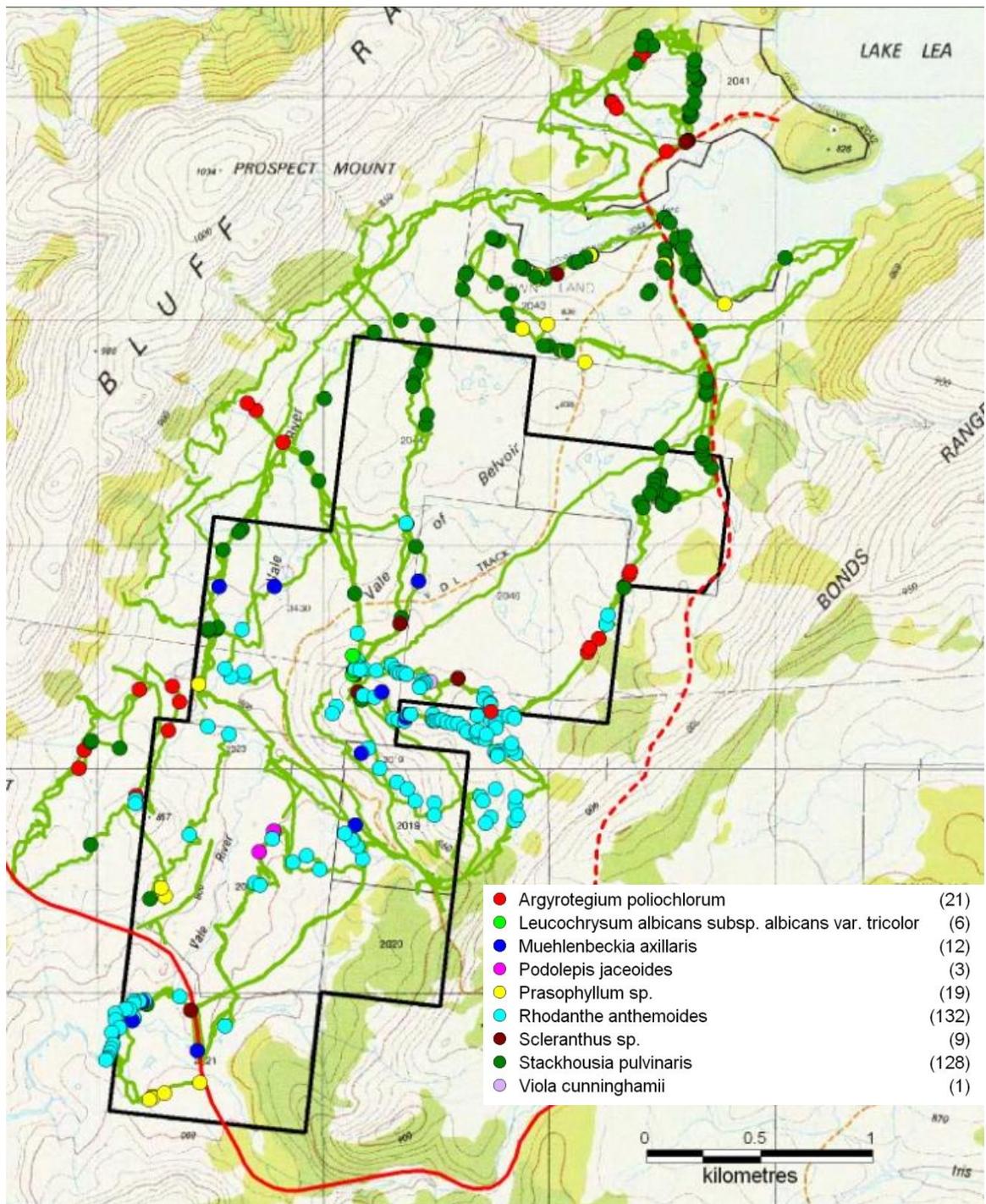


Figure 3 Records of threatened flora from the Vale of Belvoir discovered during the TLC/TPT field trip 6–8 February 2010. Also showing are the GPS tracks of the various TLC/TPT survey parties. (Map by Richard Schahinger)

The TLC organised a press release about the Vale of Belvoir Field trip. Southern Cross news and Tasmanian Country Hour on ABC radio both sent reporters on Monday morning. Denna Kingdom from the TLC anchored both segments. However, Robin Garnett appeared on the Southern Cross news on the Monday evening (8 Feb) and Phil Collier was heard in the story “Managing grazing land for conservation” by Eliza Wood on Tuesday 9 Feb.

