

New Zealand Wilding Conifer Management Strategy 2027-2047

Draft Strategy for feedback

**New Zealand's landscapes thrive,
no longer impacted by wilding conifers**



NATIONAL WILDING CONIFER
CONTROL PROGRAMME

 **WILDINGPINES.NZ**

Wilding Conifer Governance Group Foreword

The National Wilding Conifer Control Programme Governance Group invites feedback from the wilding conifer community on a draft refreshed national strategy for managing wilding conifers in New Zealand.

The draft strategy builds on the progress made since the 2015-2030 Strategy through the efforts of landowners, iwi and hapū, communities, contractors, researchers, innovators, councils, and government agencies.

It reflects on lessons learned, considers emerging challenges, opportunities and technologies, and sets a renewed direction for the future.

The draft has been developed through extensive engagement across the wilding conifer sector over recent months.

The strategy aims to reflect what matters most to everyone involved in, or affected by, wilding conifer management (also referred to as wilding pines throughout this document).

We welcome feedback from people and organisations involved in wilding conifer control, planted forest management, environmental policy, research, education and engagement, funding, and land management, whether as landowners, business owners, employees, volunteers, or supporters.

This strategy is about the whole wilding conifer management system, not just work funded or delivered through the National Wilding Conifer Control Programme. It will also help inform the development of the proposed National Pest Management Plan.

Every contribution plays a part in achieving our shared vision. Your feedback will help ensure the strategy reflects that vision and identifies the pathways needed to achieve it together.

We look forward to your feedback.

John Walsh, Chair

On behalf of the National Wilding Conifer Control Programme
Governance Group

Contents

Contents to be finalised

Executive summary	2
Introduction and context	6
Achievements	8
Lessons	10
Current and emerging challenges	11
A National Pest Management Plan for Wilding Conifers	13
Vision	14
Strategy	15
Goals	15
Focus Areas (Success, Measures, Actions)	16
Strategy implementation	25
Attachments	27
Attachment 1: Glossary	28
Attachment 2: Wilding conifer definition and species list	31
Attachment 3: Shared responsibility framework	32
How to send feedback	34

Document Title	Draft NZWCMS Strategy 2027-2047
Version	V1.0
Date/Time	7/31/2026 9:09 AM
Prepared by	Andrew Harrison (AHC Ltd)
Status	Working Draft

Executive summary

This Strategy sets the direction for wilding conifer management in New Zealand over the next 20 years. It builds on the progress achieved to date and provides a framework for reducing spread, protecting valued landscapes, strengthening partnerships, and transitioning the primary role for long term protection of land cleared of wilding conifers to enduring stewardship. Success will require continuation of coordinated national leadership, collective action, and sustained investment to ensure future generations inherit resilient landscapes free of wilding conifers.

The Strategy is intended to guide the actions of all those involved in wilding conifer management, from individual land managers, community groups, iwi and hapū, to government agencies and the National Wilding Conifer Control Programme. It seeks to focus effort around a shared vision and goals and identifies the actions required to improve the effectiveness of wilding conifer management. The strategy anticipates the establishment of a National Pest Management Plan for wilding conifers and is intended to play a key role in shaping its development.



New Zealand Wilding Conifer Management

New Zealand's landscapes thrive, no longer impacted by wildings.

Outcomes:

- Indigenous biodiversity and resilient ecosystems thrive
- Productive land uses are safeguarded
- Natural landscapes, recreation and tourism opportunities are enhanced
- Healthy water resources support people, ecosystems and the economy
- Cultural values, mātauranga Māori and connections to place are sustained
- Communities are resilient and protected from growing risks.

Goals:

- Manage high-risk seed sources and prevent or reduce wilding conifer spread
- Protect priority landscapes and outcomes from wilding conifer impacts (exclude, eliminate, progressive containment, sustained control/maintenance)
- Achieve enduring stewardship, shared responsibility and public support to maintain gains and prevent reinvasion over the long-term.

Success factors

Fa1: prevention and risk reduction

- Major wilding conifer seed sources are effectively managed, and new wilding conifer spread is prevented or minimised.
- Wilding conifer risks are systematically recognised and managed across biosecurity, forestry, climate change, and resource management systems, reducing the creation of new risks.

Fa2: enduring stewardship and sustainable management

- Priority landscapes and outcomes are protected from wilding conifer impacts.
- Wilding conifer management gains are maintained through practical and affordable long-term stewardship.
- Long-term management is supported by sustainable and enduring investment.

Fa3: strong partnerships, collective action and support

- Treaty partnerships and collaborative relationships are strong, active, and influential in decision-making, delivery, and stewardship
- Communities, land managers, industry, and government share responsibility for preventing and managing wilding conifer spread.
- Strong public understanding, support, and participation help sustain long-term wilding conifer management.

Fa4: prioritisation, innovation and cost-effective delivery

- Resources are directed to the highest priorities using transparent, evidence-based decision-making.
- Science, mātauranga Māori, monitoring, and innovation improve management effectiveness, affordability, and continuous improvement.
- Progress and performance are measurable, transparent, and used to support adaptive management.

Strategy 2027-2047

Measures

Actions

- Percentage of identified high-risk seed sources removed or under effective management.
- Rate of new wilding conifer establishment within priority areas (hectares/year).

1. Identify, map, assess, prioritise and manage high-risk wilding conifer seed sources to reduce long-term spread and reinvasion.
2. Embed wilding conifer risk management across New Zealand's biosecurity, forestry, climate change and resource management systems, including development of guidance frameworks that support policy makers and regulators to identify, avoid, and address current and emerging wilding conifer risks.
3. Explicitly address high wilding conifer risks associated with Douglas-fir, balanced with its importance as a productive forestry species.

- Extent to which priority landscapes and outcomes are protected from wilding conifer invasion.
- Area of land managed under enduring stewardship arrangements and meeting management objectives.

4. Integrate wilding conifer management into long-term landscape planning and management.
5. Develop a nationally consistent, regionally adaptable transition framework that defines the pathways, responsibilities, accountabilities, capability-building requirements, support mechanisms, and funding arrangements needed to achieve enduring stewardship and sustain wilding conifer management gains over the long term.
6. Secure and diversify funding for wilding conifer management to support the long-term implementation of this Strategy.

- Percentage of wilding conifer management plans (national, regional and place-based) developed and implemented with meaningful iwi and hapū participation.
- Levels of public awareness, support and participation in wilding conifer management.

7. Strengthen Treaty partnerships and reflect cultural values in decision-making.
8. Strengthen partnership, shared responsibility and accountability with the forestry sector.
9. Grow community capability, leadership and stewardship to support enduring wilding conifer management.
10. Build a nationwide movement to prevent and manage wilding conifer spread.

