

5.22 Pest conifers

Why are they a threat?

Pest conifers can have significant impacts on native ecosystems, particularly low-growing ecosystems such as tussock and indigenous grasslands, alpine ecosystems and subalpine scrub. In the regenerating scrub/forest of the Marlborough Sounds, pest conifers can act as a pioneering species thereby out-competing and altering these ecosystems. The likes of Douglas fir, being shade tolerant, can also readily establish in closed forest ecosystems. This can make control operations additionally challenging. Soil and soil fauna are also altered when pest conifers replace native ecosystems.



Pest conifers can also adversely affect visual amenity and landscape values by establishing themselves along ridgelines, in natural alpine landscapes or amongst natural tussock grasslands. In areas where there is long term, seasonal soil moisture deficits, dense pest conifer stands can contribute to reductions in surface water flows, potentially impacting on water availability and associated aquatic ecosystems.

All the impacts outlined above can adversely affect values held by iwi, rūngana and hapū across Te Tau Ihu. In particular, feedback from Te Rūnanga o Kaikōura outlined pest conifers as an issue of concern due to their widespread impact on indigenous species and cultural landscape values.

In areas of extensive pastoral farming, pest conifer infestations adversely impact economic wellbeing by reducing available grazing and limiting the options for future land use related to livestock production.

The subjects listed in Table 2 are to be managed as part of the pest conifer programme:

Table 2: Subjects of the pest conifer programme

Individual Subjects	
Common Name	Scientific Name
Lodgepole or contorta pine	<i>Pinus contorta</i>
Scots pine	<i>Pinus sylvestris</i>
Mountain pine	<i>Pinus mugo</i> (including sub-species and botanical variants)
Bishops pine	<i>Pinus muricata</i>
Maritime pine	<i>Pinus pinaster</i>
Mexican weeping pine	<i>Pinus patula</i>
Ponderosa pine	<i>Pinus ponderosa</i>
Corsican pine	<i>Pinus nigra</i>
European larch	<i>Larix decidua</i>
Western white pine	<i>Pinus monticola</i>

Class of Subjects
<p>Wilding conifers</p> <p>Description</p> <p>Wilding conifers means any introduced conifer tree, of the individual species listed as subjects in Table 2 and those species listed Table 3, established by natural means, unless it is located within a plantation forest and does not create any greater risk or wilding conifer spread to adjacent or nearby land than the plantation forest that it is part of.</p>

Table 3: Species for the purposes of the wilding conifers class description

Common Name	Scientific Name
Douglas fir	<i>Pseudotsuga menziesii</i>
Radiata pine	<i>Pinus radiata</i>

Objectives

Objective 5.22.1.1

Over the duration of this Plan, progressively contain pest conifers through containing and reducing, where feasible, the geographic distribution of pest conifers within the Marlborough region to reduce adverse effects on the environment, enjoyment of the natural environment and economic wellbeing.

Intermediate Outcome:

Exclusion	Eradication	Progressive Containment	Sustained Control	Site-led
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Objective 5.22.1.2

Over the duration of this Plan, all pest conifers within the Stronvar Retirement Area to be contained or reduced, where feasible, through a site-led programme to reduce adverse effects on the environment, enjoyment of the natural environment and economic wellbeing that will:

- a) preserve, and where possible enhance, indigenous vegetation cover within Stronvar Retirement Area to the extent practicable; and
- b) minimise downstream sediment to the extent practicable.

Intermediate Outcome:

Exclusion	Eradication	Progressive Containment	Sustained Control	Site-led
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Principal measures to achieve the objectives

1) Providing Regional Leadership

Council will play a leadership role in facilitating, establishing, and subsequently supporting as a partner, collaborative programmes that carry out the on-ground management of pest conifers. It will also be responsible for overseeing progress against the programme objective for the Marlborough region.

A major component in Marlborough will include Council actively supporting community-led initiatives such as those driven by the community trusts.

2) National Wilding Conifer Control Programme

The outcome of the programme will be heavily reliant on the successful ongoing implementation of the National Wilding Conifer Control Programme (NWCCP) - a collaborative model for wilding conifer control. Significant joint Crown funding from the Ministry for Primary Industries, Department of Conservation and Land Information New Zealand came into effect in 2016 but requires ongoing successful Crown budget support to continue.

This programme will see substantial investment in management operations primarily within the High Risk Conifer Management Area. This may also occur outside this area should it be prioritised and resources made available by the NWCCP.

