



Newsletter 11 ♦ March 2013 ♦ ISSN 1178-4393

From the Chair

Remember Blacktop? Everyone who lived in or near Riverlea in 2007 will recall how the community came together to oppose Blacktop Construction's resource consent application to operate an asphalt plant on Mexted Place, off Riverlea Road.

There was a strong sense of community and passion for protecting our local environment. It was also expensive and time-consuming, but we got the outcome we wanted when Blacktop withdrew its application just before the deciding hearing went ahead.

One of this society's main aims is to have local planning rules reflect this area's special nature, and protect Riverlea from heavy industry, particularly noxious and offensive activity.

The city's Proposed District Plan is now out. Disappointingly, it gives the Riverlea industrial area no special protection (although some general industrial zone regulations have been tightened).

But it's only a proposed plan! Before it becomes operative, we can do a good deal to change it.

This community can again come together to make sure the area is properly protected, once and for all.

Finally, let's celebrate what we already have in Riverlea Road. I know that many of you, like me, find those businesses useful to have nearby, and support them whenever possible.

Andrea Graves, Chairperson

Protecting Riverlea Road

On 29 March, submissions to the proposed district plan close. These submissions do get read and sometimes result in plan changes. If you would like the rules changed for the Riverlea industrial area (i.e. Riverlea Road and Mexted Place, the small cul-de-sac coming off it), please make a submission! Our voice will be louder if community members and business owners make their own submissions in addition to the society's submission. Here's how and why to do it.

Why: Because we don't want another attempt by heavy, noxious or offensive industry to establish there. This is the best way to repel such attempts.

This is a real threat, because there is land in the area that looks ready for development or as if it may be further developed in future.

It's also an opportunity to preserve the present

nature of the Riverlea industrial area. Its mix of mostly light and service industrial activity, useful retail outlets, residential homes and flats over workshops is unique in Hamilton. Many Riverlea business owners value the present mix, and would welcome the arrival of complementary businesses.



This was almost 'our' asphalt plant.

However, according to the proposed district plan, any industrial activity, whether heavy or light, will be able to set up shop there.

We want Riverlea to be treated differently from the other industrial areas in these main ways:

- heavy industry to require a resource consent
- noxious or offensive activity, or activity requiring an air discharge consent, to be categorised as 'non complying'.

For the society's submission we have engaged planners Bloxam, Burnett and Olliver (BBO), and are fortunate to have the assistance of Dr Joan Forret, local resident and environmental lawyer with Harkness Henry.

How: We have started a blog website at www.riverleaenvironmentsociety.blogspot.co.nz

It will have information and guidance to help you, including a pre-prepared submission you can print, fill out your name etc and sign, plus guidance on how to make your own unique submission.

New sign

Last year we created and funded the new sign at the Malcolm Street end of the Hammond Bush boardwalk with Hamilton City Council (HCC) to enhance appreciation of our special local patch of bush.



The sign shows a rare swamp maire tree, and plants and animals that interact to form Hammond Park's ecosystem. The steel arch over the sign represents the Waikato River.

We hope you enjoy the sign's look and content. Much credit goes to local artist Adrienne Grant, whose creative

talents were poured into the project, and Wiremu Puke of Ngati Wairere who advised on the area's rich and fascinating Maori history.

Our monetary contribution towards the sign came from funds passed to us by HEIRS (Hamilton Environmental Improvement in the Riverlea Suburb), HCC's Envirofund and RAFT (River Action Focus Team).

The sign reads "Hammond Park" instead of "Hammond Bush" to avoid confusion with a more official Hammond Bush nearby.

Theft of bat monitor

In spring both of our bat monitors were stolen from a letterbox on Malcolm Street. One was later found, fully functioning, in bushes near the horse paddocks. The other has not been found.

They were not insured, and had been funded by HCC's Envirofund. Our remaining monitor can be borrowed from Robert Welch, ph 858 2314, raswelch@outlook.com.

Few pests, more tui?

Our baiting programme in Hammond Park – thanks to resident Terry Hume - appears to be reducing rats and possums that threaten native bird life.

After valuable advice from Landcare Research and Waikato Regional Council (WRC), the society stepped up its baiting programme last June. This involved restocking and monitoring 24 bait boxes in the bush between the Malcolm St end of the walkway and Riverlea Rd every 2-3 weeks. At first about 40% of the boxes had baits taken. By the bird nesting period in September, bait take had dropped to 20%, and has remained this way until now.

WRC supports this programme with rodent counts using tracking tunnels, and Landcare has carried out native bird counts, to be reported in a later newsletter.

Possums and particularly rats have devastating effects on native birds. They cannot be eradicated because they sneak in from adjacent urban and riverbank habitat, but early indications are that our

baiting is controlling them, and that native birds such as tui are returning in numbers to Hammond Park.

Web expert needed

Can you help us? Our website needs help, and we could pay someone to do it, but we are a voluntary organisation and would prefer to keep the money for vital projects. If you can help, please email us.

Your email address

We would like to send you regular emails about our monthly working bees (the next of which is on 23 March) and to contact you by email for other reasons when we need to. If you are not already receiving our emails, and would like to, please send your email address to riverlea.soc@gmail.com.

Money

We have been safeguarding donated funds for a time such as this; we need to pay for advice and assistance to obtain planning rule changes for the Riverlea industrial area.

We can't tell yet how much we will require, or how long the process will take, but due to your generosity and our stewardship of the funds, we have no urgent need. However, should the need arise, we will once again have to rely on the goodwill of the community to supply the funds necessary to properly protect the Riverlea area.

I would like to renew/add my financial support to the Riverlea Environment Society Inc. with a tax-deductible donation.

 Name(s)

 Address

 Phone

 email

 Signature

Donation per household:	\$20	[]
	\$40	[]
	\$__	[]
Receipt required?		[]

Thank you for your support