- Percentage of Programme investment contributing directly to agreed national and regional management priorities and outcomes.
- Demonstrated improvement in management effectiveness or cost-efficiency attributable to new tools, technology or knowledge.

11. Strengthen alignment between national, regional and local prioritisation to maximise long-term outcomes and investment effectiveness.
12. Maintain and continuously improve a nationally consistent wilding conifer intelligence, mapping and monitoring system.
13. Strengthen the translation of science, mātauranga Māori, innovation and knowledge into operational decision-making and management, guided by an applied science strategy.
14. Review and strengthen governance, management agency, and delivery arrangements to maximise long-term effectiveness, efficiency, and value for money.



Introduction and context



The wilding conifer threat

Wilding conifers (refer to the definition and species list in Appendix 2) remain one of New Zealand's most significant landscape-scale invasive plant threats. When seeds of exotic conifer species spread beyond their intended location and establish, they can transform ecosystems and landscapes. They reduce indigenous biodiversity, impacting taonga species and mahinga kai, diminish agricultural productivity (or in some cases may be greater than earning potential of the land), alter valued natural landscapes, reduce water availability in sensitive catchments, and increase the risk and intensity of wildfires.

If left unmanaged, it is estimated that wilding conifer infestations could affect up to 25 percent of the country within 30 years, imposing **at least \$4.6 billion in economic losses over 50 years**¹. This includes impacts that arise from reduced water availability for irrigation and hydroelectric generation, alongside losses in productive land, increased wildfire risk, and damage to biodiversity. These estimates are conservative and do not fully capture wider social, cultural, landscape, and intergenerational impacts, meaning the true cost to New Zealand is likely to be substantially higher.

The scale of the challenge extends beyond individual property owners and requires a sustained, collective response.

Most wilding conifers originate from legacy plantings established for forestry, erosion control, shelter, research and amenity purposes, together with unmanaged naturalised offspring that continue to spread from these sources.

The risks associated with conifer plantings vary considerably depending on species, location, management practices, and landscape vulnerability. Managing existing seed sources and preventing the establishment of new ones remains a fundamental component of long-term success.

The challenge is heightened by the fact that several economically important forestry species can contribute to wilding conifer spread. Effective management therefore requires balancing the benefits of plantation forestry and carbon sequestration with the need to protect landscapes from unwanted spread.

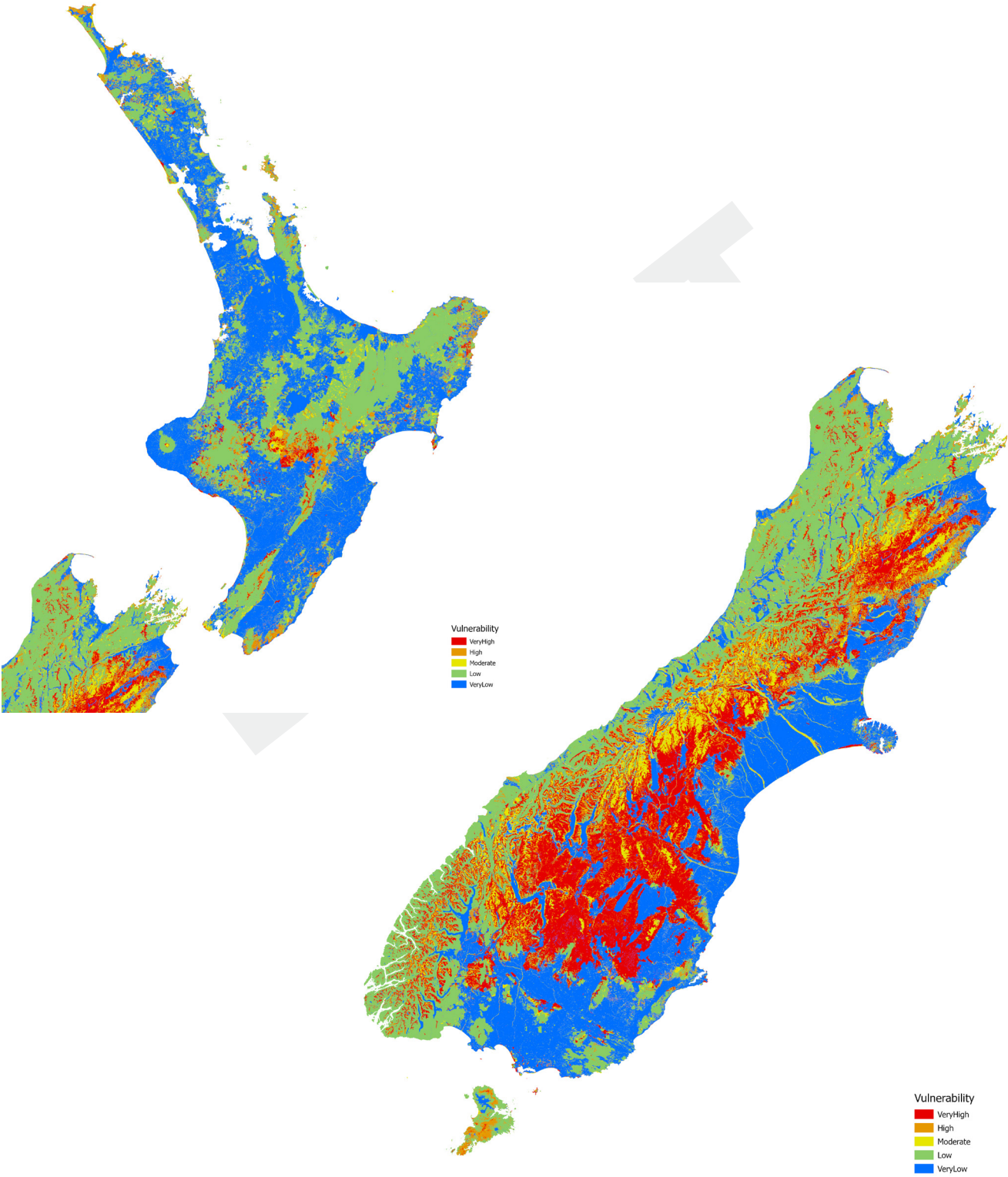
Long-term success depends on controlling seed sources, timely follow-up control, maintaining ongoing surveillance, and integrating prevention into wider land-use decisions.

Wilding conifer management is an intergenerational challenge. The choices made today will affect New Zealand's landscapes for decades to come. Success will depend on sustained commitment, effective partnerships and enduring stewardship.

¹ Wyatt, S. (2018). Benefits and costs of the wilding pine management programme phase 2. Sapere Research Group. Prepared for the Ministry for Primary Industries.

This map shows land vulnerability to wilding conifers (affecting up to 25% of the country within 30 years).

Note: This map may differ slightly in the final version.



