



## WILDING CONIFERS ON THEIR WAY OUT

Nelson Nature's ongoing control of wilding conifers in the Dun Mountain mineral belt, and the native forest in the Maitai and Roding Water Reserves, is showing results. By the end of June, Council will have worked through most of the dense infestations impacting the mineral belt.

The control methods used are designed to cause minimum disruption to the surrounding native trees, with the weed species slowly breaking down where they grow. The photos show the rust coloured dead conifers surrounded by native vegetation.

Following completion, we'll undertake an aerial survey to identify any missed mature conifers and control any remaining trees.

Along with Council's retirement of its Douglas fir plantations, this control work will remove the main sources of seed for re-infestation of the mineral belt.

The Dun Mountain mineral belt is unique for its high mineral content rocks and soils and its harsh climate.

This nationally important ecosystem is home to a small but highly specialised population of plants and animals.

Wilding conifers have the potential to severely impact this unique ecosystem by shading out the low growing vegetation and permanently changing the soil chemistry.



## PROTECTING OUR MINERAL BELT FROM WEEDS

Along with wilding conifers, gorse and Spanish heath are the main weed threats to the mineral belt ecosystem.

Both species have the potential to form dense stands and shade out the special plants that belong there.

Over the summer, Nelson Nature contractors have surveyed a large proportion of the mineral belt for these three weeds, and work to control the scattered infestations found, and prevent any further spread, will get underway next spring.

## WORKING TOGETHER TO PROTECT OUR COASTAL SPECIES

Nelson Nature is working with a number of community partners to protect one of our vulnerable coastal species, banded rail. Banded rail are secretive birds that live in the saltmarsh on the edges of estuaries. In the South Island, they are only found in Nelson-Marlborough, including the Waimea Estuary.

Nelson Nature is supporting Forest and Bird to restore the vegetation at the mouth of Orphanage Stream, which will provide important habitat for banded rail and other coastal edge species. At the same time, we are working with Natureland and Battle for the Banded Rail to trap predators along the edge of the Waimea Estuary to protect banded rail from introduced pests like stoats and rats. A great example of community collaboration!



Roger and Lena from Natureland installing traps along Whakatu Drive to protect Banded Rail.

## HELP RESTORE HABITAT FOR BANDED RAIL

Saturday 14 and Sunday 15 July 2018, 9am – 4pm

Join this community planting day at the Orphanage Stream delta and help restore a coastal habitat in Nelson City.

Please bring a spade if you have one and wear solid footwear and gloves.

Contact Julie for more information on 03 545 0989.

This community event is organised by Forest and Bird and supported by Nelson City Council's Nelson Nature programme.



## WHAT CAN YOU DO TO HELP?

Spanish heath and gorse have small seeds that are spread by wind, soil, water and human activity.

If you are a tramper or a mountain biker, you can help reduce the spread of weeds by ensuring your bike tyres, boots and clothing are free from mud and seeds before heading in to the trails in the mineral belt, e.g. Coppermine Trail, Dun Mountain and Rocks Hut trails.

If you want to help look after our back country while you are out there, take a pocket knife with a saw and cut down any wilding conifer you pass. Cut the conifer at the base, but make sure you remove any green needles and branches from the stump otherwise it will re-grow. If the conifer is small, you can pull it out entirely and shake the soil from the roots.

