



RIVERLEA

environment society

Newsletter 24
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From the Chair

Developments this year presage some major changes in Riverlea with the construction of a new Waikato River crossing, housing development at Peacocke and planning for the Te Awa River Ride through Hammond Park. RESI has actively engaged on these issues in a bid to ensure any ecological damage is minimised and mitigated. In our next newsletter we will expand on how these developments will impact our suburb and seek donations to cover the costs involved. In the meantime we are taking a short break. We thank all our friends, helpers, and volunteers for your continued and hugely appreciated support throughout the year, and wish everybody a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year! **Allan Pearson**

Amberfield Development at Peacockes

Since our last update, RESI has put an enormous amount of time and money into submitting to the Hamilton City Council (HCC) resource consent hearing for this proposal. We were assisted by Professor Bruce Clarkson (ecologist), Dr Rebecca Stirnemann (bat ecologist), Phil Lang (barrister) and Kirsty Graveling (planner).

On 1 November, the panel of Commissioners issued two resource consents to Weston Lea Ltd (the developer). They include multiple conditions to protect indigenous flora and fauna, especially the long-tailed bat, many of which we worked hard to achieve – not least the substantial reserve which will be created on the riverbank opposite Hammond Park and strict limits on lighting. The full document can be viewed at www.hcc.govt.nz/amberfield (the last item); consent conditions 75–150 and 163 are of particular interest.

Both the developer and the Director General of Conservation have since appealed the decision to the Environment Court. RESI is considering its position to be a party to the Court hearing.

Morepork Time in Hammond Park!

This time last year was when moreporks (ruru) were most outspoken in Hammond Park. We know this due to automatic hourly ruru recordings that are being captured in Hammond Park (see graph). This is part of 'The Cacophony Project' which is developing technologies to:

- Lure invasive predators with sound and light
- Observe predators using a thermal camera
- Identify predators automatically using machine learning algorithms
- Eliminate positively identified predators
- Monitor bird song over time to measure the impact.

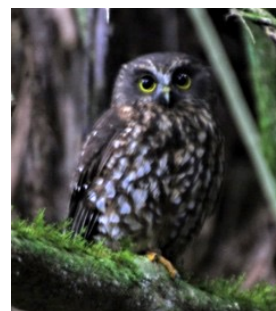
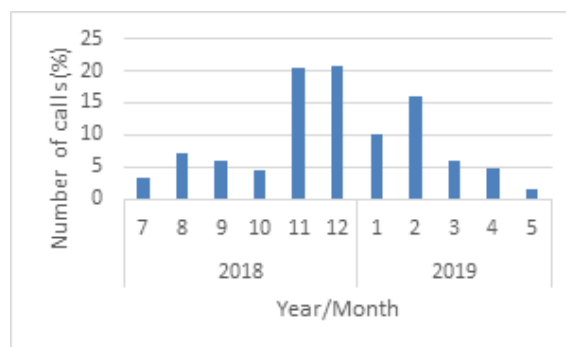


Photo: Lindsay Cumberpatch



Hammond Park has been the main testing location for developing the 'Bird Monitor' which is basically a solar-powered mobile phone app and microphone that uploads audio recordings to the 'cloud'. Machine learning, a sub-type of artificial intelligence, is being developed to automatically count bird calls (not just morepork) to create a 'cacophony index' across New Zealand. Find out more at cacophony.org.nz or email Dr Tim Hunt: tim.hunt@wintec.ac.nz

Hammond Park Te Awa River Ride

In the July 2018 newsletter, we outlined our initial concerns regarding the proposal for Te Awa River ride to pass through Hammond Park. Since then we have met and corresponded with HCC and Te Awa Trust.

Our aim has been to ensure adequate protection of Hammond Bush's fragile ecosystem, and strong safeguards for all users of the existing boardwalk. Our final position letter went to the HCC CEO and Te Awa Trust in October and provides for:

- No widening or realignment of the existing boardwalk
- Compulsory cyclists' dismount for the full length of the boardwalk
- A well sign-posted alternative on-road route through Riverlea suburb for cyclists who do not wish to dismount
- Consultation on information signage and dismount structures
- RESI involvement in regular reviews of the usage and any problems with the Te Awa River Ride.
- No artificial lighting in Hammond Park and the Mangaonua Gully to avoid adverse effects on the long-tailed bat.

One important associated development has been the success of the Te Awa River Ride in securing \$173,000 from the Waikato River Authority to restore native vegetation along the cycleway including the Mangaonua River mouth. This will effectively extend Hammond Park to the south and will help sustain the ecology of the area in conjunction with the proposed cross-river planting at Amberfield.

Climate Action Day in Riverlea

Last week our regular weekday volunteers, clearing *Trandescantia* from Hammond Park, were joined by enthusiastic secondary school students from around Hamilton as part of Climate Action Day. Together we continued to clear the floor of the Hudson Street Gully of this smothering weed which was commenced by a contingent of staff from NIWA during a working bee in the week prior. Thank you to these volunteers; many hands make a massive difference.

New-Look RESI Website

Mike Forrett of iConcept has done a great job in modernising the look and feel of our website. For example, check it out on your cell phone at www.resi.org.nz. In the future we plan to add new pages about the history of Riverlea, its people, flora and fauna. So let us have your ideas.



Our local kuia, Tania Macdonald, welcoming those gathered for the Climate Action Day working bee to Te Ngahere o Ngā Tūpuna o Neherā (Hammond Bush).



Some of the young people and regular volunteers enjoying a cuppa and korero together following the Climate Action Day working bee (organiser Eilidh Huggan left-hand side).

Gully Restoration in Riverlea

In November, the second annual Gully Tour of Riverlea was held. The tour visited four gully properties at various stages of restoration. It was a chance to discuss ideas, share knowledge and meet with neighbours. Paula Smith has already met with many of the riverbank/gully property owners and provided support on native plant restoration. If you would like advice on plant selection, pest plant clearance and animal pest control please contact her on conservation@resi.org.nz or 021 749892.

I would like to support the Riverlea Environment Society Inc. with a tax-deductible donation

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Name(s)	
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Suggested donation per household: \$40 per year, or any other amount of your choosing. *Our bank account is 03 1559 0110053 000. To donate online, please use your surname as the reference, and email us stating the amount, your name and address so we can issue a receipt. Thank you for your support.*