

Summary of Prescribed Burning Field Trip, 21 November 2019

On 21 November, a group of about 25 people all gathered in 4WDs at Hamish Roxburgh's station for a tour and discussion about prescribed burns of wilding pines. Hamish's station is in North Canterbury in the Amuri Range, and he has been using burning as a way to control wildings for over 7 years now. The group of us on the field trip were from a variety of organisations: landowners, Fire and Emergency NZ, Federated Farmers, MPI, DOC, LINZ, Scion, Manaaki Whenua Landcare Research, and the NZ Wilding Conifer Group. We were curious to learn about Hamish's methods and see the results of past burns.



We started the field trip by going to see a hillside which Hamish had burned in 2012. I was amazed to see both pasture and some natives thriving. Exotic grasses intermingled with tussocks and even some flaxes and cabbage trees. And best of all, no wildings to be seen.

Hamish described his methods to us: first he sprays a low dosage of metsulfuron over the wilding trees in autumn, then he burns in early spring when it is wet. He said he has never had a fire escape and additionally is very successful at

controlling wildings. The areas where he has burned were mostly *Pinus nigra* (Corsican pine) invasions at moderate densities.

We stopped for lunch overlooking a series of sites which Hamish had burned earlier this year, back in 2016, in 2017, and in 2018. It was useful to see the progression and how quickly grasses and natives grew back. This progress demonstrated both successful pasture management and wilding control using prescribed fires.

Feeling energised after lunch, we carried up the road to see areas which Hamish has not burned yet. Wildings were doing well, although with Hamish's successful burning methods, hopefully not for long!



All in all, it was a great day to see where Hamish has burned and the success of it. We are not sure whether burning will be adopted as a method used by the National Programme, and it isn't a method that is suitable everywhere. However, it was great to generate discussions about where fire could be a suitable tool and foster potential collaborations.

Outcomes: Tess and Rowan will organise a more detailed workshop about burning and next steps for this to be a potential control technique in 2020; Scion will do a small experimental burn in the Mackenzie in autumn 2020 as part of their Extreme Fire Research; and the National Programme will explore the possibility of doing a small trial burn (late 2020 is the earliest this would happen).

