

Wilding Conifer Management Strategy Refresh: notes from workshop at 2024 Wilding Pine Conference 18 October 2024

Working well looks like:

- Less inconsistency in funding or delivery
- Improved prioritisation
- Delays in funding allocations delivered to timely outcomes
- Risk management consistent through range of providers
- Iwi relationships
- National policy in place
- Improved aerial applications
- National programme centralised procurement
- Realistic and consistent H&S performance/audits
- Reduced effort for operational managers
- Iwi involved in conversations
- Remove need/reduced cost overhead for consultant managers

What actions if working well?

- Good monitoring of sites
- Good education is working
- Restoration advice/ tree info
- Forest industry committed to funding
- Panel of contractors – continuity of work
- Long-term funding secured
- Longer term prioritisation determined
- Template contract/agreements
- Technical support more accessible

Funding

- Philanthropy as a funding source
- Levy forestry for the impacts e.g. KVH, bovine TB
- More focus on resource recovery and use (?) self-funding models
- Where is the money coming from?
- Security for contractors needed – risk losing expertise/training and secure teams, need 6+ month forecasting ahead
- Carry funding over financial years
- Consistency of funding over the long-term
- Confirmed funding model that majority agrees on
- Plan needs 5 year funding
- Biodiversity credit system
- Create a wilding conifer charity trust to collect funds
- 20% local contribution – how do we manage this with massive funding fluctuations?
 - o \$20m/y = \$4m contribution vs \$2m/y = \$400k contribution
 - o Change 20% contribution to a “beneficiary levy” i.e. fed farmers, hydro, forestry etc
- Pines support other invasives (rats, possums etc), can we get some Predator Free \$\$\$
 - o Remove the pines, less habitat for invasive mammals

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Innovation/science/research/good practice

- Need complete map of where conifer are! Or will this make no difference as no funding for new infestations
- Monitoring sites by contractors in collaboration with DOC, universities, councils, scientists
- Prioritise funding for innovation – support innovation to site challenges
- Science funding for innovators (chemical, drones, nozzles etc)
- Support gene editing for all commercial conifers
- Ag chem resistance management new technology and AIs
- Guidelines for businesses to get new tools adopted into the GPGs
- More operationally focused research
- National research plan
- Controlled burning
- More cost effective AFSA herbicide
- More applied science/research:
 - o Responding to the needs of the sector
 - o Can roll out research quickly
 - o Research done well can then be rolled out in the field immediately
- Drone teams (?) – nationally to control pines and native seeding
- Constant review of control methods
- Better links between science done and science needed for management
- Developing new control methods
- Cone abortion innovation
- Fungal stuff v interesting/promising
- Climate change
 - o Modelling impact of climate change of wilding spread
 - o Include climate change in the risk calculation and projection
 - o Prioritisation of MUs based on future climatic suitability (Etherington 2023 paper?)
 - o Add climate change to risk calculator
- User friendly interface for wind modelling
- Quantity effect of grazing
- Fire?
- New brews
- Brew effect on surrounding environment (for restoration purposes)
- Biotic resistance (planting to prevent pines)
- GMO trees
- Biocontrol – unlikely
- Population sizes to induce Allee effects
- Understanding how control methods impact tree/population lifecycle e.g.:
 - o Time to coning
 - o Seed viability
 - o Pollen production
 - o Germination & survival

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GAPS

- Long-term use of pines, phase out pines to native species with a production(?) view
- Prioritise knowledge gaps – invite opportunities to learn where these gaps are
- Local govt connection (district councils)

Including iwi – what does it look like:

- Conversations from the beginning – at all levels **before** decisions are made
- Te Ao Maori – views can be very different to pakeha world view
- Guardianship, not ownership
- Mana whenua do the mahi
- Doesn't necessarily need to be paid – coordinate volunteers
- Bureaucracy is preventing mana whenua crews from doing the mahi on their whenua – cut this out (councils)
- Educating mana whenua – once they know about the problem they are the champions
- Actions:
 - o Invite iwi to strategy/refresh sessions
 - o Sponsor iwi to do this – make it accessible/affordable
 - o Workshops for mana whenua - come to them?
 - Education sessions
 - Implementation workshops
 - o Advocacy/identification of barriers to working with mana whenua on the ground
 - o Many treaty settlements require upskilling and contracting mana whenua – this needs to be reflected in the strategy

