

# Annual Report 2019



I'm pleased to present the fifteenth Annual Report of the Trust. It is a tribute to those who established and those who continue to support the Trust that we have undertaken work during this time to protect the special natural environment of the Lake Ōhau basin.

We are starting a new decade and it brings with it a heightened awareness of the challenges that we face, particularly in relation to climate change. We face an uncertain future, where politicians and community leaders need to make decisive long-term decisions so our future generations inherit an earth that can still support human life. As individuals and through groups like the Trust, we also need to make our personal decisions with a keen sense of what our choices mean for our communities, both local and global. There is plenty of advice out there about what you can do, I encourage you to commit to actions that will benefit us all.

The Trust's work helps by ensuring healthy ecosystems, through predator trapping, removing plant pests such as wilding trees and replanting area in trees. Providing information so people, both locals and visitors understand our natural environment and the pressures it faces, is also important.

Highlights of our year that ended on 30 September 2019 were:

- Getting our gear container on site, kitted out inside and landscaping/planting around it – special thanks to Grant and Warren for all their work to achieve this.
- Meeting in Twizel with the Minister of Conservation, Hon Eugene Sage, to tell her about the Trust's work and discuss how agencies/organisations working together will deliver positive change for the natural environment in the Mackenzie basin.
- Undertaking 11 months of possum trapping – 78 possums trapped, with the numbers declining significantly during the year to around 3 possums being trapped each month. Thank you to our dedicated possum trapping crew.
- Planting 127 beech trees along the shores of Lake Ōhau over the Easter 2019 weekend – with the largest number of volunteers doing the planting that we have ever had at a work session.
- Contractors delivering the cotoneaster control work that we received grants from DOC and ECan to carry out. We really appreciate the work that Peter Willemse at DOC does to coordinate this work and make the best use of the funds that are available.
- Held 5 work sessions, where 68 volunteers did 141 hours of work. We know that many of the volunteers continue to do work in their own time and we appreciate these efforts. Overall, our volunteer hours by the Trustees, possum trappers and work sessions was 977 hours. That is a significant contribution and we are very grateful for our volunteers willingly undertaking the work.

The Trustees were also involved in the push for more funding for wilding tree control and the various initiatives to raise the profile of this critical environmental issue. A very



compelling video made by ECan is available on Youtube - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=40yoEXnp4xQ&feature=youtu.be>

The video clearly shows what we are faced with and what we need to do. The Trust continues to be vigilant about keeping wilding trees in control, but we do face a challenge when significant numbers of mature trees on private property remain, and provide a continued seed source for wildings.

So what next for the Trust? In the 2019/20 year we plan to (see our work programme):

- Install our information sign about mistletoe along the A20 cycle trail
- Complete our cotoneaster control work
- Install new traps targeting mustelids, i.e. stoats and ferrets along our possum trapping lines and up into the sub-alpine areas of Parsons, Sawyers and Freehold creeks
- Extend our possum traps to the upper forests in Parsons, Sawyers and Freehold creeks
- Work with DOC, ECan and others to develop a plan to enhance the reserve around Lake Middleton and continue to provide information about the grebes
- Plant 112 beech trees along the shores of Lake Ōhau at Easter and Queens Birthday weekend - with the help of volunteers and guests attending a wedding!

The Trust again received significant financial support during the year from PureTrails NZ. We really appreciate this and it has enabled us to undertake projects such as the A20 information sign and the installation of new predator traps. We appreciate the continued generous support we received from Bunnings in Dunedin. The Trust is in a healthy financial situation.

The Trust delivers on-the-ground activities and the generous donations it receives enables these rewarding hands-on endeavours to continue. It is worth clarifying that, conversely, the Trust does not engage in advocacy work and has not and would not contribute its funds to the advocacy or legal work undertaken by other organisations. In a small community people have opportunities to support a variety of causes, therefore certainty about where their efforts and donations are being applied is important.

We appreciate the support we have received from the DOC Twizel staff, particularly Ursula Paul, Kevin Donoghue and Dean Nelson, and from Rob Carlson-Ilse at ECan (we wish Rob well in his new position with DOC in Geraldine).

At this AGM, we farewell two of our Trustees, Grant Eames, who has been a Trustee for eight years, 3 of them as Chairperson and Stacey Burnett, who has been a Trustee for two years. Thank you for your contribution to the Trust and we'll acknowledge them later during the AGM.

I feel privileged to have worked with my fellow Trustees, Warren, Katrina and Grant during this year. Thank you for our support and sharing your time, skills and knowledge.



Vivienne Smith-Campbell

Chairperson, The Ōhau Conservation Trust