Achievements

Key achievements (2015 – 2026) include:

Established a nationally coordinated and locally led wilding conifer management system

- National Wilding Conifer Control Programme established, involving MPI, DOC, LINZ, NZDF, regional councils, territorial local authorities, iwi, farming and forestry sectors, researchers, community groups, landowners, and contractors.
- Built on existing community leadership and regional capability, empowering grassroots action and locally led delivery that remain fundamental to national progress.
- Supported community and iwi-led projects through the Wilding Conifer Community Partnership Fund and the Wilding Pine Network.

Delivered landscape-scale management and protection

- Developed a nationally consistent approach to prioritisation and investment, including a shift to landscape-scale control.
- Around 80 percent of the known infestations (approximately 3 million hectares) are under programme management, and approximately 75 percent have received at least one round of control.
- In some areas the programme is beginning the process to transition the responsibility for control back to local management.

Secured significant investment, access to tools and national capability

- Secured more than \$175 million in Crown funding and over \$38 million in partner funding.
- Developed a skilled national workforce and regional delivery capability with a strong Health & Safety culture.
- Engaged with the Environmental Protection Agency and territorial local authorities to secure access to control tools.
- Announcement by the Minister for Biosecurity that a NPMP will be developed.

Strengthened policy, regulation, and prevention

- Supported the introduction of national tools to manage future spread risk, including the National Environmental Standard for Commercial Forestry (NES-CF) wilding conifer provisions and Wilding Conifer Risk Calculator.
- Improved policy settings that incentivised wilding conifers, including Emissions Trading Scheme (ETS) eligibility for wilding conifers and the tree weed exemption process allowing the removal of Pre-1990 wildings and seed sources.
- Supported the development of regional pest management plan provisions and associated rule-development guidance to promote greater consistency and effectiveness across regions.



Strengthened the science, innovation, and evidence base for wilding conifer management

- Established the Wilding Conifer Information System (WCIS), providing a national platform for mapping, planning, monitoring, reporting, and decision-making.
- Improved surveillance, mapping, and control technologies through innovation and operational learning.
- Supported approximately \$16 million in MBIE-funded research – Winning against Wildings (2016–2021) and Vive la résistance (2021–2026) – which strengthened the evidence base for wilding conifer management and supported early development of new tools and approaches.



Lessons

Key lessons from the past decade that should shape future management include:

- **Sustained investment** – Wilding conifer management requires long-term, consistent, and sufficient investment. Inadequate funding, interruptions to control programmes, and delayed follow-up management can rapidly reverse progress, undermine the value of earlier investment, increase long-term costs, and transfer growing environmental, economic, cultural, and social impacts to future generations.
- **Landscape-scale** – Wilding conifers are a landscape-scale, long-term challenge that cannot be solved property by property. Success requires coordinated action across entire landscapes, tackling major seed sources, aligning management across land tenures, and integrating wilding control into broader land-use and stewardship decisions.
- **Seed source control** – Identifying and managing major seed sources is fundamental to successful wilding management. Potential sources include unmanaged wilding populations, legacy plantings, shelterbelts, woodlots, plantation forests, and isolated trees. Because the risk of spread differs between sources, management actions should be risk-based and targeted. Failure to address ongoing seed production can undermine control efforts, leading to persistent reinfestation and escalating costs.
- **Maintenance** – Maintenance is critical following initial and follow-up control, and while the cost per hectare typically declines over time, the total maintenance commitment increases as the area under management expands. Long-term success depends on sustained investment and planning for maintenance from the outset.
- **Resilience** – Wilding conifer control alone will often not deliver enduring outcomes. Long-term success often depends on strengthening resilience of ecosystems and landscapes after removal, through restoration, natural regeneration and sustainable land uses that reduce opportunities for reinvasion.
- **Whole-system management** – Lasting outcomes require an integrated approach that aligns control, prevention, resilient land use, other sustainable land management programmes, incentives, regulation science, and community aspirations.
- **Collaborative model** – The greatest gains have come from aligning national coordination with regional delivery and grassroots action, showing that landscape-scale challenges require both strategic leadership and community ownership.
- **Transition as a process that leads to stewardship** – Achieving enduring outcomes requires a planned transition “process” that starts at the outset, from Programme-funded control to affordable, long-term stewardship by local land managers and kaitiaki, supported by appropriate incentives, accountability and enduring support mechanisms.
- **Knowledge to action** – Strong research foundations have been established and significant advances in technology are emerging (e.g. remotes sensing, modelling, AI, genetics & operational technologies). Continued improvement will depend on converting research, data, and technological advances into operational practice, supported by clear implementation pathways, capability development, and sustained investment in adoption at scale.

Current and emerging challenges

- **Seed sources remain a major risk**
 - Large unmanaged seed sources, including legacy plantings, shelterbelts, production forests, and naturalised populations, continue to drive spread across landscapes. Addressing large, unmanaged seed sources will require a coordinated, long-term approach that combines investment, regulatory tools, landowner responsibilities, risk-based prioritisation, and sustained management across both public and private land.
- **Large-scale and hard-to-access infestations** – Addressing large-scale and hard-to-access infestations within available funding may require innovative technologies, new management tools, and strategic containment approaches. Prioritisation remains a challenge, with growing pressure to balance investment in these established areas against opportunities for earlier intervention in emerging infestations, where management is typically more effective and cost-efficient.
- **Land-use and land management change**
 - As land uses and land management practices change, so do wilding conifer risks. New forestry plantings, carbon projects, changes in farming, changing ownership patterns and changing land management practices can all affect where wildings establish and spread. Management approaches (policy, regulation and on-the ground management) will need to adapt to keep pace with these changes.
- **Carbon forestry expansion** – Growth in carbon forestry can deliver significant climate benefits. Wilding conifer risks may increase where forests are established using higher-risk species or where location, design, management or accountability arrangements do not adequately address spread risk.
- **Climate change** – A changing climate may alter the suitability, growth rates and spread of conifer species, increasing invasion risk in new areas and creating additional uncertainty for long-term management and planning.

Wilding spread and increasing control costs - Mid Dome, Southland



1998 – \$20 per ha



2004 – \$1500 per ha



2015 – \$2000 per ha

- **Fair contribution** – Ensuring costs, responsibilities, benefits, and risks are shared fairly remains a growing challenge. Landowners, managers, industry, communities, iwi and hapū, and government can all experience costs, constraints, benefits, and risks associated with wilding conifers. Future approaches will need to balance these interests while maintaining incentives to prevent, reduce, and manage wilding spread.
- **Social license** – Enduring success depends on maintaining public and stakeholder support through clear communication of the impacts of wilding conifers, the benefits of management, and the consequences of inaction, while ensuring control tools and methods remain effective, sustainable, and socially acceptable.

