**Multiple Benefit Conservation in Tasmania**

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**PAPER:** *An innovative global partnership between Conservation International and BHP Billiton has facilitated the conservation and ongoing management of over 11,000 hectares of land in the Tasmania’s Central Highlands, by the Tasmanian Land Conservancy (TLC) in a project called the Five Rivers Conservation Project. This project creates a world class, financially sustainable, effective nature conservation management model at a landscape scale and in doing so contributes towards achieving Aichi Target 11. The project has delivered substantial and enduring benefits across many different arenas.*

*Landscape scale conservation*

*The Five Rivers Conservation Project landscape features open marshy valleys, old-growth forests and woodlands, native grasslands, cushion plant staircase wetlands, endangered sphagnum moss beds and encompasses five river systems. It is habitat for almost the full range of Tasmanian mammals, including endangered wildlife such as the iconic Tasmanian devil, the Spotted tailed quoll the Eastern quoll and Tasmanian wedge-tailed eagle and important endemic species not found in any other region on earth.*

*Perpetual funding for management*

*BHP Billiton has provided financial support for the long term conservation management of the properties through establishing an endowment fund for the area. Income from the endowment fund provides employment and engagement opportunities for local communities and ensures that conservation management of the property will be funded over the very long term.*

*Collaboration and partnerships*

*Substantial areas of the land are in and adjacent to the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area and are further complemented by an existing landscape-scale private protected area owned and managed by Tasmanian Aboriginal people - trawtha makuminya. Together, the properties encompass a region of almost 20,000 hectares that extends and cements the World Heritage Area. The partnership forged with the Tasmanian Aboriginal community, the Parks and Wildlife Service and the TLC enables effective natural and cultural management across the entire area.*

*Ecological monitoring*

*A critical component of the project is the establishment of an efficient but effective long term ecological monitoring program. This program has been designed to gather scientific data to inform conservation management using simple, repeatable and robust methodologies. In the future, the Five Rivers Reserve will become one of a network of national sites for long term ecological monitoring across Australia. The approach pioneered here is also being developed to suit the range of conditions across Tasmania and is being rolled out across TLC’s reserve estate. Climate change is predicted to be especially marked in the highland region, and our monitoring will be able to inform this.*

*Citizen science*

*Critically, the methods of monitoring and assessment pioneered in the Five Rivers reserve have the potential to be utilized by private landholders across the entire Tasmanian private reserve estate. Resolving the most reliable and simplest methods to assess biodiversity and structural condition is an essential precursor to teaching the methods to citizen scientists and building a robust framework to store and utilize the information. These methods are also exploring the use of remote technology to bring the natural world into the hands of those with smart phones.*

*Funding for a sustainable economy*

*In addition to financing an endowment, BHP Billiton seed funded the development of a carbon project across properties held by TLC throughout Tasmania. Finalized under the international Verified Carbon Standard, this project is sequestering carbon into the living tissues of forests that are now protected from logging and providing habitat to Tasmania’s unique wildlife. Virgin Australia Airlines has purchased the first year of available carbon credits, for their clients to offset carbon emissions from flights.*

*Building support for conservation in the community*

*The TLC takes every opportunity to build understanding and support for our wonderful natural assets. Engaging new supporters from Tasmania and interstate was the focus of The Skullbone Experiment, an innovative project exploring the link between art and nature. A high profile group of Australian artists participated in a retreat on the Five Rivers Reserve (Skullbone Plains) then produced artworks in response to their experiences in this remote, Central Plateau landscape. Resulting artworks were publically shown at the Queen Victoria Museum and Art Gallery, Launceston and UNSW Galleries, Sydney.*

*Other activities encouraged and supported on the reserve include mountain biking, walking, high-end trout fishing, and visits by the education NGO Book End Trust.*

*Developing globally recognised skills*

*Early in the new year, the first course of the soon to be launched Protected Area Learning and Research Collaboration will hold part of a Masters Unit in* Protected Area Management Plans *based on the Five Rivers Reserve. The collaboration will be the first tertiary and vocational education and research hub dedicated to natural and cultural heritage protection, stewardship and conservation management and capacity development for the Oceania and Asia – Pacific Region.*

*Overall, the collaboration will provide short courses and graduate certificate and masters courses. Three Australian universities – University of Tasmania, James Cook University and Murdoch University - are in the process of having courses approved that specifically address selected competencies from the draft Global Partnership for Professionalising Protected Areas Management (GPPPAM) framework.*