3) Council Inspection and/or Service Delivery

Inspection and/or service by Council may include staff, contractors or other authorised persons:

- a) Carrying out inspections to ensure occupiers are meeting obligations, if there are any;
- b) Undertaking service delivery to manage pest conifers;
- c) Visiting properties or doing surveys to determine whether pests are present;
- d) Monitoring effectiveness of control;
- e) Using administrative powers of the Biosecurity Act 1993, if necessary, which could include:
 - i) Issuing a Notice of Direction to an occupier or person under section 122;
 - ii) Undertaking default works and recovering the cost under section 128;

For the full range of administrative powers available to Council as management agency, see section 8.

4) Advocacy and Education

Council in conjunction with the many parties involved in pest conifer management may:

- a) Provide general purpose education, advice, awareness and publicity to land owners and/or occupiers and the public about pests and pathways (and control of them).
- b) Encourage land owners and/or occupiers to control pests.
- c) Promote industry requirements and best practice to contractors and land owners and/or occupiers.
- d) Encourage land owners and/or occupiers and other persons to report any pests they find.
- e) Facilitate or commission research.

5) Collaboration within the Stronvar Retirement Area

If control operations are proposed on Stronvar Retirement Area (see Map 10A) as part of any programme to manage pest conifers on the property to implement Objective 5.22.1.2, the management agency shall work with the occupier to identify and agree upon appropriate measures to maintain the indigenous biodiversity values at Stronvar and minimise erosion risk from the management of pest conifers.

The appropriate measures identified and agreed between the management agency and the occupier will be recorded in a management plan (or other document agreed between the management agency and the occupier) in so far as it applies to Stronvar Retirement Area.

The management plan may take a different approach to contain or reduce wilding conifers in different parts of the Stronvar Retirement Area.

Rules

Rule 5.22.2.1

Occupiers shall destroy all pest conifers present on land they occupy (except land within the High Risk Pest Conifer Management Area), prior to cone bearing, if the pest conifers are located within an area on that land which has had a control operation carried out on it, or in accordance with a negotiated handover agreement.

A breach of this rule will create an offence under section 154N(19) of the Biosecurity Act.

Note: For the purposes of Rule 5.22.2.1, control operation means an operation to remove pest conifers from the land to a point where infestations have been managed to a level where coning trees are at, or close to, zero density and there is also no seed rain that could cause unreasonable levels of re-infestation. This assessment determines unreasonable levels of re-infestation will take into account risk of seed dispersal from sources that can affect the property, vulnerability and nature of the land cover and use on the property. Occupiers will be notified by the management agency should a control operation meet this threshold. A period of handover can be negotiated and documented via a negotiated handover agreement. The agreement acknowledges the likely variation in situations associated with pest conifer management. Should the occupier of the land change before the obligation under Rule 5.22.2.1 is triggered, any such agreement in place will end and require renewal with the new occupier.

Rule 5.22.2.2

Occupiers shall destroy all pest conifers listed as individual subjects in Table 2, present on land they occupy, prior to cone bearing, unless the land they occupy falls within the High Risk Pest Conifer Management Area identified in Map 10.

A breach of this rule will create an offence under section 154N(19) of the Biosecurity Act.

Note: The High Risk Pest Conifer Management Area identifies an area of land that contains infestations of high risk pest conifer species where an obligation on occupiers to destroy them is considered unreasonable given the history and nature of infestations.

Rule 5.22.2.3 (Good Neighbour Rule)

Occupiers shall destroy all pest conifers present, listed as individual subjects in Table 2, on land they occupy within 200 metres of an adjoining property boundary, where that adjoining property has previously been cleared through control operations and that adjoining occupier is taking reasonable steps to manage pest conifers, within 200 metres of the boundary.

A breach of this rule will create an offence under section 154N(19) of the Biosecurity Act.

Rule 5.22.2.4 (Pest Agent Rule)

Occupiers shall destroy any Pest Agent Conifer present on land they occupy within 200 metres of adjoining property, if pest conifers have been destroyed through control operations on the adjoining property, within 200 metres of the boundary, and that adjoining occupier is taking reasonable steps to manage pest conifers, within 200 metres of the boundary.

A breach of this rule will create an offence under section 154N(19) of the Biosecurity Act.