Prioritisation

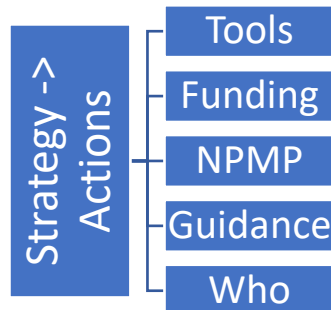
- More robust
- In 2016 they had original prioritisation that was not followed – independent – low priority areas jumped queue following this
- If it's done, follow it – what are we trying to protect
- Factors that determine high priority sites - conservation values highly (?) sites
- National prioritisation for funding allocation
- Weighting
 - o Threatened species
 - o Threatened ecosystems
 - o Culturally important sites
- Reprioritise MUs – focus on eliminating threat in some MUs then move on

Key strategy comments

- Strategy missing key description of roles and responsibilities
- Issue with the title
- Shouldn't have link to 'right tree' and have wilding conifer on same page
- Do we want a strategy that is aspirational – or something more realistic – run risk of losing community buy in by not being realistic

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- Action plan – full high level picture - covers full issues, inc below



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- Continue advocacy of strategy
- Strategise with avoiding unavoidable loss as a very high priority
- Strategy needs to be more biodiversity focused – increase biodiversity weighting
- Alignment with other strategies, e.g. FSC, Predator Free Aotearoa, DOC EMUs
- Strengthen objectives 3.2 & 4.1
- Further action on alignment at local level

Planning

- RPMP
 - o Does this need to be bolstered
 - o stick & carrot – what if landowner pleads poverty
 - o Work with regional councils to strengthen RPMPs
 - o Put timelines on RPMP so councils aren't playing lip service to plans
 - o Strengthen RPMPs
 - Challenges:
 - Regional councils' abilities to resource and implement new rules
 - Reasonable burden – very militant approach with unfairness
- Strengthen the District Council rules, e.g. QLDC rule – can't plant wilding species in district plan
- National Pest Management Plan/Strategy
 - o Consistent regulation for shelterbelts & amenity planting/all other applications (not just forestry)
 - o Advocate for legislation that creates this
- Consistent national rules & compliance
- Long-term management legislation/regulation improvement
- How to make our control methods a lot less carbon-emitting (helicopters will soon become too costly, next decade?)
- EMUs(?) that capture ecosystem values – geothermal, frost flat – Landscape approach to control pines to protect bio values across tenure
- Create a working group to make a resource especially for restoration of harvest sites cutover and controlled dense infestations
- More focus on restoration post-control
- Focus approval on seed sources and chasing the coning trees

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- Work towards making D. fir an unwanted organism? Give out a 10 year warning before it's done
- Future land use informing control actions – best practice guide for each land use outcome
- Long game biocontrol
- Fast track pest agent tree removals at 100% funded
- Ensure repeated control costs are accounted for in initial control plan

Transition

- Legally binding contracts are missing
- Responsibility
 - o Landowners
 - o Crown for legacy
- Transition/hand back language – change language, implies programme took responsibility away initially
- Includes restoration plans, Maori input/inclusion
- Develop focus on transitioning landscapes
- Can control funding be used for restoration? Currently no, but maybe good?

Forestry related comments

- Marginal strip for forestry – curtains of radiata, relevant seed source can leap it
- Focus on phasing out wood economy with natives
- National contract with a forestry company to manage harvest for control
- ETS & WC exemption – need advice from the National programme how it works/opportunities
- Harvest of wild stands not covered by NES-CF
- Address carbon farming

Education/Awareness

- Community presentations to educate public more, social media, meetings local newspapers
- Undesirable trees not planted in the wrong place
 - o Consistent messaging through national education package – tailored to specific audiences/value bases
 - o Choose key target audiences (schools, rotary, regulators, elected members, funders)
 - o Consistent visits each year
- Another survey on social licence – has it increased?
- Conflicted messaging from gov – carbon, pest tree, forestry
- Searchable information on website, e.g. “how to...”
- A wilding Google and connection to experts
- Improve awareness amongst people who have seed sources

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- No new planting e.g. in shelter belts
- Widespread public awareness of wildings and what we want to achieve – what good looks like
- An AI trained on the wilding literature to answer questions
- One page simple language wilding pine/conifer information sheet
- Enviroschools
- Increase types of platforms to increase awareness
- Awareness of the consequences of doing nothing
- Visual representations of native vs pine takeover