Table 1 Results of joint TLC/TPT field trip to Vale of Belvoir February 2010 (source: Richard Schahinger)

Threatened Species	Records prior to Feb10	Records during field trip	Comments
<i>Argyrotegium poliochlorum</i>	1	21	Only seven records in Tas prior to our surveys, so a breakthrough of sorts for a poorly known species.
<i>Leucochrysum albicans</i>	6	6	All in the vicinity of Daisy Dome.
<i>Muehlenbeckia axillaris</i>	1	12	
<i>Prasophyllum tadgellianum</i>	1	?	Too late in the season to ID; 19 <i>Prasophyllum</i> records to be revisited & ID'd next season
<i>Rhodanthe anthemoides</i>	19	132	Locally abundant around the slopes of Daisy Dome & also along the Vale River to the south
<i>Scleranthus brockiei</i>	3	?	A very messy taxon. <i>Scleranthus</i> sp. records to be targeted & resolved next season
<i>Stackhousia pulvinaris</i>	28	128	(Plus 230 from Dec 2009.) Buckets of the thing, though mostly on the valley floor east of the Vale River & north of Daisy Dome. Most abundant within and at margins of sinkholes but also in low numbers in sedgy grasslands.
<i>Viola cunninghamii</i>	4	1	The elusive <i>Viola</i> . Tas Herbarium confirmed one collection; very thin on the ground it would seem, though now in a much better position to pin it down.



Figure 4 Belinda Colson with volunteers at the Vale of Belvoir (photo Robin Garnett)

Monitoring threatened lichen species before an ecological burn at Pontville Crown land block on 27 March 2010

Adapted from: *Pontville Crown land block, March–April 2010 Update: Re-scoring of the lichen transects & an ecological burn*. Richard Schahinger, Threatened Species Section, Department of Primary Industries, Parks, Water and Environment, Hobart, 8 April 2010

Six TPT volunteers worked with Richard Schahinger on 27 March to re-score the five 50-metre long transects that have been set up to monitor two threatened lichen species *Xanthoparmelia amphixantha* and *Xanthoparmelia molliuscula*. This field work was carried out just before an ecological burn of two sections of the Pontville block. The burn was undertaken to reinvigorate the over-grown grasslands, but is also being used as an opportunity to monitor the response of several of the block's threatened species to fire to better inform future management.

TPT volunteers will do follow-up monitoring of burnt and unburnt transects in the coming months.



Figure 5 Ecological burn at Pontville Crown Land Block on 1 April 2010 conducted by the PWS fire crew from Glenorchy (photo Richard Schahinger)



Figure 6 (Left to right) Alison Vandenburg, John Davies and other TPT volunteers monitoring lichens; View of the same site immediately after the burn (photos Richard Schahinger)

TPT Forward Program 2010-2011

The forward program for 2010-2011 is included below. Dates are currently tentative and subject to seasonal conditions. Some of our favourites from last season, like the Midlands and Vale of Belvoir are almost certain to run on these dates as there are multiple activities planned.