Explanation of the rules:

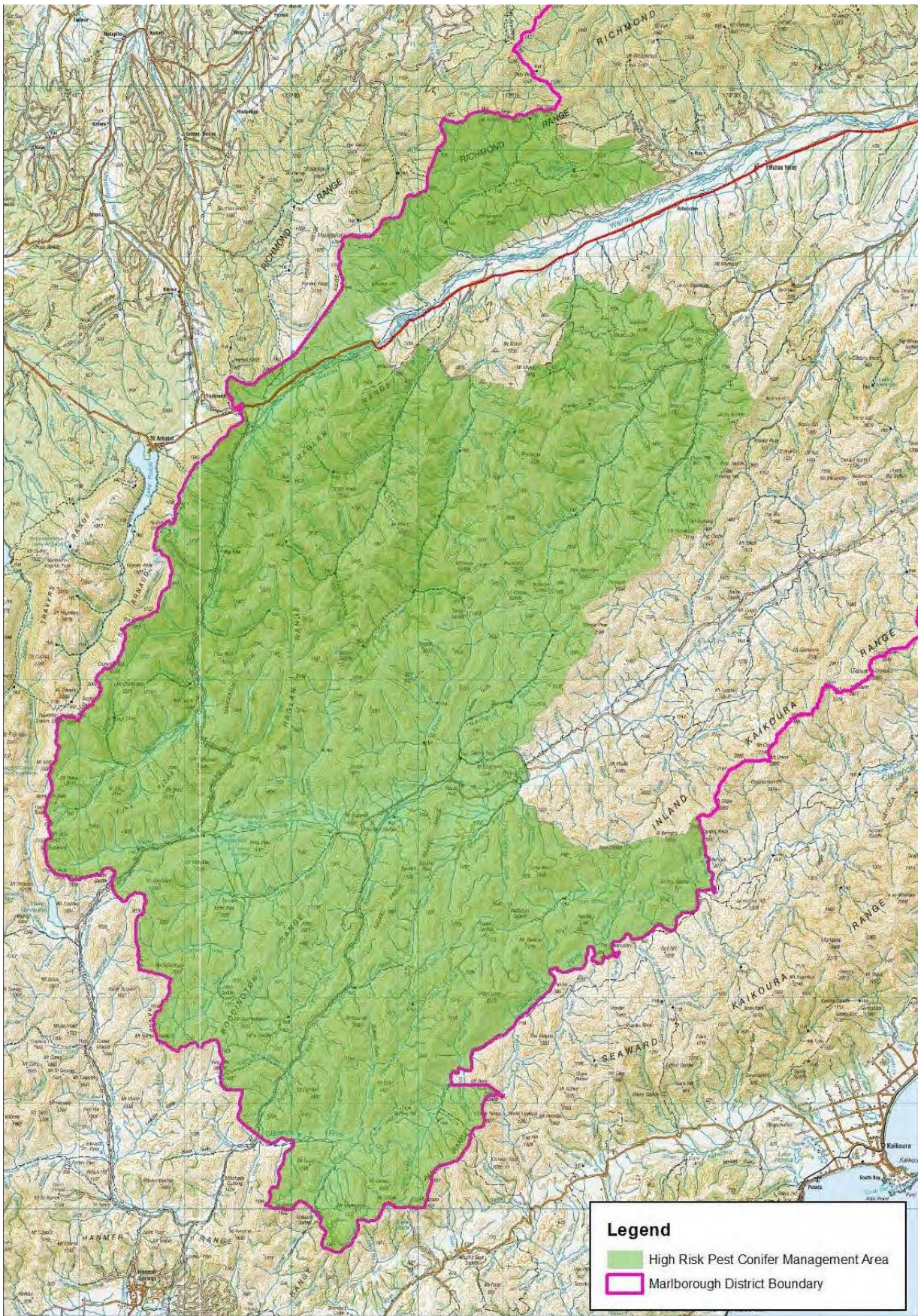
The purpose of Rule 5.22.2.1 is in accordance with section 73(5)(h) in that occupiers of land within areas that have been subject to operations to destroy pest conifers are required to take specified actions to prevent the pest re-establishing on that land.

The purpose of Rule 5.22.2.2 is in accordance with section 73(5)(h) in that occupiers of land that have the high-risk species of pest conifers present, are required to take specified actions to destroy those pest conifers, should they occur outside of the High Risk Pest Conifer Management Area.

The purpose of Rule 5.22.2.3 is in accordance with section 73(5)(h) in that occupiers of land adjacent to areas that have been subject to control operations are required to take specified actions to prevent inaction on their property causing cross-boundary re-establishment of the pest on land that has been subject to control.

The purpose of Rule 5.22.2.4 is in accordance with section 73(5)(h) in that occupiers of land adjacent to areas that have been subject to control operations are required to take specified actions to prevent a pest agent on their property causing cross-boundary re-establishment of the pest on land that has been subject to control.

