

Wilding Conifer Control Policy

Department:	Parks and Recreation
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Approved by:	Council
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Purpose:

To provide guidance on Council's approach to eradicating wilding conifers on council owned or managed land.

Principles and objectives:

Council recognises its obligations as a landowner to pro-actively manage the spread and eradicate wilding conifers, and to give effect to the Otago Regional Pest Management Plan 2019.

This recognition reflects:

- That Council displays leadership to control the spread of wilding conifers.
- An acknowledgment that wilding conifers on Council owned or managed land are contributing to the spread of wilding conifers on nearby properties (which in turn hinders the ability of those landowners to control the spread of wilding conifers).

Scope:

This policy applies to council owned and managed land including (but not limited to):

- Recreation reserves, local purpose reserves, historic reserves, scenic reserves, and road reserves.

This policy does not apply to council owned or managed commercial forestry blocks, with the exception that:

- Council will pro-actively manage any spread onto neighbouring land.
- Council will give consideration to replanting forestry blocks with a species with less propensity to spread.

Definitions:

Wilding is the term used for the natural regeneration or self seeding spread of introduced trees, occurring in locations which are not managed as forests or plantations.

Within New Zealand the term is generally applied to the following species of conifers;

- Bishops pine (*Pinus muricata*)

- Contorta (lodgepole) pine (*Pinus contorta*)
- Corsican pine (*Pinus nigra*)
- Douglas fir (*Pseudotsuga menziesii*)
- Larch (*Larix decidua*)
- Maritime pine (*Pinus pinaster*)
- Mountain pine and dwarf mountain pine (*Pinus mugo* and *P. uncinata*)
- Ponderosa pine (*Pinus ponderosa*)
- Radiata pine (*Pinus radiata*)
- Scots pine (*Pinus sylvestris*)

Policy:

Operational context:

The New Zealand Wilding Conifer Management Strategy 2015-2030 identifies that wilding conifers are a serious and pressing established pest in New Zealand.

The Kai Tahu ki Otago Natural Resource Management Plan 2005 specifies that the spread of exotic wilding trees and other woody weeds is an issue which adversely affects cultural landscapes.

The Otago Regional Pest Management Plan 2019 classifies wilding conifers as a pest.

Within Central Otago wind is the main vector of spread with seed generally being blown in strong Norwest winds up to 25km from source plantations. Once established wilding conifers aggressively spread further afield. As a result, delays in deploying effective controls are associated with significant increased costs.

Adverse effects of wilding conifers:

Landscape and amenity.

- Interfering with views of golden tussock glacial and rocky landscapes.

Biodiversity and nature conservation.

- Avoiding the loss of flora and fauna that is unique to Central Otago as wilding conifer canopy closure dominates and degrades native flora and fauna habitats.

Economic productive values.

- Loss of productive farmland.

Recreational and lifestyle.

- Ensuring opportunities for walking, cycling, running and tramping are maintained.

Historic and archaeological.

- Avoiding the obscuring and loss of sites due to canopy closure.

Water yield.

- Avoiding the reduction of water yield of catchments into rivers due to canopy interception and evaporation.

Wildfire risk.

- Mitigating the significant risk wilding conifers present for property.

Central Otago District Plan

Acknowledges the threat of wilding conifers and provides a framework for controlling the spread of wilding conifers. It encourages land use practices to ensure that adverse effects on the open space, landscape, and natural character and amenity values within the rural environment are avoided, remedied, or mitigated.

Any planting of species that exhibit spreading vigour requires a resource consent as follows:

- Discretionary activity (tree plantings that exceeds 2 hectares)
 - Douglas Fir (*Pseudotsuga menziesii*),
 - European larch (*Larix decidua*)
 - Ponderosa pine (*Pinus ponderosa*)
 - Bishops pine (*Pinus muricata*)
 - Maritime pine (*Pinus pinaster*)
 - Radiata pine (*Pinus radiata*)
- Discretionary activity (tree plantings less than 2 hectares)
 - Corsican pine (*Pinus nigra*)
- Non-complying activity
 - Scots pine (*Pinus sylvestris*) and/or Swiss Mountain pine (*Pinus mugo*)