Location	Target Species	Activity	Tentative date(s)
Pontville	Lichens & woody spp.	Rescore transects	24 Jul
Pontos Hills	<i>Hardenbergia violacea</i>	Assist RTBG with establishing ex situ site: planting & caging	TBA
Training		Hobart	28 Aug
Training		Burnie	11 Sep
Milford	<i>Caladenia saggicola</i>	Map & rescore transect	25 Sep
Pontville	Lichens & woody spp.	Rescore transects	9 Oct
Wynyard	<i>Chiloglottis trapeziformis</i>	Re-map & survey	10 Oct
Bridport CA	Orchids	Surveys post-fire	TBA Oct
Midlands LWE	Various	Extension surveys, establish transect and some weeding	30-31 Oct and 1 Nov
Milford	<i>Prasophyllum milfordense</i>	Map sp. & rescore transect	3 Nov
Campbell Town Golf Course	<i>Prasophyllum incorrectum</i> (and <i>Caladenia anthracina</i>)	Rescore ten paired 4 by 4 m quadrats (& general orchid survey)	early Nov
Arthur-Pieman	Orchids	Extension surveys and establish transect	6-7 Nov
Mt William NP	<i>Zieria</i> , <i>Euphrasia</i> etc	Transect for <i>Zieria</i> & ext surveys	17 Nov
Campbell Town Golf Course	<i>Prasophyllum olidum</i>	Map sp. & rescore 30 m long demographic transect	late Nov
Bruny Island	<i>Euphrasia</i> & orchids	Extension surveys of burnt areas: East Cloudy Head & Labillardiere Peninsula	16-17 Nov
Pontville	<i>Hibbertia basaltica</i> , <i>Cryptandra amara</i> etc	Post-fire weeding	4 Dec
Milford	<i>Prasophyllum milfordense</i>	Rescore transect for fruit set	7 Dec
Campbell Town Golf Course	<i>Prasophyllum olidum</i>	Rescore transect for fruit set	21 Dec
Surrey Hills, Waratah, Vale of Belvoir	<i>Prasophyllum crebriflorum</i> and others	Extension surveys, Re-score transect	21-23 Jan
Snug Tiers	<i>Prasophyllum amoenum</i> (& <i>Dryopoda dives</i>)	Extension surveys post-fire	8 Jan
Vale of Belvoir	<i>Stackhousia</i> & <i>Leucochrysum</i>	Set up experiments; extension surveys south of Cradle Link Road	5-7 Feb
Smiths Lagoon/Vaucluse	Orchids & wetland species	Weeding lagoon & ephemeral species mapping	19 Feb
Apsley River	<i>Bertya tasmanica</i>	Map & establish transect	12 Mar
Arthur Pieman	<i>Pneumatopteris pennigera</i> lime fern	Rescore transects	18 Mar
Pontville	Lichens & woody spp.	Rescore transects	26 Mar

Other News

General Meeting at the Royal Botanical Gardens: RTBG 15 May 2010

In conjunction with the May TPT General Meeting, we were fortunate to have a presentation and hands-on session with botanist, Alan Gray. Alan has previously taught numerous children and adults about Tasmanian plants and is currently working for the Tasmanian Herbarium on the Flora of Tasmania Online project. In his engaging talk he convinced us of the value of using plant keys for identification and then gave us useful practice in identifying Eucalypt species for ourselves.

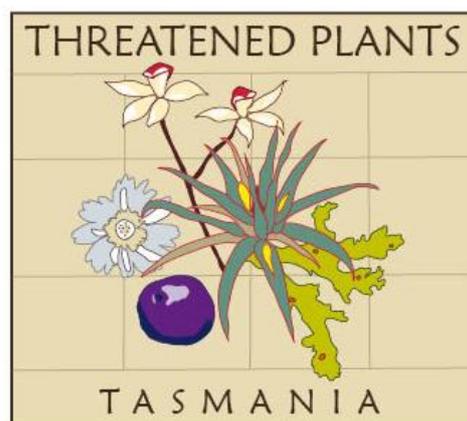
During the May General Meeting the threatened orchid monitoring DVD was shown and officially launched. This DVD explains and demonstrates the method that TPT uses to monitor threatened orchids. The committee will send it to TPT members to view before they go on their first orchid monitoring field trips. The DVD was funded by a grant from the Commonwealth's Threatened Species Network (which no longer exists) and filmed by Shane Pinner of Spinner Productions.

Training days

TPT will be offering training days on 28 August in Hobart and 11 September in Burnie, similar to those offered in 2008. The morning will include a discussion of threatened species and how the Natural Values Atlas (NVA) supports effective management of these species. There will also be hands-on use of the Natural Values Atlas. The afternoon will be spent in the field working with a GPS unit, two-way radios, plus some recording of information for input into the NVA. The whole day will be very interactive, as participants learn new skills as part of a friendly and supportive team. Watch out for further details. Also, please advise friends and family who may be interested to attend.

New TPT LOGO

Cradle Coast NRM has very generously funded the creation of a logo for TPT as part of our collaboration in support of threatened species in the Cradle Coast region. The executive have been very positive in their feedback about the draft. Please contact a member of the executive if you have any comments. Thanks very much from TPT to Belinda Colson at Cradle Coast NRM for coordinating this project.



2010 Committee

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