Photos to come

A National Pest Management Plan for Wilding Conifers

On 24 May 2026, the Prime Minister of New Zealand and the Minister for Biosecurity announced that, “MPI will begin developing a National Pest Management Plan (NPMP) for on-going control of wilding conifers. This will further strengthen national coordination of wildings management, ensuring efficient and effective control work and establishing nationally consistent rules to prevent their further spread.”

The Strategy provides the long-term strategic direction for wilding conifer management in New Zealand. A National Pest Management Plan under the Biosecurity Act 1993 will provide a statutory mechanism for implementing elements of this Strategy by establishing nationally consistent objectives (aligned with the goals in this Strategy), management requirements, responsibilities, funding arrangements and accountability mechanisms for the long-term management of wilding conifers.

The NPMP process also requires development of an evidence-based cost allocation model that clearly defines how costs are shared between those who benefit from management, those who create or exacerbate risk, and those with ongoing management responsibilities.

The Strategy has been deliberately aligned with the National Policy Direction for Pest Management 2015 and associated guidance to assist consistency between the Strategy and a future NPMP.

Vision



20-YEAR VISION

New Zealand's landscapes thrive, no longer impacted by wildings

Ongoing wilding conifer spread risk is effectively managed through stewardship and shared responsibility, with ongoing innovation and collaboration, enabling New Zealand's lands and landscapes to support production, conservation, recreation and cultural values for future generations.



(Diagram design to be updated)

A thriving landscape is one where wilding conifers no longer threaten the values people care about.

High-risk seed sources are managed, wilding spread is greatly reduced, and ongoing control is achievable and affordable.

Community groups, iwi and hapū, conservation managers, foresters, farmers and other land occupiers and government work together at a landscape scale to get and keep wilding conifers under control.

Wilding conifer management is integrated into everyday land-use land management at individual property and landscape scales - whether those values are economic, cultural, ecological, social or a combination of these.

Policies enable people to use land in beneficial ways and to remove and control wilding conifers.

Wilding conifer management becomes a normal part of land-use and land-management decisions - from the individual

property to catchment scales - supporting the economic, cultural, ecological and social values of the landscape.

Where high-risk conifer species are retained, those who benefit from them take responsibility for managing the risks they create.

Achieving thriving landscapes free of wilding conifers requires more than tree removal. It requires sustained investment, collective action and a carefully managed transition to long-term stewardship that keeps wilding conifers under control and prevents them from becoming an inter-generational problem again.

It will also require the right system settings, including fair allocation of costs and responsibilities, effective incentives and regulation, sound prioritisation, and the application of science, mātauranga and innovation to improve outcomes and reduce costs.

Strengthening these foundations is a core focus of this Strategy.

Strategy

Wilding conifer management contributes to the following outcomes:

Indigenous biodiversity and resilient ecosystems thrive

– Indigenous ecosystems, habitats, threatened species, ecological processes and naturally rare environments are protected and restored, strengthening ecosystem resilience and enabling New Zealand's native biodiversity to flourish.

Natural landscapes, recreation and tourism opportunities are enhanced

– Outstanding and iconic landscapes, natural character, visual amenity and valued recreational environments are maintained and restored, supporting tourism, outdoor recreation and people's connection with nature and place.

Cultural values, mātauranga Māori and connections to place are sustained

– Whenua, wai, wāhi tapu, mahinga kai, taonga species and the mauri of ecosystems are protected from wilding conifer impacts, supporting enduring kaitiakitanga, mātauranga Māori and enduring connections between people and place.

Productive land uses are safeguarded

– Pastoral, forestry, horticultural, arable and other productive landscapes are protected from wilding conifer invasion, maintaining their productive potential, economic value and long-term sustainability.

Healthy water resources support people, ecosystems and the economy

– Headwater catchments, freshwater ecosystems, drinking water supplies, irrigation schemes and hydroelectric generation catchments are protected from wilding conifer impacts, ensuring the reliable provision of water and supporting long-term water security.

Communities are resilient and protected from growing risks

– Communities are better protected from increasing wildfire risk, escalating management costs and other adverse impacts of wilding conifer spread, supporting long-term social, environmental and economic wellbeing.

Goals

The goals for wilding conifer management are:

1. Manage high-risk seed sources and prevent or reduce wilding conifer spread.
2. Protect priority landscapes and outcomes from wilding conifer impacts by either:
 - excluding wilding conifers;
 - eliminating wilding conifers; or
 - progressive containment; or
 - sustained control (maintenance) of wilding conifers.
3. Achieve enduring stewardship, shared responsibility and public support to maintain gains and prevent reinvasion over the long-term.

Focus Areas (Success, Measures, Actions)



The Strategy identifies five interrelated focus areas that together provide the framework for achieving its vision, outcomes and goals. For each focus area, the Strategy outlines success factors, measures, and strategic actions to strengthen wilding conifer management.

While the Strategy sets the long-term strategic direction, a National Operational Plan will further define indicators, targets, priorities and more detailed actions and work programmes as circumstances change and new lessons are learned (see *Strategy Implementation*).

Focus Area 1: Prevention and risk reduction

Success factors:

- Major wilding conifer seed sources are effectively managed, and new wilding conifer spread is prevented or minimised.
- Wilding conifer risks are systematically recognised and managed across biosecurity, forestry, climate change, and resource management systems, reducing the creation of new risks.

Measures:

- Percentage of identified high-risk seed sources removed or under effective management.
- Rate of new wilding conifer establishment within priority landscapes (hectares/year).

Actions to strengthen wilding conifer management:

Action 1:

Identify, map, assess, prioritise and manage high-risk wilding conifer seed sources to reduce long-term spread and reinvasion.

Explanation:

High-risk seed sources can drive wilding conifer spread across large areas, undermining the effectiveness of control programmes and increasing the difficulty and cost of achieving long-term containment and maintenance. These sources may include unmanaged wilding stands, legacy plantings, shelterbelts, woodlots, plantation forests, plantation edges, and individual trees located near vulnerable landscapes. Risk levels vary considerably between seed sources and management responses should be prioritised according to the likelihood and consequences of spread.

A nationally and regionally consistent approach should be established to identify, map, assess risk, prioritise, and manage high-risk seed sources. Prioritisation should be undertaken within a nationally consistent framework that enables regional application and reflects local circumstances (refer to Action X).

Action 2:
Embed wilding conifer risk management across New Zealand's biosecurity, forestry, climate change and resource management systems, including development of guidance frameworks that support policy makers and regulators to identify, avoid, and address current and emerging wilding conifer risks.

Explanation:

Wilding conifer risks should be consistently identified, assessed and managed across New Zealand's biosecurity, forestry, climate change and resource management systems. Regulatory and policy settings should enable policy makers, regulators and land managers to identify and manage current and emerging wilding conifer risks through guidance and decision-support frameworks that support evidence-based, proportionate and coordinated responses across relevant systems.

