

Before the Queenstown Lakes District Council Hearing Panel

Under the Resource Management Act 1991

In the matter of the renotification of two submissions on Stage 1 of the Queenstown Lakes Proposed District Plan concerning the zoning of land at Arthur's Point by Gertrude's Saddlery Limited and Larchmont Enterprises Limited

Summary of evidence of Kelvin Lloyd on behalf of Gertrude's Saddlery Limited and Larchmont Enterprises Limited

1 February 2023

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Introduction

- 1 My full name is Kelvin Michael Lloyd. I am a Senior Principal Ecologist at Wildland Consultants Ltd. My qualifications and experience are set out in my evidence in chief.

Summary of evidence

- 2 The site is located in the Shotover Ecological District, within the Lakes Ecological Region. It has been dominated by self-seeded wilding conifers since the 1970s. The climate comprises hot summers, cold winters, and a relatively dry climate in the rainshadow of the Main Divide, with annual rainfall ranging from 650-1,600 millimetres per annum.¹ Conservation land wraps around the western, southern, and eastern margins of the site, while the existing / developed Arthurs Point urban area bounds the site to the north. The Conservation Area land to the south is dominated by exotic conifers. A draft ecological restoration plan recently developed for the Arthurs Point area proposed actions for this area including felling the exotic conifers, replanting the area with indigenous tree species, and controlling weeds².
- 3 The recently-cleared vegetation on the Site comprised mostly of self-seeded larch (*Larix decidua*); a tall deciduous conifer that is associated with long-distance spread. No indigenous vegetation is present, although some shade-tolerant indigenous plants (such as shield fern) may be present in the forest understorey. The forest may have provided limited habitat for common indigenous forest birds, particularly insectivorous species such as pipihi/silvereye (*Zosterops lateralis*), riroriro/grey warbler (*Gerygone igata*), and piwakawaka/fantail (*Rhipidura fuliginosa*) but it has not been identified as an important habitat for indigenous forest birds³. The site therefore had very low ecological value under its previous wilding tree cover, and has even lower ecological value following the clearance of these trees.

¹ McEwen M. 1987: Ecological regions and districts of New Zealand. New Zealand Biological Resources Centre Publication No 5, Part 4. Department of Conservation, Wellington.

² Wildland Consultants 2022: Ecological restoration plan for Arthurs Point, Queenstown. *Wildland Consultants Ltd Contract Report No. 6198*. Prepared for Keeping Arthurs Point's Original Wildlife and the Arthurs Point Community Association.

³ Wildland Consultants 2020: Mapping of significant habitats for indigenous fauna in terrestrial, freshwater, and marine ecosystems in Otago Region. *Wildland Consultants Contract Report No. 5015b*. Prepared for Otago Regional Council.

- 4 Removal of wilding conifers from the proposed rezoning area has been a very positive ecological effect, as it now enables prioritisation of clearance of wilding conifers from the adjacent conservation land, and reduces the size of the wilding seed source in the local area, which is vulnerable to wilding conifer spread.
- 5 Follow-up control will need to be undertaken to address regeneration of wilding conifers from seed that is exposed to light. In the absence of such control, the site would become re-infested with wilding conifers and other weeds.
- 6 I support the need for ongoing management controls to ensure that follow-up control of regenerating conifers and any invading sycamore is adequately undertaken over the Site.
- 7 The rezoning provisions proposed by the Submitters provide for the future registration of instruments binding lot owners to maintain native plantings and undertake pest plant control. This should result in permanent suppression of wilding conifers and any invading sycamore on the site. The planting of taller indigenous trees will help to suppress wilding conifer regeneration.
- 8 The revegetation areas proposed over the Site will enhance nature conservation values, and provide an opportunity to connect with any future revegetation of the adjacent Conservation Area, once wilding conifers have also been cleared from that land.
- 9 If the Site was not rezoned for residential/revegetation, and not used for primary production, reinvasion of wilding and pest plant species would occur in the absence of ongoing active pest management of the land.
- 10 Overall I consider the rezoning proposal will result in a net conservation benefit for the Site and its surrounding environment given:
 - (a) The scale of native revegetation proposed to be undertaken at the stage of subdivision and maintained in perpetuity;
 - (b) The removal of wilding conifers over the Site reduces the risk of the wilding conifer regeneration, and will promote wilding clearance on adjacent land;
 - (c) Areas of indigenous revegetation over the Site will provide a future opportunity to connect with, and enhance, conservation benefits for any future revegetation on the adjacent Conservation Area.

Kelvin Lloyd