Other notes

Shelterbelts

- High wind sites carry past stock grazing
- Exception for LINZ to no exotics is for shelterbelts
- Engagement to get shelterbelt replacement
- Need a rule to govern if transitioning, can you enforce? How? Who is going to pay

MU model is flawed, needs a focus on site-led

- Funding goes to the right place
- Represents what a true picture is in terms of infestation/control
- New mapping, no need to have boundary lines for entire country “site-led”, but flexible as some MUs are a true reflection
- MU can restrict other aspects, e.g. funding & ETS
- Strategy needed for operational areas/MUs that won't receive funding

Redirect welfare spend e.g. PEP

Programme is very south island focused

Supporting minister (lobbying)

Acknowledge fire risk

Crown land – crown don't own land, they are just the guardians for the present (generally it is Maori land)

Need for defining key goals for wilding operations:

- Restoring landscape
- Protecting productivity
- Protecting threatened species
- Protecting water
- Different pathways to achieving these goals

NPS-CF – riparian margins too small, encroachment and overspray are big issues

Buffer

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- Forest owner responsibility for wilding control on neighbouring property
- Zone around block of less spread prone trees (radiata)
- Slower coning age to buy time
- Lengthen cycle time
- Spread distance less

Emphasise removal of standing trees (where possible)

Exit strategy

- What if we don't get the funding?
- How do we communicate this to those most affected?