National and regional pest management arrangements should complement existing mechanisms for managing plantation forestry wilding risk, including the National Environmental Standards for Commercial Forestry (NES-CF), or any future successor. Opportunities should also be taken to better recognise and address wilding conifer risks through regional and local planning frameworks as New Zealand's resource management system evolves, including risks associated with legacy plantings, unmanaged seed sources, woodlots and other conifer plantings that may fall outside national forestry regulatory frameworks.

The New Zealand Emissions Trading Scheme (ETS) and voluntary carbon market settings should support climate-

change objectives while ensuring associated wilding conifer risks are identified, monitored and managed, with long-term responsibility for managing wilding conifer risks clear.

Action 3:
Explicitly address high wilding conifer risks associated with Douglas-fir, balanced with its importance as a productive forestry species.

Explanation:

Douglas-fir forests can present a particularly significant wilding conifer risk in some parts of New Zealand due to the species' invasiveness and ability to spread into vulnerable landscapes. At the same time, Douglas-fir makes an important contribution to New Zealand's forestry sector, regional economies, and wood supply.

Management approaches should recognise both the benefits and risks associated with Douglas-fir and take a risk- and evidence-based approach to implementing mitigations. Particular attention should be given to locations where the likelihood of spread is greatest, where vulnerable landscapes are at risk, or where the consequences of invasion would be significant.

Responses may include improvements to surveillance and monitoring, management and operational practices, planning and regulatory measures, the use of lower-risk alternatives where appropriate, cost-sharing and accountability mechanisms, and investments in science, innovation and technology to reduce wilding conifer spread and management costs.

Focus Area 2:

Enduring stewardship and sustainable management

Success factors:

- Priority landscapes and outcomes are protected from wilding conifer impacts.
- Wilding conifer management gains are maintained through practical and affordable long-term stewardship.
- Long-term management is supported by sustainable and enduring investment.

Measures:

- Extent to which priority landscapes and outcomes are protected from wilding conifer invasion.
- Area of land managed under enduring stewardship arrangements and meeting management objectives.

Actions to strengthen wilding conifer management:

Action 4: Integrate wilding conifer management into long-term landscape planning and management.

Explanation:

Wilding conifer management should support broader environmental, cultural, social, and economic outcomes, rather than being viewed solely as a control programme.

Management priorities and investment decisions should be informed by integrated landscape plans, catchment plans, iwi resource management plans, or similar frameworks that identify desired outcomes, priorities, responsibilities, costs, monitoring arrangements, and pathways to enduring stewardship.

For areas receiving, or seeking, significant wilding conifer management investment, a long-term landscape management

plan or business case should be developed and considered as an input to investment decisions. This would help ensure investment is tied to clear outcomes, agreed priorities, realistic costs, accountabilities, monitoring arrangements and enduring stewardship pathways.

Action 5: Develop a nationally consistent, regionally adaptable transition framework that defines the pathways, responsibilities, accountabilities, capability-building requirements, support mechanisms, and funding arrangements needed to achieve enduring stewardship and sustain wilding conifer management gains over the long term.

Explanation:

Transition is not a single handover event but a planned and staged process that begins when management first starts and continues until enduring stewardship arrangements are established. This needs to be planned from the outset and starts with education to set clear, shared community and land occupier understandings and expectations.

A nationally consistent, regionally adaptable framework should define transition pathways, responsibilities, accountabilities, capability-building requirements, support mechanisms, and funding arrangements, while allowing flexibility for local circumstances.

The framework should support stewardship models ranging from individual landholder management to catchment-scale, iwi and hapū-led, community-led, or multi-partner arrangements. It should also provide

mechanisms for additional support where management gains are at risk of being lost.

The goal is to ensure wilding conifer management becomes an affordable and enduring component of sustainable land stewardship. The framework should recognise that some priority landscapes may continue to require coordinated regional or national support where the scale, complexity, or ongoing drivers of wilding conifer spread make sole reliance on local stewardship impractical.

Action 6:
Secure and diversify funding for wilding conifer management to support the long-term implementation of this Strategy.

Explanation:

Strengthen the long-term financial sustainability of wilding conifer management by securing and, where possible, diversifying funding sources that complement existing investment and support delivery of national, regional and local priorities. Building on the outcomes of the 2024 Wilding Pine Network Funding Summit ², opportunities should be pursued with beneficiaries, exacerbators, regional and local partners, impact investors, philanthropic organisations and other funding sources. Opportunities to generate value from outcomes or wilding conifer management (e.g. nature-based markets, voluntary carbon markets, biomass utilisation etc.) should also be explored to help support long-term management and outcomes.

² Wilding Pine Network: Summary of Funding Summit
Held in Blenheim 9th October 2024

Focus Area 3:

Strong partnerships, collective action and support

Success factors:

- Treaty partnerships and collaborative relationships are strong, active, and influential in decision-making, delivery, and stewardship
- Communities, land managers, industry, and government share responsibility for preventing and managing wilding conifer spread.
- Strong public understanding, support, and participation help sustain long-term wilding conifer management.

Measures:

- Percentage of wilding conifer management plans (national, regional and place-based) developed and implemented with meaningful iwi and hapū participation.
- Levels of public awareness, support and participation in wilding conifer management.

Actions to improve wilding conifer management:

Action 7: Strengthen Treaty partnerships and reflect cultural values in decision-making

Explanation:

Support meaningful participation by iwi and hapū in governance, prioritisation and delivery. Strengthen partnerships with iwi and hapū to support place-based management and kaitiakitanga. Ensure prioritisation, investment and management decisions explicitly consider the protection of culturally significant landscapes, mahinga kai, wāhi tūpuna and the mauri of ecosystems (guided by mana whenua), alongside ecological, social and economic considerations.

Foster long-term relationships that enable shared stewardship, restoration and intergenerational outcomes for people and landscapes. Undertake periodic Treaty partnership health assessments. (NB. this may be through broader Treaty partnership health assessments as agreed between Treaty partners, rather than assessments specific to wilding conifer management).

Action 8: Strengthen partnership, shared responsibility and accountability with the forestry sector

Explanation:

The forestry sector is a critical solution partner in achieving the vision and outcomes of this Strategy.

Well-managed production forests provide significant economic, social and climate benefits to New Zealand. Contemporary plantation forests managed under current national regulatory frameworks should be distinguished from unmanaged legacy plantings, abandoned forests, historical shelterbelts and naturalised wilding populations, which may present different levels and types of risk. The risk of wilding conifer spread varies considerably between species, forest types, locations and management practices.

