



### ***From the Chair***

Since our August newsletter, a lot has happened. Long-discussed developments in the Riverlea area have progressed, or are about to start, including major highway construction projects, and a shared cycling and walking path through Hammond Park.

The proposed Amberfield subdivision across the river goes to another Environment Court hearing on 16<sup>th</sup> June, this time in Hamilton and focused on specific conditions. These include car headlight screening and monitoring of ecological effects. RESI, Forest & Bird and the Department of Conservation continue to advocate for conditions that will give our local bat population the best chance of survival. If you are able to help cover our lawyer's and experts' fees, your assistance would be much appreciated; we are somewhat in the red.

Hammond Park has had a major clearance of exotic trees and weeds. This year the Hamilton City Council has consulted residents on a proposed toilet and upgrading of the playground in Hammond Park. Many Malcolm Street residents were opposed and we await the outcome of the review and detailed plans. A memorial seat for the late Dr Robert Welch, a dedicated environmentalist and RESI Committee member, has been installed.

### **Allan Pearson**

#### ***Please join us for our 2021 AGM in July***

**Date:** Thursday 8 July

**Time:** 7–9 pm

**Where:** Riverlea Theatre lounge, 83 Riverlea Road

**Presentation:** Guest speaker

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

RSVP by Sunday 4 July to

[Riverlea.soc@gmail.com](mailto:Riverlea.soc@gmail.com)

### ***Bart in the Park***



*Bart at work in Hammond Park removing an alder tree close to the boardwalk.*

Locals and visitors to Hammond Park may have recently heard a chainsaw at work. This would probably have been Bart of Bart's Tree Services and his colleague Tim, who undertook work beyond the of scope of our wonderful volunteers. This work was funded by Hamilton City Council and included two rounds of poisoning all pest plants and exotic trees on the steep bank between the boardwalk and the river, using specialized abseiling equipment where needed. They also removed alders close to the boardwalk at the Malcom Street end. Other poisoned trees have been marked with pink dazzle.

They also topped the tall alders within fall distance of the boardwalk. These trees have been plunge cut with chainsaws to create habitat for bats. You can see this from under the trees but not from the boardwalk, as most cuts are on the northern aspect of the poled trees. Bart and Tim commented that they were pleased to see forest fauna thriving in Hammond Park, particularly New Zealand trapdoor spiders and puriri moth larvae.

RESI is very grateful to Bart and Tim for their hard mahi, Hamilton City Council for the funding, and Ali McCullough HCC Planning Lead (Biodiversity and Parks/Parks and Recreation) for doing an excellent job coordinating the work.

### ***Te Awa River Ride Update***

The Te Awa River Ride is a shared walking/cycling path that will run between Hamilton and the Cambridge velodrome. The Te Awa Trust and Hamilton City Council are committed to routing it through Hammond Park. As many of you will be aware, RESI was approached about this, and for ecological reasons the committee strongly defended the boardwalk from being widened and straightened, which would have required significant bush clearance.

Because it is narrow and angular, the committee also opposed the boardwalk being ridden on for safety reasons. The compromise reached is that the boardwalk will be a dismount section of the ride.

The path's construction is well advanced between the Cambridge velodrome and the Tamahere side of the Mangaonua stream. The section between the Hamilton side of the stream and Geoffrey Place is delayed apart from tree-felling and is expected to begin in spring. Ecologists checked that no potential bat-roosting trees would be felled.



*Recently installed fencing at the southern end of Hammond Park, an indication that work on the section of Te Awa River Ride that will join it to the park is imminent.*

The committee is currently being consulted on signage for the dismount section and on interpretive panels for the park's ecology. It is also exploring how best to guide cyclists, who do not wish to dismount, to navigate Riverlea streets and easily re-join the River Ride.

While the River Ride will increase traffic through Hammond Park, it has already improved pedestrian access to Hamilton Gardens and will make the Mangaonua esplanade accessible for recreation and conservation. Te Awa Trust has won funding to restore and plant some of the esplanade, which has the potential to be high-quality forest, and there will be opportunities for community planting sessions.

### ***Pest Free Riverlea***

To date we have 175 traps across 97 properties in Riverlea. This comprises 21 T-Rex, 57 Victor and 70 Goodnature A24 traps, all for rats, and 27 Trapinator traps for possums. In recent months we have filled some of the trapping 'gap' areas in Riverlea, with more work to follow in consultation with Hamilton City Council.



*This possum was caught in Hammond Park recently, reinforcing how vital it is to maintain the trapping program.*

A pest monitoring exercise last September showed 15% incidence of rats across the three x 20 tunnel monitoring lines in Hammond Park and across the Riverlea suburb. This compares with 23% incidence of the original (pre-trap) monitoring of May 2017. The incidence of mustelids is small, but we remain vigilant for these lethal predators.

If you have a trap please record catches at the Urban Rat Project website, [ratproject.org](http://ratproject.org)

Should you require assistance with new or replacement traps, lures and gas for GNA24s, or simply general advice, please contact RESI Community Conservation Coordinator, Paula Smith [conservation@resi.org.nz](mailto:conservation@resi.org.nz), or phone 021 749 892. For further general information, please see our updated website [www.resi.org.nz](http://www.resi.org.nz)

## Would you like to be more involved with RESI?

We would like to welcome new members to the RESI committee and/or our subcommittees at the 2021 AGM on July 8. We are keen for anyone to join us who is willing to contribute their time, experience or local knowledge to a community organisation that has made a difference to this corner of Hamilton over the past 13 years. 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.

### ***Korero with our Kuia***

Tēnā koutou katoa.