Council as the management agency will administer the rules.



Map 10: High Risk Pest Conifer Management Area

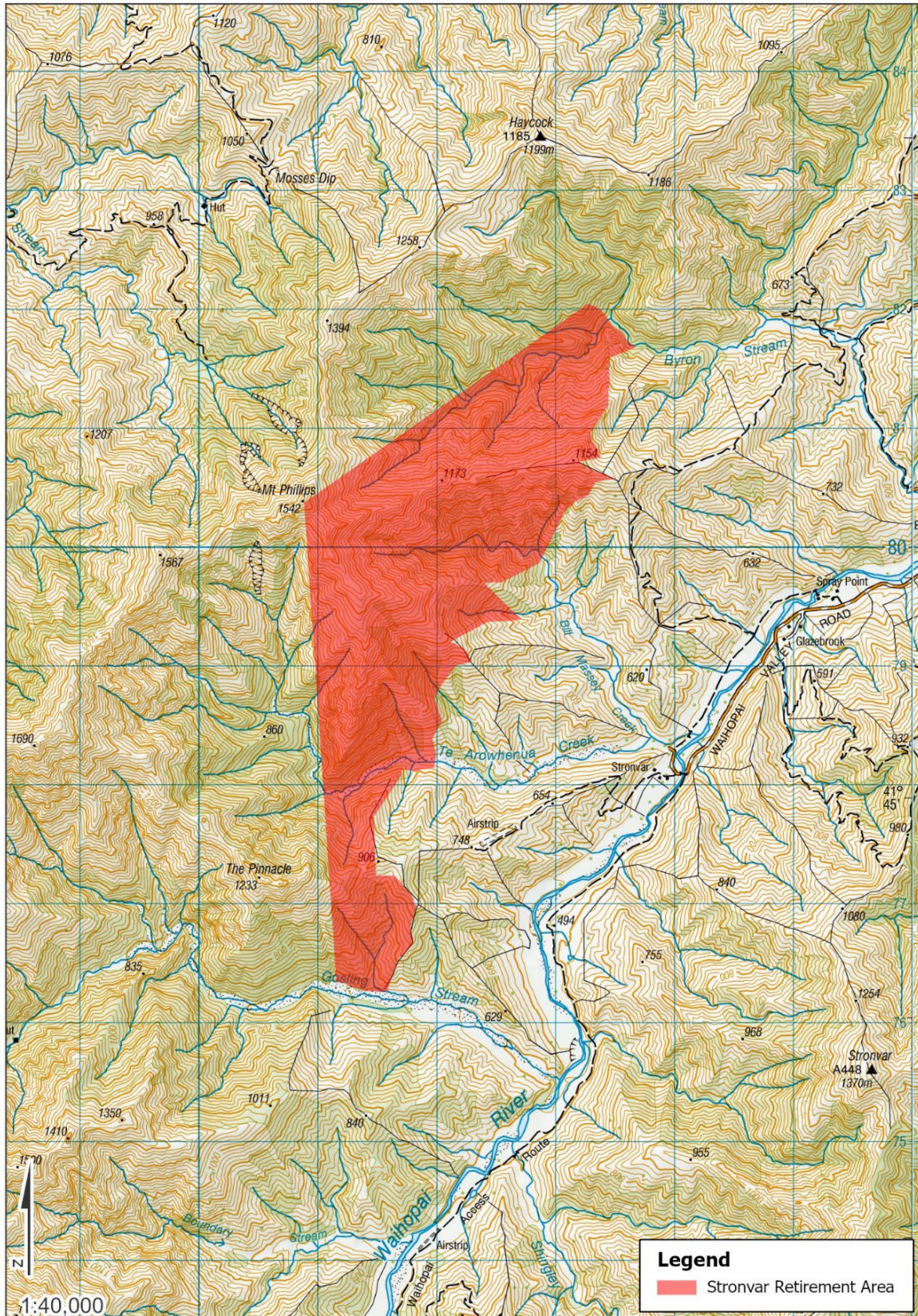
Description of Stronvar Retirement Area.

Location of the site: Stronvar, Waihopai Valley Road.

Site description: See Map 10A below.

Legal description: Part Lot 2 Deposited Plan 565491 (being part of the land contained in Record of Title 1010126).

Values being protected: Biodiversity; Soil Resources.



Map 10A: Stronvar Retirement Area: Site-led Programme