Strengthen partnerships with forest owners, forestry companies, investors and industry organisations to improve transparency, information sharing (including through WCIS), risk management, good practice and innovation. Recognise and promote the significant contribution that many forest owners already make to preventing and managing wilding conifer spread, while supporting continued leadership in reducing future risks.

Encourage shared responsibility through voluntary initiatives, collaborative programmes and industry leadership, while ensuring policy, regulatory, and planning frameworks effectively manage wilding conifer risks and promote fair and balanced outcomes.

Consider the potential for a Forestry Accord between government, the forestry sector and other relevant partners. The Accord would set out shared commitments and responsibilities for managing wilding conifer risks, including good practice expectations, information sharing, continuous improvement, and collaborative actions to prevent and manage wilding conifer spread.

Action 9:
Grow community capability, leadership and stewardship to support enduring wilding conifer management.

Explanation:

Support communities, iwi and hapū, landowners, catchment groups, and local organisations to play an active role in local wilding conifer prevention and management. This may include through direct or indirect investment in community-led initiatives. Strengthening local capability, leadership, knowledge, and trusted delivery partnerships will galvanise collective action, foster enduring stewardship, support the transition from programme-led management, and maintain the social licence needed for sustained action.

Action 10:
Build a nationwide movement to prevent and manage wilding conifer spread

Explanation:

Build public understanding of the impacts of wilding conifers and the benefits of taking action, so that preventing and managing spread becomes a shared responsibility. Use national campaigns, local success stories, community champions, education programmes, and visible before-and-after results to inspire action and make progress tangible. Strong public support and community leadership will help drive prevention, strengthen participation, sustain investment, and create lasting stewardship of New Zealand's landscapes.

Focus Area 4:

Prioritisation, innovation and cost-effective delivery

Success factors:

- Resources are directed to the highest priorities using transparent, evidence-based decision-making.
- Science, mātauranga Māori, monitoring, and innovation improve management effectiveness, affordability, and continuous improvement.
- Progress and performance are measurable, transparent, and used to support adaptive management.

Measures:

- Percentage of Programme investment contributing directly to agreed national and regional management priorities and outcomes.
- Demonstrated improvement in management effectiveness or cost-efficiency attributable to new tools, technology or knowledge.

Actions to strengthen wilding conifer management:

Action 11:

Strengthen alignment between national, regional and local prioritisation to maximise long-term outcomes and investment effectiveness.

Explanation:

A nationally consistent prioritisation framework should guide investment towards the interventions that deliver the greatest long-term reduction in wilding conifer risk and the greatest overall benefit. The framework should support transparent, evidence-based and consistent decision-making across national, regional and local scales, informed by the best available evidence, modelling and local knowledge,

while allowing sufficient flexibility to reflect local circumstances, values and priorities.

Prioritisation should take a long-term, landscape-scale perspective and be informed by integrated landscape plans, catchment plans, iwi resource management plans, and other relevant planning frameworks where they exist. It should consider factors such as wilding conifer invasiveness, landscape vulnerability, protection of priority outcomes, seed-source risk, prevention opportunities, feasibility of success, stewardship requirements, desired long-term landscape outcomes, and the full lifetime cost of management.

Key principles to guide wilding conifer management effort include:

- Keep clear areas clear.
- Act early to prevent future spread and cost.
- Reduce future risk by addressing legacy infestations and managing high-risk seed sources.
- Support long-term stewardship through enduring funding and partnerships

Aligning prioritisation across national, regional and local scales and continuing to improve the evidence base and transparency are the critical improvements needed.

Action 12:

Maintain and continuously improve a nationally consistent wilding conifer intelligence, mapping and monitoring system

Explanation:

Effective prioritisation and management depend on accurate, current, and accessible information. Maintain and continuously improve the Wilding Conifer Information System (WCIS) as New Zealand's authoritative platform for wilding conifer intelligence, mapping, monitoring, forecasting, reporting, and decision support.

WCIS should provide a dynamic and regularly updated picture of wilding conifer extent, species, density, age class, seed-source risk, management status, priority values, future spread potential, and emerging risks. Information should be integrated from multiple sources and made accessible to government agencies, iwi and hapū, regional programmes, the forestry sector, landowners, researchers, and community groups.

The system should directly support prioritisation, investment planning, operational delivery, performance reporting, adaptive management, and long-term stewardship. A robust national intelligence capability will improve situational awareness, strengthen transparency and accountability, enable consistent application of the national prioritisation framework, and support more effective and cost-efficient management decisions over time.

Action 13:

Strengthen the translation of science, mātauranga Māori, innovation and knowledge into operational decision-making and management, guided by an applied science strategy

Explanation:

Effective wilding conifer management currently relies on science, innovation and knowledge being translated into practical tools, technologies and management approaches that improve on-ground outcomes.

There is an opportunity for iwi- and hapū-led solutions including the use of mātauranga Māori to inform and guide management of wilding conifers.

The pathway from research, development and innovation to operational implementation should be strengthened, including balanced investment in the testing, demonstration and scaling of promising tools and technologies that improve cost-effectiveness and safety under real-world conditions.

Monitoring, modelling, risk assessment, mapping, mātauranga Māori, operational experience and local knowledge should be used to support adaptive management. This will enable priorities, investments and management approaches to be continuously refined in response to changing conditions, emerging risks and new evidence. An applied science strategy is needed to help direct, focus and coordinate efforts across science and wilding conifer management systems. The strategy should generate fit-for-purpose applied science, translate evidence into operational and policy practice, and support uptake by end users to achieve management outcomes.

Action 14:
Review and strengthen governance, management agency, and delivery arrangements to maximise long-term effectiveness, efficiency, and value for money

Explanation:

The current collaborative model is widely valued and should be retained. However, the development of a National Pest Management Plan (NPMP) and current local government reform provide a timely opportunity to review and strengthen the governance, management agency, and delivery arrangements for wilding conifer management.

A focused review should be undertaken as a priority to identify opportunities to improve efficiency, coordination, accountability, consistency, and value for money across the management system. This should include both near-term operational improvements and longer-term institutional arrangements.

The review should consider governance, national coordination, regional delivery, management agency options under the Biosecurity Act 1993, procurement and contracting systems (including capability and capacity retention), reporting requirements, shared services, funding and fund administration, and opportunities arising from changes to local government structures and functions.

Future arrangements should be fit for purpose, support effective implementation of an NPMP, enable enduring stewardship and landscape-scale management, and remain adaptable to changing risks, funding, and institutional settings. Practical improvements should be implemented as opportunities arise rather than waiting for completion of the NPMP process.

