

Wakatipu Wilding Conifer Control Group

Wakatipu Wilding Conifer Control Group Submission to the QLDC District Plan 17 May 2016.

QLDC Proposed District Plan Ch. 34.1

- 1 .In making this submission WCG has the support of a data base of over three hundred people, an active executive of fourteen who meet monthly, partnerships with the key statutory organisations such as DOC, QLDC and LINZ, ORC, a growing volunteer group, plus strong links with all landowners, and with community groups. WCG was initiated by QLDC in 2009. Council recognised the growing wilding problem and WCG was formed as a community group. The result since its inception is that we are now investing over a million dollars a year in eradicating and controlling wildings. The WCG mandate is under the title “wilding pines” which includes all the pinus species but also includes Douglas-fir (*Pseudotsuga menziesii*) and Larch (*Larix decidua*).
2. WCG strongly affirms the total ban on the planting of all wilding species under the general term “Wilding Pines”, as determined in Chapter 34. Council is to be commended on taking the stance on banning all wildings. While totally supportive of the wilding ban, WCG wishes to reaffirm that we are not anti-tree. Right trees in the right place enhance landscapes. WCG’s is committed to work with QLDC in fighting all wildings in the areas under QLDC jurisdiction.
3. All landowners, Councils, Doc, are required to comply with the ORC RPMS to remove pinus contorta.. WCG has submitted to ORC demanding that they strictly enforce their RPMS. But equally important is for ORC to extend their RPMS to include the other pinus species and D-fir in particular. A QLDC inclusive by-law to ban the planting of wilding species” will set the example to ORC to review their RPMS to include a ban on planting wilding species in areas where there is the potential to spread.
4. As the guardian of local Outstanding Natural Landscapes Council is the only organisation with the power to determine the future of the areas iconic landscapes, the alpine flora, fauna and the mountain scenery. As the stewards of Tourism, the mantle of the conservation of iconic landscapes rests on QLDC as the lead agency. The war on wildings will be won or lost in this decade.
5. The slow creep of wilding infestation has taken years to reach the present crisis, even longer for the community to recognise and own the problem. A growing momentum of understanding the wilding problem is now evident in the community. The task is not accomplished. While a community group such as WCG can make inroads into control work future facing by-

laws enforced by Council is essential. Council is elected by the community to give a lead to the community. Council can authorise a group such as WCG to tackle the wilding task but unless it gives a lead to the community in recognising and alleviating the wilding problem then it fails.

6. Future control of wildings will rely heavily on Council funding. A hybrid type organisation of WCG and Council will require investigation in the years ahead.
7. WCG calls on Council to continue setting the example by being a “good neighbour” by removing all wildings from Council Reserves and Council land. The removal of the seeding potential of the Arrowtown forest will flag the importance of this by-law to the community and the example of a Council to address the exponential seed spread from D-fir
8. Recommendations:
 - a. Ban the planting of the wilding species as outlined above
 - b. A number of landowners will require the encouragement, direction and assistance from Council and from WCG to remove all seeding wildings. We encourage Council to take the initiative by writing to all landowners pointing out the ban on planting wilding species and using the authority of Council to urge all landowners to remove wildings.
 - c. WCG calls on Council to use its media and influence to educate all ratepayers on the power of wind to spread seeds from coning trees. During Wakatipu’s strong “wind events” seeds are blown kilometres onto the mountainous terrain where they quickly germinate and grow.
 - d. While calling for a ban on wildings WCG urges Council to promote the planting of fine non spreading trees. Along with the ban positive advice and lists of suitable specimen trees that enhance the district.