

6 December 2024

On behalf of the Mid Dome Trust which has been in existence for eighteen years I present to you our Annual Report for the 2023-24 year.

It has unfortunately been a disappointing year due to a much-reduced control budget due to a substantial deficit in funding from the government's National Wilding Conifer Control Programme.

This has resulted in a second year of no Aerial Foliar Spray Application of the mature seed-source *P. contorta* and reduced budgets for ABBA and ground control. Every year of sub-optimal funding results in ever increasing costs in the future to deal with uncontained wilding spread and growth and exponentially pushes out our ability to reach the goals of the trust's 2023-2033 Management Strategy.

My sincere thanks to our Programme Manager Boffa Miskell Ltd and especially Brent Rohloff and Marcus Girvan for making the best of the funds available to us. The trust values the ongoing excellent relationship we have with Boffa, their experience, skills and the management of onsite contractors that they have built up over the years is to be commended.

I also want to recognise the support and funding from our funding partners. DOC and ES continue to support us financially, but it was a real blow to be informed by LINZ that they will not be supporting the trust financially for the next control season due to government cutbacks to budgets. This is doubly disappointing as the LINZ-managed land is situated on the high and wind-prone front faces that comprises 4% of the total Programme Area.

Highlights from the control season include,

- 507 hectares of ground control completed
- 3,617 hectares of Aerial Basal Bark Application (ABBA) completed
- Total operational spend of \$1,030,845
- 77 people were employed on site this year, undertaking enough work to equate to 5.5FTE's
- The Turk hut was upgraded to improve living conditions for the crews using it as accommodation during the season
- A successful Volunteer Day was held on Flagstaff 1 in April this year
- A survey flight with Environment Southland and DOC representatives on board in June



**Patron:** *Sam Neill*

**Members:** Ali Ballantine (Chair), Michael Skerrett, Geoffrey Young, Richard Bowman, Glenys Dickson, John Whitehead and Tapuwa Marapara

The increasing presence of D. fir appearing within our Programme Area is of real concern. The trust is working with Environment Southland to ensure this highly invasive species can be managed with landowners and managers under their Regional Pest Management Plan.

Trustees Glenys Dickson and Tapuwa Marapara resigned from the trust during the year, on behalf of the trust my sincere thanks to them to their input and support over the years of their tenure. We are fortunate to bring on local landowner Jeff Keen and ES Councillor Peter McDonald on board as new trustees.

Over the past year Richard has again done a power of work at a local and national level to advocate for sustainable funding and more effective control methods and strategies at a local and national level.

It was with regret to learn the Environment Southland's Biosecurity & Biodiversity Operations Manager Ali Meade has resigned from the council after eight years in this role. Ali has done a great job over this time in supporting and assisting myself and the trust. This includes her involvement in leading the creation of a Memorandum of Understanding between the council and the trust. She will be missed.

Due to changes in the support that Environment Southland provides for the trust the role that Leah Smith held as Programme Support for several years was disestablished. Leah did an excellent job for us over this time, and she was particularly skilled in events management and comms.

And finally, thanks to the hardy volunteers who attend our Volunteer Days, many of whom have done so over many years. We are unfortunately not getting the numbers attending that we used to so the trust is looking into other options such as approaching corporates for their involvement instead. But we will however still honour the commitment of our long-standing volunteers in attending these events.



Ali Ballantine  
**Chairman**  
**Mid Dome Wilding Trees Charitable Trust**