Strategy implementation



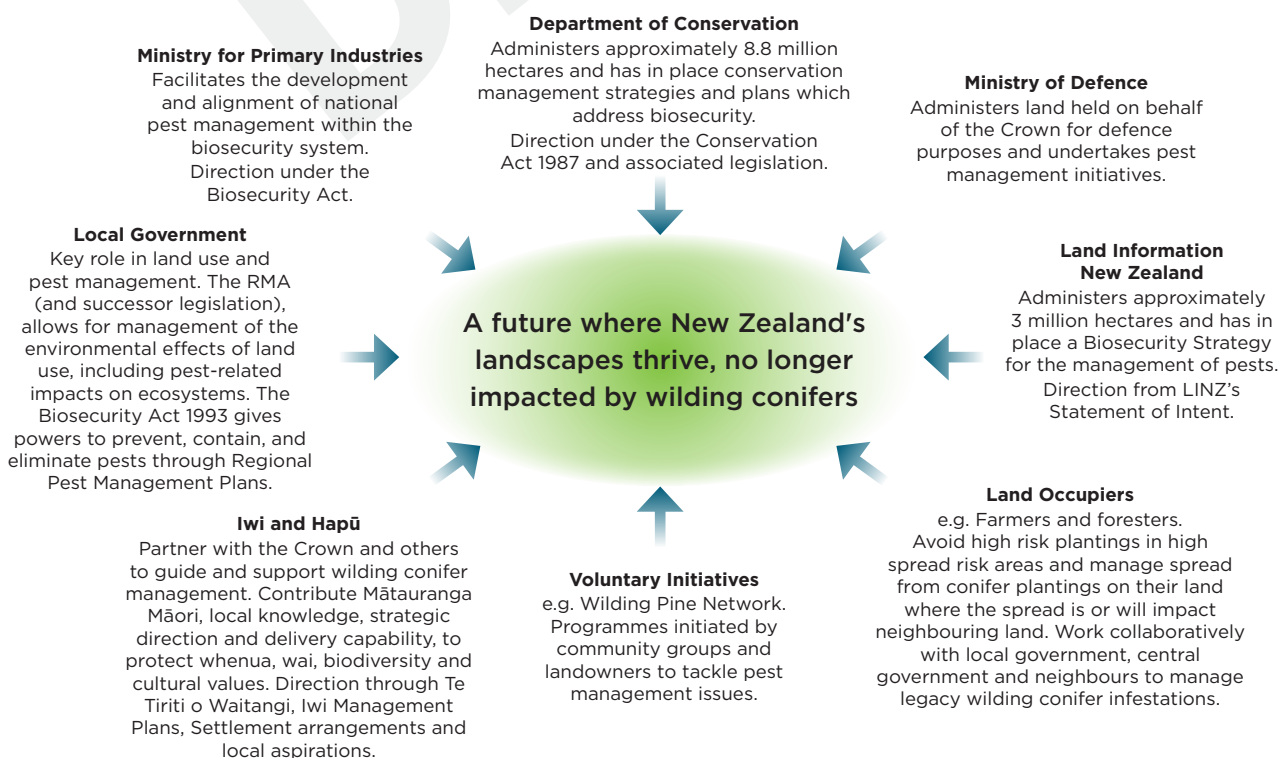
Achieving a future where New Zealand's landscapes thrive, no longer impacted by wilding conifers, is a shared national responsibility. Central and local government, iwi and hapu, land occupiers (including the sectors that represent them), communities and research partners all have important and complementary roles to play. Long-term success will depend on collective action, sustained commitment, and enduring stewardship across generations.

While responsibility for managing wilding conifers is shared, the Crown has a unique leadership role in providing national direction, policy, regulation, investment, coordination, and science support. This reflects the national significance of the issue, the Crown's responsibilities as a Treaty partner, its role as a major landowner and manager of land containing wilding

conifer risks, its historical contribution to some wilding conifer seed sources through past planting programmes, and its role as the primary representative of wider public-good outcomes. Achieving the vision and goals of this Strategy will require sustained Crown leadership and commitment, working alongside iwi and hapū, communities, land occupiers, industry, local government, and other partners.

Key participants in future New Zealand wilding conifer management governance are set out in Figure 1. These come together to provide governance oversight for the Strategy, including to support implementation of the New Zealand Wilding Conifer Control Programme, as well as to support the broader activities and functions that sit outside this Programme. A shared responsibility framework is included in Attachment 3.

Figure 1. Key Participants in Future New Zealand Wilding Conifer Management Governance



Once a National Pest Management Plan is approved, governance and oversight arrangements will transition to those specified in the Plan, including the statutory governance and Ministerial oversight requirements set out in the Biosecurity Act 1993. The shared responsibility framework (Attachment 3) may need to be reviewed and refined at this time.

Details of Strategy implementation will be set out in a National Operational Plan (NOP). The NOP will provide the mechanism for coordinating and implementing the objectives and actions contained in this Strategy and, once approved and operative, the National Pest Management Plan (NPMP).

The NOP will establish the operational arrangements required to deliver the Strategy and NPMP effectively. These

arrangements may include national and regional priorities; annual and multi-year work programmes; investment and resource allocation processes; partnership and engagement approaches; communications and social licence initiatives; research and innovation priorities; information and intelligence requirements; data management and reporting standards; compliance and enforcement approaches; capability development; transition to enduring stewardship arrangements; and processes for reviewing, evaluating, and adapting programme delivery.

The NOP will enable delivery to remain responsive to emerging risks, changing operating environments, new knowledge, and lessons learned, while maintaining alignment with national objectives and statutory requirements.

Review process

This Strategy will be reviewed in accordance with NPMP requirements, including health checks every three years and a full review after 10 years, unless otherwise directed by the Minister for Biosecurity or the Governance Group.

Operational performance and adaptive management will be supported through regular review of the National Operational Plan, which will guide implementation of the Strategy and, once established, the NPMP.

Attachments



Attachment 1: Glossary

Term	Meaning
Containment	means to contain wilding conifers to a geographic area over time.
Control	means to provide for ongoing management of wilding conifers to reduce their impacts and spread to other properties.
Enduring Stewardship	means the sustained management of wilding conifer risks after initial control has been achieved, supported by clear responsibilities, ongoing maintenance, effective partnerships, and appropriate funding arrangements, so that landscapes remain protected, and management gains are maintained for future generations.
Eradication	means to reduce the infestation level of wilding conifers to zero levels in a geographic area in the short to medium term.
Exclusion	means to prevent the establishment of wilding conifers in a geographic area.
High-Risk Seed Source	means a conifer planting, stand, forest, shelterbelt, woodlot, or naturalised population that is generating, or is likely to generate, significant wilding conifer spread.
Landscape Resilience	means the ability of a landscape to maintain or recover its desired ecological, cultural, social, and productive functions despite pressures from wilding conifers and other environmental changes. A resilient landscape has land uses, ecosystems, management practices, and stewardship arrangements that reduce vulnerability to wilding conifer establishment and spread and support long-term, affordable management.
Landscape-Scale Management	means the coordinated management of wilding conifers across multiple properties and land uses within a wider landscape or catchment to reduce spread, protect shared values, and achieve long-term outcomes.