National Wilding Conifer Management Strategy

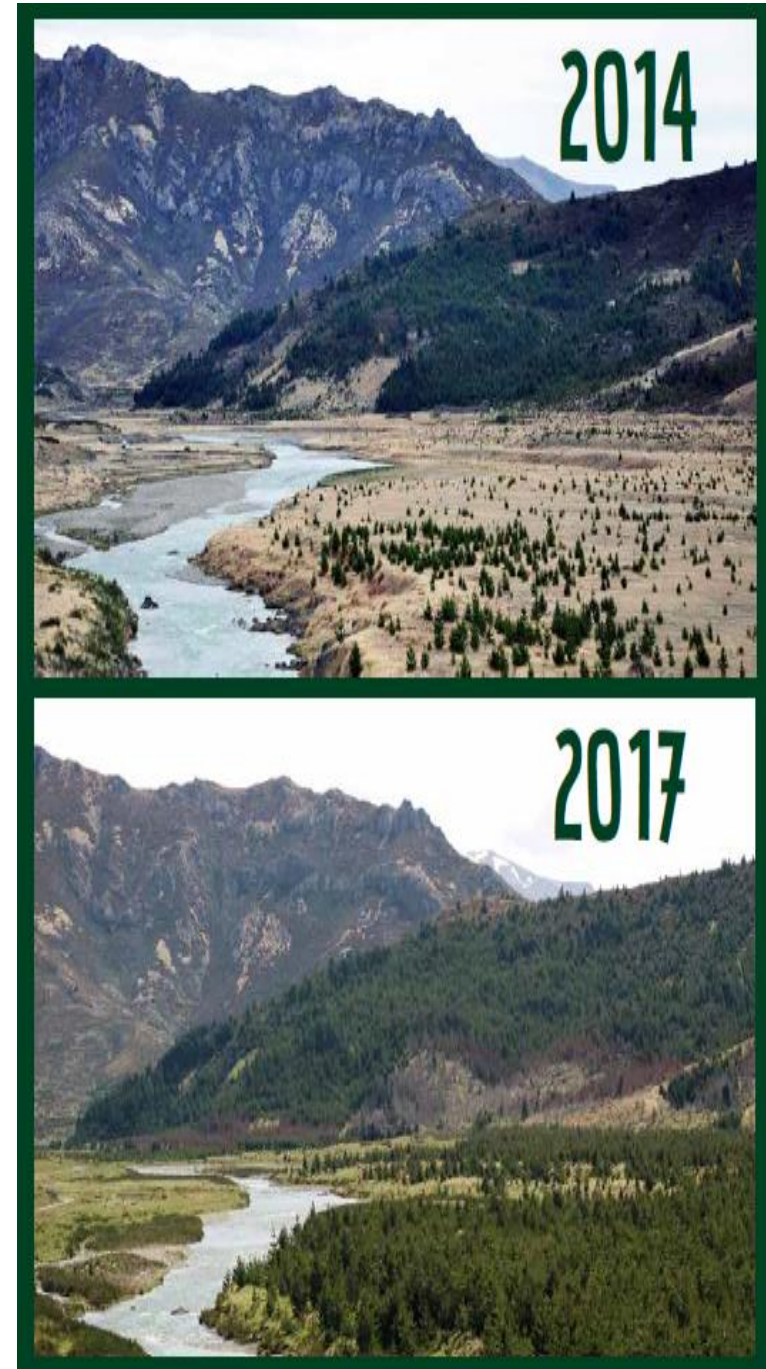
Sherman Smith, Biosecurity New Zealand

Wilding Pine Conference
16-18 October 2024, Taupō

Prior to National Programme

- \$11m spend on control nationally
- Various parties – central and local government, landowners, trusts
- Continued spread of 5% per year (90,000 ha)
- Often contestable funding
- 2018 CBA: Wildings a \$4.6b threat to economy

Clarence River Flats, Molesworth
Recreation Reserve



How the strategy came about

- Who was involved
 - *Department of Conservation*
 - *Land Information New Zealand (LINZ)*
 - *New Zealand Defence Force*
 - *Regional and District councils*
 - *Scion*
 - *New Zealand Forest Owners Association*
 - *Federated Farmers*
 - *Community Group groups*
 - *MPI.*
- List of actions
- Strategy written with no funding on the horizon

