



Annual General Meeting November 2011

CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT

INTRODUCTION

This year has been a relatively 'lean' one for funding and as a result, we were only able to complete a small area of control.

The work on the highest priority areas continued with some significant take-off sites completed.

Some areas have been sprayed with various chemical combinations and densities to determine the optimum level of aerial control. We have also done some trials with ground basal-bark spraying to determine their effectiveness and costs.

In conjunction with this commercial control effort there has been the excellent work done by the various volunteer groups to clear the outlying and lightly infested areas of wildings.

Preparations for work on the Broad Stream unique grasshopper habitat have slowly been developed ready for a major push during this coming summer. Some of the large D. fir trees in the area were chemically poisoned which has proved to be effective.

Along with the field operations there has been an underlying administrative cadre that have continually kept the wheels turning – paying accounts, keeping records, organising volunteer groups, developing further funding submissions and monitoring overall progress.

Dean Turner from DOC has produced a very comprehensive report of this year's control operations. Some of the following information has been extracted from his report. His full report is on the WELRA website.

WELRA acknowledges the valuable financial contributions from:



Department of
Conservation
To Papa Atarua

CONTROL METHODS

A combination of chainsaw, basal bark spraying, hand tool and hand pulling techniques were used to control trees on Flock Hill Station. A helicopter was used to access remote parts of the blocks high up the slope, and to position bulk supplies of fuel and equipment.

Basal bark spraying is the application of chemical directly onto the trunk of the tree. The chemical penetrates the bark with the assistance of an oil based carrying agent. This technique is very quick in the right situation and has recently been developed. It is suitable for trees up to 15 centimetres in diameter and can be used year round as long as the tree is dry.

FUNDING

There were three sources of funding utilised this year. The Environmental Enhancement Fund provided a grant of \$7,449.47 (+GST, \$8,566.89 including GST). This money was provided to protect shrub land.

A grant of \$8,500.00 (+GST) was provided by Ecan Resource Care group to compliment work already done by volunteers.

Ecan provided \$20,000.00 (+GST) towards work this year but was increased to \$23,803.27 to allow for some helicopter time and for the contractors to complete a full day's work at the end of the contract.

Several sources of funding were not utilised this year such as funding for Broad Stream and funding from the Pacific Conservation and Development Trust. Part of the reason is WELRA work did not commence this season until late May. The other part of the reason is chemical control techniques should be available in late spring 2011 that will create large efficiencies – therefore allowing more work to be done with the same amount of money.

The Department of Conservation provided, free of charge, the management of operations this season. In excess of 80 hours was committed to the management of operations this year.

SUMMARY OF WORK DONE

Work started far too late in the season this year for a number of reasons. This necessitated some funded work to be put on hold until next year. The work that was completed went well given the issues with access (wet tracks were unable to be driven on). The work that was completed was either done within the requirements of the terms of the funding or was completed in strategically important parts of Flock Hill Station.

The new basal bark spraying method was faster than either hand tool or chainsaw cutting and the contractors preferred it as a control method. Trees sprayed with this method, this late in the season, take a long time to die.

For the \$39,700 available funds, a total of 107 hectares were covered at an average of about \$370 per hectare. This is a good return for the money spent.

VOLUNTEERS

Volunteer groups such as tramping club members, conservation volunteers, Ecoquest, community groups, school groups, 4wd clubs and individuals continue to make inroads into the outlying lighter density areas of the infected area.

Non-powered hand tools such as loppers, jacksaws, pruning saws and axes are the weapons of choice for these groups.

FUNDING APPLICATIONS

Funding for the new season is actively being sought. Some applications have not succeeded for various reasons so other potential sources of funds have been pursued as well. The initial outcomes have been very encouraging and we anticipate considerable funds will be available for the next two years.

EXECUTIVE MEETINGS

The current Executive comprises: - Maree Goldring (Secretary), Nick Ledgard, David Hewson, James Hoban, Pete Wakefield and Ray Goldring (Chair). A permanent invitation to attend meetings has been extended to DOC staff and Chris Stewart has taken this opportunity to attend.

Bob Leonard resigned from the Committee to go to Wellington after his house here in Christchurch was damaged during the quakes. Bob was a valued member of WELRA and his contributions were really appreciated. We wish him well for his future endeavours.

Executive meetings this year have been infrequent. Some have been carried out through the email system as a means of expediting a particular issue at short notice without the need to have a full face-to-face meeting.

APPRECIATION

For this year's financial contributions I would like to pass our appreciation on to:-

- **ENVIRONMENT CANTERBURY**
- **PACIFIC CONSERVATION & DEVELOPMENT TRUST**
- **FLOCK HILL HOLDINGS**

for their generous financial support in helping the Alliance to achieve its goal of controlling and eventually eliminating wilding pines from the upper Waimakariri basin.

We continue to acknowledge the valuable contributions of those funders and volunteers who have given money and effort during the last three years of wilding control.

I would also like to acknowledge the valuable contribution that ECAN staff, particularly David Hewson, James Hoban and Donna Woodley, have rendered towards the smooth-running of the many logistical and administrative tasks required to achieve effective outcomes for the Alliance.

Our thanks also to Dean Turner of DOC and Errol Barnes from ECAN for their good work in supervising the contractors to achieve the optimum “value” for the available funds.

I wish to pass on our appreciation to DOC and Flock Hill Station for their contributions towards advancing the efforts for the eradication of the wildings.

I also acknowledge the valuable and effective practical eradication work undertaken by the many volunteers who work long, hard hours using a variety of methods to clear the land of the wilding trees. The visual effect from SH 73 between the cleared and un-cleared areas is very impressive.

Finally – I would like to give special thanks to the members of the Executive for their support and constructive input during the deliberations over the various issues we have been dealing with to achieve our aims and objectives.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ray Goldring', written in a cursive style.

Ray Goldring NZSSM
CHAIRPERSON