Term	Meaning
Legacy Planting	means historic conifer plantings (for erosion control, shelter, research, production forestry, etc.) that predate the Resource Management Act 1991 and declaration of <i>Pinus contorta</i> as a noxious plant in 1983 (under the Noxious Plants Act 1978), or wildings that originated from those historic conifer plantings. These historic conifer plantings were established by both private occupiers and government agencies (e.g. catchment boards, NZ Forest Service).
Management Agency	As per its meaning under the Biosecurity Act 1993 – means the body specified as the management agency in a pest management plan or a pathway management plan.
Mātauranga Māori	means the body of knowledge, understanding, experience, values and worldviews developed by Māori through their relationship with te taiao and passed down and adapted across generations. It includes knowledge of the environment, people and place, and informs decision-making, stewardship and management practices.
National Operational Plan (NOP)	means a National Operational Plan, which is made either to describe how this Strategy will be implemented, or to describe how a NPMP will be implemented (pursuant to section 100B of the Biosecurity Act 1993), or both.
National Pest Management Plan (NPMP)	means a national pest management plan under Part 5 of the Biosecurity Act 1993.
Priority Landscapes	means geographic areas identified for coordinated wilding conifer management, including: • landscape-scale management units established through the National Wilding Conifer Management Programme for investment, planning, and delivery purposes; and • additional locally identified areas where communities, iwi and hapū, landowners, or agencies are undertaking management and stewardship activities that deliver wilding conifer management benefits.

Term	Meaning
Priority values	means environmental, cultural, social and economic values that are vulnerable to wilding conifer invasion and are important to protect for current and future generations. These include indigenous biodiversity and ecosystems, threatened species and habitats, natural landscapes and natural character, cultural values and sites of significance, water resources, productive land, recreation and tourism values, community wellbeing, infrastructure, and other values identified through national, regional or local prioritisation processes.
Progressive containment	means to contain or reduce the geographic distribution of wilding conifers to an area over time.
Wilding Conifer	Refer to definition in Attachment 2.
Wilding Conifer Information System (WCIS)	means Wilding Conifer Information System (this is the national platform that provides information, mapping, monitoring, and decision-support tools to support the planning, prioritisation, delivery, and reporting of wilding conifer management activities across New Zealand).

Attachment 2: Wilding conifer definition and species list

Wilding conifers are any introduced conifer tree, including (but not limited to) any of the species listed in Table 1, established by natural means, unless it is located within a forest plantation, and does not create any greater risk of wilding conifer spread to adjacent or nearby land than the forest plantation that it is a part of.

For the purposes of this definition, a forest plantation is an area of 1 hectare or more of predominantly planted trees.

Common Name	Scientific Name
Douglas fir	<i>Pseudotsuga menziesii</i>
Lodgepole or contorta pine	<i>Pinus contorta</i>
Scots pine	<i>Pinus sylvestris</i>
Dwarf mountain pine and mountain pine	<i>Pinus mugo and P. uncinata</i>
Bishops pine	<i>Pinus muricata</i>
Maritime pine	<i>Pinus pinaster</i>
Ponderosa pine	<i>Pinus ponderosa</i>
Corsican pine	<i>Pinus nigra</i>
European larch	<i>Larix decidua</i>
Radiata Pine	<i>Pinus radiata</i>

Note: The definition and list of species will be updated in the final version to capture all significant wilding conifer species and ensure alignment with the NPMP proposal as this is developed.

Attachment 3: Shared responsibility framework

A framework for sharing responsibility for achieving resilient landscapes free of wilding conifers is as follows:

Stakeholder	Strategic Role	Primary Responsibilities
MPI/Biosecurity New Zealand	National system leader and programme coordinator	Overall pest management system leadership (s.12A Biosecurity Act); national biosecurity, pest management and regulatory policy leadership; development and oversight of relevant regulatory frameworks and national policy settings (alignment with related land-use, forestry and environmental policy frameworks); coordination of research, funding and best practice; and overall leadership and coordination of the National Wilding Conifer Control Programme (NWCCP) alongside programme partners.
Crown land managers (e.g. DOC, LINZ, NZDF)	Strategic land managers and delivery partners	Manage wilding conifer risks on Crown land, protect priority values, manage seed sources, integrate management with broader land and asset management objectives, contribute to regional and national outcomes, and support the transition to long-term stewardship and maintenance.
Regional Authorities	Regional leadership, coordination and delivery partners	Regional pest management leadership (under s.12B of the BSA), integration with regional pest management plans, NWCCP delivery partners leading and coordinating regional and local delivery, integration with catchment management and wider regional functions and programmes.
Territorial Local Authorities	Local planning and implementation support	Land-use planning; local compliance support; public awareness; integration with community resilience and wider local functions and programmes.
Iwi and hapū	Treaty partner, kaitiaki and landowner	Governance and decision-making partner; incorporation of mātauranga Māori and cultural values; place-based leadership and priority-setting; landowner responsibilities; exercise of kaitiakitanga; protection of whenua, wai, wāhi tapu and taonga species and intergenerational outcomes.

Stakeholder	Strategic Role	Primary Responsibilities
Landowners and Occupiers	Front-line managers and stewards of the land	Prevent and manage wilding conifer spread; identify and control seed sources; maintain treated areas and ongoing control measures; support surveillance, monitoring and reporting; and participate in long-term stewardship and management arrangements.
Forestry and Farm Forestry Sector	Solution partner and risk manager	Manage and mitigate wilding conifer spread risks associated with forest establishment and management; adopt and promote best practice; invest in prevention and seed source control; contribute sector expertise, innovation and research; and support collaborative management efforts.
Wilding Pine Network, Communities and Catchment Groups	Stewardship and advocates	Provide community leadership and place-based knowledge; support monitoring, surveillance and restoration efforts; mobilise volunteers and resources; raise awareness and advocate for local priorities; and foster enduring stewardship of landscapes and catchments.
Research and Science Providers	Knowledge and innovation partners	Generate the evidence base for effective wilding conifer management; develop and refine tools, technologies and methods; improve understanding of risks, impacts and management outcomes; monitor programme effectiveness; and support adaptive management and informed decision-making.
Governance Group /Management Agency	Strategic leadership and oversight	Provide strategic direction and oversight; coordinate action across partners; ensure accountability for investment, performance and outcomes; oversee reporting, evaluation and strategic reviews; and drive adaptive management and continuous improvement.



How to send feedback

By email: wilding.pines@mpi.govt.nz

Online: wildingpines.nz/strategy-2026

Scan the QR Code to go to the online feedback form