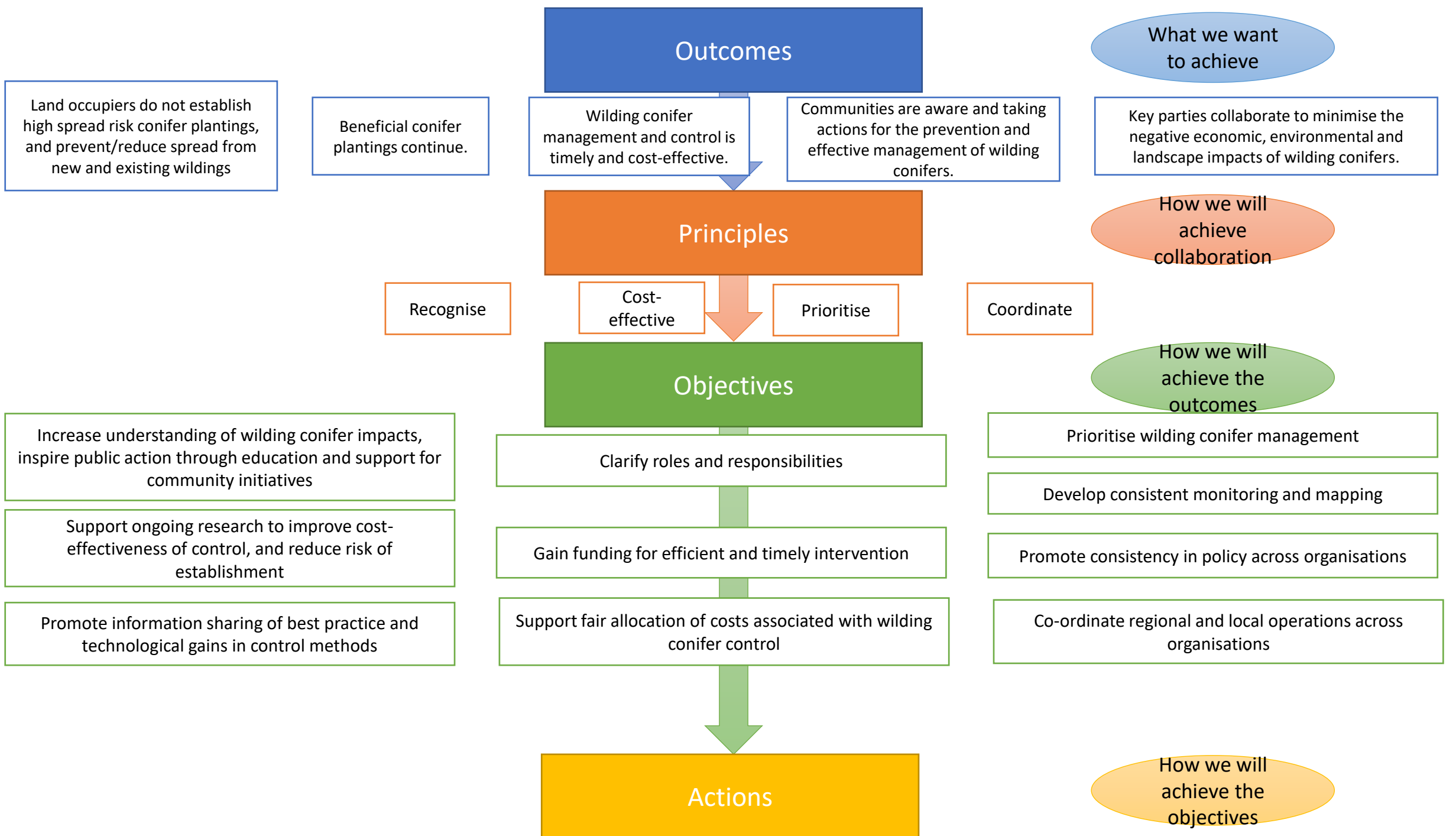


New Zealand Wilding Conifer Management Strategy 2015-2030

- **Aim:** prevent the spread of wilding conifers, and contain or eradicate established areas of wilding conifers by 2030
- **Principles to improve management:**
 - Coordinate all levels
 - Prioritise control
 - Recognise individual and collective responsibilities
 - Be cost effective and timely



NATIONAL WILDING CONIFER
CONTROL PROGRAMME



Strategy Refresh - Approach

- Actions out of date (2019) – what/how/do we need to update these?
- 2030 on the horizon
- Reflection of what's been achieved so far and what we can update



Our starting point

Recognised gaps

- Iwi / Te Ao Māori perspectives
- Transition

Other themes

- Funding model / cost share & delivery model
- Tools to finish the job, e.g.:
 - Innovation
 - control methods
 - monitoring progress
 - right tool for the job
 - land use outcomes (outcomes, e.g. Restoration)
 - prevention
- **Majority of actions have been completed**
- **A lot has changed since 2014**



**NATIONAL WILDING CONIFER
CONTROL PROGRAMME**

Progress on actions

- 18 actions
 - 44% achieved
 - 28% substantively achieved
 - 28% partially achieved

OBJECTIVE	ACTIONS	TIMEFRAME
Clarify roles and responsibilities	Encourage the key parties to fulfil their roles outlined in the strategy	2015 - 2020
	Develop an accord for management of wilding conifer spread from planted forests, shelterbelts, amenity plantings and woodlots.	2015 - 2017
Gain funding for efficient and timely intervention	Determine options for funding wilding conifer control, including establishment of a national fund to address highest priorities.	2015 - 2020
Support fair allocation of costs associated with wilding conifer control	investigate options for assisting community trusts to obtain funding in a timely way	2015 - 2017
Prioritise wilding conifer management	Prioritise wilding infestations based on best information available, to inform allocation of funding and control effort.	2015 - 2019
Develop consistent monitoring and mapping	Agree consistent standards for collecting, recording and sharing data on wilding conifer distribution, density and control efforts.	2015 - 2016
	Develop a national tool to map wilding conifer distribution, and provide a repository for ongoing monitoring data.	2016 - 2020
	Refine prediction modelling of wilding spread based on the best information available.	2016 - 2020
Promote consistency in policy across organisations	Work collaboratively to develop agreed best practice regional pest management	2015 - 2018
	Develop best practice RMA policies and rules as a proactive means of addressing wilding risks associated with new plantings. This could include a refined version of the wilding risk calculator.	2015 - 2016
	Promote consistency across local government including exploring national policy mechanisms to ensure consistent regulation relating to wilding conifer management.	2015 - 2018
	Promote alignment of national policy relating to wilding conifer management.	2015 - 2018
Co-ordinate regional and local operations across organisations	Facilitate co-ordinated control amongst land owners and other stakeholders.	2015 - 2020
Increase understanding of wilding conifer impacts, inspire public action through education and support for community initiatives	Develop communications plan to raise awareness of issues relating to wilding conifer management and build advocates.	2015 - 2016
Support ongoing research to improve cost-effectiveness of control, and reduce risk of establishment	NZWCMG maintain oversight of research and identify priorities and needs to support wilding conifer management.	2015 - 2020
	Explore any opportunities for addressing research needs.	2015 - 2020
Promote information sharing of best practice and technological gains in control methods	Promote development and uptake of current best practice for wilding management.	2015 - 2020
	Maintain www.wildingconifers.org.nz website as the site to go to for information.	2015 - 2020

LEGEND
Achieved
Substantively achieved
Partially achieved

For discussion

1. What gaps exist today in the current strategy?
2. If these things were working well, what would that look like?
3. What are some actions that could be taken?



Next steps

- Notes from this workshop will be sent to all conference attendees
- Further consultation – specific thoughts from people to see what could be improved