When we were children our elders taught us how to make mōkihi (rafts) or waka (canoes) from the rāupo (bulrush reeds) which grow in abundance in the swampy parts of the awa (river) or roto (lake). Rāupo was an important plant for Māori people and had many uses such as thatching for rauwhare (roofing), walls (pakitara), whariki (mats), pollen for kai (food), poi making, rourou (baskets) and manu tukutuku (kite flying).

They showed us how to gather the rāupo and how to tie it in long thick bundles. When we had sufficient bundles they taught us how to shape the bundles into a mōkihi (raft) or waka (canoe) using harakeke (flax) to bind the bundles together. We would spend hours sailing in our mōkihi or waka until we heard the sound of our mothers calling us home "Hoki mai tamariki ma! Hoki mai ki te kainga!"

Every native tree and plant that you see growing in Te Ngahere o Ngā Tūpuna o Neherā (Hammond Bush) was used by our old people for their medicines, food, clothing, houses, palisades, roofs, mats, baskets, weapons, canoes, bowls and footwear, to name a few. Before taking the leaves or the bark from the rakau (trees) our elders would say a karakia (prayer):

### ***Whaktauāki ki nga rākau***

E nga rākau rangatira

O chiefly trees

E tū ana teitei i te wao nui o tane

Standing tall in the great forest of Tane

Ki te kore koutou

Without you

Mā wai e mihi te rā

Who will greet the sun

Na, Tania Macdonald, Tainui, Te Arawa, Tuhoē

### ***HCC'S Long Term Plan: Greening the City***

Hamilton City Council have just completed hearing and considering oral submissions for the LTP. There are five priorities including "A green city". The main focus of the Green City is gully restoration with an option of investing \$29 million to restore and improve the gullies, with less investment in the first five years and more in the last five years. This is HCC's preferred option. The second option is to speed things up by reversing the timing of the spend. The project includes improving access through paths and boardwalks, establishing a biodiversity monitoring and reporting programme, and supporting the community to care for and restore nature. RESI submitted in support of this proposal. If adopted, this could include work on the Mangaonua Gully behind Riverlea Road, and across the river on the Mangakotukutuku Gully. If current draft budgets are accepted, formal approval is scheduled by the end of June.

George Lusty, coordinator of the Friends of Mangaonua, spoke during the submission process about a number of planned and consented developments in gullies. There is little or no formal protection for Hamilton's gullies, which undermines restoration efforts and potentially poses a threat to wildlife living there. Worryingly, there does not seem to be any planned action by HCC to protect these gullies, which host most of the city's remaining vegetation.

### ***Hammond Happenings: Performances in the Park***

In December last year, the park was host to two performances. The Tongan brass band from St. John's Methodist Church, Hamilton East, made a brief visit to the park on the evening of Saturday 19 December. They played a selection of Christmas carols to a small but appreciative gathering.



A RESI-inspired contemporary dance created by University of Waikato doctoral candidate, Johanna Claus, was performed on the evening of Monday 21 December. This ‘summer solstice ritual’ aimed to gather people to pay attention to environmental concerns. It started in the Riverlea Road industrial area and concluded on the large grassed area at the Balfour Crescent end of the park at about 10 pm.

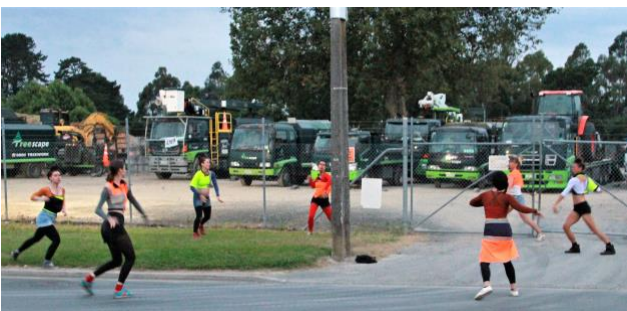


Photo: Lindsay Cumberpatch

**Request From RESI Coordinator**

Have you got time to help with the restoration project at Hammond Park?  
 You are welcome to join our working bees:  
 Thursday – every second Thursday at 10.15 am; and  
 Saturday – last Saturday of each month at 10 am.  
 We meet at the boardwalk entrance to Hammond Bush (Malcolm Street end).  
 Please wear sturdy shoes/gumboots, and bring a drink bottle and gardening gloves.

Contact Paula on [conservation@resi.org.nz](mailto:conservation@resi.org.nz) or 021 749892 for more details.

**Thank you**

Thank you to all our volunteers and supporters. Your continued support with every facet of RESI’s endeavours is hugely appreciated by the RESI committee and the Riverlea community. Where would we be without you! And likewise for our Conservation Coordinator, Paula Smith. Paula does a fantastic job and deserves special mention!

**Roading Concerns**

Some RESI Committee members have received expressions of concern from residents regarding the road alterations to the top (west) end of Howell Avenue to accommodate the Te Awa River Ride. The work is commencing this week but if you have any outstanding concerns or queries please let us know (email [riverlea.soc@gmail.com](mailto:riverlea.soc@gmail.com)) and these can be included in any communications RESI has with HCC regarding the contract as it proceeds.

**Donate to support our work**

*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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Address

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Phone Email

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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.*

***We are indebted (both financially and in gratitude) to our lawyer, Phil Lang, our planner, David Phizacklea, and our bat experts, Drs Rebecca Stirnemann and Ingrid Stirnemann. They have worked tirelessly in our legal challenge to have proper protection for bats implemented in the Amberfield subdivision in Peacocke, and the dispute continues. If you wish to donate to their fees, please include the word BATS in the reference field.***