



RIVERLEA

environment society

Newsletter 25
August 2020
ISSN 1178-4393

From the Chair

A lot has happened since our last newsletter of December 2019. We survived the lockdown and, fingers crossed, will be free from covid-19 until science comes to the rescue. In the meantime we are lucky to live in a suburb with such a beautiful walk along the river. I'm sure the boardwalk has never had so much traffic or been appreciated by so many Riverlea families as during those long lockdown weeks.

Predator control, weeding and planting in Hammond Park has now resumed, assisted by our Community Co-ordinator, Paula Smith. There has been more good news from Hamilton City Council. A \$100,000 grant is to be allocated to five Hamilton community restoration groups, including the Riverlea Environment Society. A big shout out to our current councillors who are actively seeking to leverage the energy of community groups around the city to restore and maintain Hamilton's gully systems. RESI intends to use some of the money to employ contractors to thin exotic shrubs and trees close to the boardwalk that are currently restraining our ability to expand Hammond Bush to the west.

Allan Pearson

Amberfield

In 2019, RESI and many other Riverlea residents submitted to the resource consent hearings on the proposed 105 ha Peacocke subdivision across the Waikato River. As a result, the design was amended, with a wide reserve replacing the planned houses and road immediately opposite Hammond Park. While the Hearing Commissioners granted consent, they also imposed a series of conditions to permit the rare long-tailed bat to continue to live in the area. In other places, NZ bats have been deleted from the landscape by urbanization. As a species, the bats are only just clinging on to survival. Hammond Park is a well-known local hot spot for bats, and many of us will have enjoyed evening bat tours run there by the Waikato Museum.

The developer appealed to the Environment Court to remove or weaken some of the Commissioners' ecological conditions. Initially, RESI



Pekapeka (bat) making a guest appearance at the Amberfield Resource Consent hearing.

was relying on other groups to support the ecological conditions through the appeal. But we have reluctantly now become an active participant due to significant backtracking during the mediation process. The

Commissioners' conditions in our view represented the bare minimum if the long-tailed bats are to continue to live around Riverlea. Hence, RESI will represent the bats of Hammond Park in Court, with support from the Royal Forest & Bird Society and, in many aspects, from the Department of Conservation. We will keep you informed of developments.

Please join us for our 2020 AGM this month

Date: Wednesday 26 August

Time: 7–9 pm

Where: Riverlea Theatre lounge, 83 Riverlea Road

Bat expert Rebecca Stirnemann will give a presentation on 'Bats of Hamilton'.

Supper afterwards and a great opportunity to meet someone new from your local community.

RSVP by Mon 24 August to riverlea.soc@gmail.com

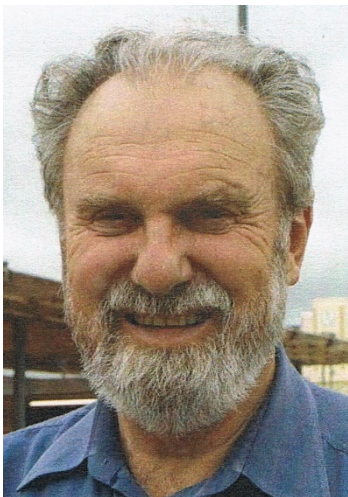
Pest Free Riverlea

Pest-free work continues, and we now have 170 traps across 94 properties in Riverlea. The breakdown is 18 T-Rex, 57 Victor and 69 Goodnature A24 traps, all for rats, and 26 Trapinator traps for possums. There are still some pest trapping 'gaps' within the suburb, and we are working to fill these.

A pest monitoring exercise in March showed an average of 15% incidence of rats across the three 20-tunnel monitoring lines in Hammond Park and across Riverlea. This compares with an average of 17% for 2019, 12% for 2018 and 20% for 2017. Please help us by recording your catches at The Urban Rat Project website, ratproject.org. The next monitoring exercise will be in early September.

A "thank you" evening out at Hammond Bush is planned for Riverlea trappers in September. This will include trapping tips, a walk with bat monitors, a visit to the glow worm site and a moth-spotting station. Should you require assistance with new or replacement traps, or general advice, please contact Paula Smith at conservation@resi.org.nz or 021 749 892. For further general information, see our updated website www.resi.org.nz.

Obituary: Robert Arthur Sandel Welch ONZM, PhD.



It is with great respect and sadness that RESI members pay tribute to committee member Dr Robert Welch (ONZM, PhD). He died on 12 July doing what he enjoyed so much – walking his beloved dog near his home close to Hammond Park and the Waikato River.

With a distinguished career in agricultural sciences and a deep love of nature and the environment, Robert was a foundation committee member of RESI and, for some years, was the Chair. He will be fondly remembered for his warm personality and many contributions, especially doing the 'hard yards' fostering liaison with tangata whenua and encouraging new people to get involved with our activities.

True to his values, Robert's body was given a natural burial in the area set aside for that purpose in the Hamilton Cemetery. In due course the whole area will be returned to native bush.

He is survived by his wife Alexandra, four children, and many mokopuna.

Request From RESI Coordinator

Are you keen to help with the restoration project at Hammond Park?

We have working bees you can join:

- Thursday - every second Thursday at 10.15 am
- Saturday - the last Saturday of each month at 10 am

We meet at the boardwalk entrance to Hammond Bush (Malcolm Street entrance).

Wear sturdy shoes/gumboots. Bring a drink bottle and gloves.

Contact Paula on conservation@resi.org.nz or 021 749 892 for more details

Would you like to be more involved with RESI?

We are looking for new volunteers for the RESI committee and/or our subcommittees at the 2020 AGM on August 26th. We are keen for anyone to join us who is willing to contribute his or her experience and local knowledge to a community organisation that has made a difference to this corner of Hamilton over the past 12 years. For example, anyone with web experience or who could spend an hour or two a week to help us with our email inbox would be especially welcome at the moment. Committee membership is not a big commitment and can be tailored to your availability. The committee has a monthly two-hour meeting with refreshments afterwards. We also have subcommittees that meet as required (Contracts, Pest-Free Riverlea, Communications, Liaison) which focus on specific local issues that may be of interest.

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

Name(s)

Address

Phone Email

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.