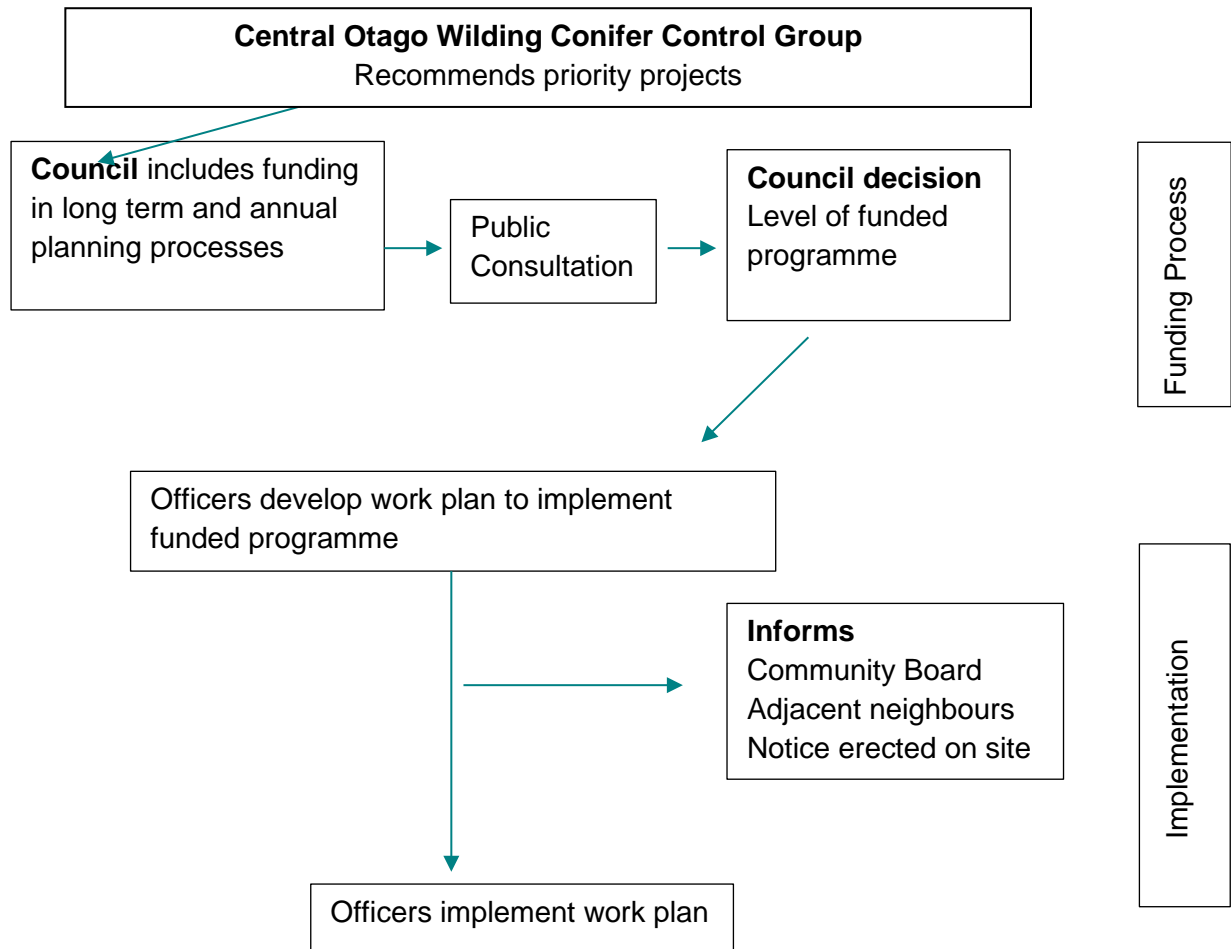
Planting of Lodgepole pine (*Pinus contorta*) is a prohibited activity for which no consent can be applied for or obtained.

Key policy elements:

- Council will pro-actively work to eradicate wilding conifers on council owned or managed land.
- Eradication of wilding conifers from Council owned or managed land will be undertaken as efficiently as possible in a single operation.

- No new plantings of wilding conifers will take place on council owned or managed land.
- Council will pro-actively manage the spread of wilding conifers from council owned commercial forestry blocks onto adjacent land.
- Where no wildings currently exist on council owned or managed land but the land is susceptible to wilding spread, Council will proactively manage removal of any seedings to prevent wildings being established

Council will manage the programme to control the spread and eradicate wilding conifers through the following process:



Relevant legislation:

Reserves Act 1977
Resource Management Act 1991

Related documents:

<https://www.wildingconifers.org.nz/assets/Uploads/2014-new-zealand-wilding-conifer-management-strategy-3.pdf>

www.wildingpines.nz

<https://www.wildingconifers.org.nz/>

<https://wildingpinenetwork.org.nz/>