



# RIVERLEA

environment society

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## From the Chair

A recent highlight for RESI was a visit to Hammond Park on 27<sup>th</sup> April by the former Minister for Conservation the Honourable Kiritapu Allan. During her visit she learnt about our resident bat population and the friction between urban expansion in southern Hamilton and the preservation of high value natural habitats. She was highly engaged and, I think, delighted to escape 'the office' for a walk along the boardwalk while discussing these issues with the residents, representatives of Project Echo and DOC staff who accompanied her.

This winter we will be planting 700 native plants in Hammond Park. While not a large planting programme in the scheme of things, what matters is continuity. Twenty-plus years of winter plantings probably represent in excess of 20,000 plants. Hammond Park is flourishing because of this work by residents, supported by the HCC Parks and Open Spaces Unit through Gerard Kelly.

Finally, the RESI AGM is being held on the 28<sup>th</sup> of July. Please show your support by coming along. I look forward to seeing you there.

## Allan Pearson



### Welcome Gabrielle

I am RESI's new Conservation Coordinator. I bought a gully property about four years ago on the Ranfurly gully in Fairfield. Wanting to learn how to restore it, I started volunteering at the AJ Seeley gully reserve with the guidance of Gerard Kelly (HCC). My role with RESI includes

liaising with residents to encourage the extension of Hammond Park's natural habitat and biodiversity. Connecting with nature plays an important part in both our mental and physical wellbeing.

RESI offers generous subsidies for the purchase of ecologically sourced native plants and of predator traps. We, along with Project Echo, established a new predator trap line in the park recently with great results.

If you would like to help with the ongoing nurturing of our precious resource, we welcome you to come along to the working bees held on the last Saturday of each month and every second Thursday morning. Please contact me if you would like to know more about the RESI programme by email at [conservation@resi.org.nz](mailto:conservation@resi.org.nz) or phone 027 773 4727.

### Please join us for our 2022 AGM

**Date:** Thursday 28 July

**Time:** 7-9pm

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

**Presentation:** Guest speaker Harvey Aughton of Project Echo

Supper afterwards

RSVP by Sunday 24 July to

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

### WE NEED YOU!

Sadly, at the upcoming AGM we are losing two committee members who between them have put in decades of service to RESI. We would be delighted for you to join the remaining six of us to carry on the important work RESI does. As the saying goes, many hands make light work. No particular talents required, just your passion and enthusiasm for our beautiful and unique little corner of Hamilton. In this coming year the committee is aiming at reducing the monthly 2-hour meetings to bi-monthly, and focusing more on our core business of restoration. If this sounds like something you are interested in being part of, please let us know.

## Te Awa River Ride

Elements of the Te Awa Cycleway have been completed in Riverlea, notably the work to narrow the upper end of Howell Avenue and the ramp down from Geoffrey Place to the Malcom Street end of Hammond Park. At the same time, currently out of public view, the route along the Mangaonua Stream from Riverglade Drive to the Waikato River is progressing. This elevated cycleway is an impressive construction incorporating a new bridge across the stream and it will open up a new route to Tamahere in the east as well as to Hamilton Gardens and the central city to the north.

The new route will also enable the restoration of the weed-infested Mangaonua Gully. However, full restoration will take decades - enlarging Hammond Park in the process. On the negative side, residents have already been impacted by the narrowing of Howell Avenue and the awkward compromises needed to get the cycleway up onto Cobham Drive. An alternative, originally considered, was to take the cycleway up the riverbank below the Hamilton East Cemetery. Unfortunately, this was rejected because of cost and engineering difficulty but would have been a more direct and less intrusive route.



Above: Te Awa River Ride still under construction

Between the ramp from Geoffrey Place and the Mangaonua Stream mouth lies Hammond Park and

the 0.5 km boardwalk, only 1.6m wide, constructed in 1999. It runs through Hammond Bush, a protected and diverse forest remnant which Riverlea residents greatly treasure. By modern design standards, the boardwalk is not a safe route that can be shared by two-way pedestrians and mounted cyclists in the numbers anticipated. RESI strongly opposed an initial suggestion that our narrow bush reserve be further reduced by widening and straightening the existing boardwalk. A compromise was agreed in 2017 between the HCC, RESI and the Te Awa Trust that the boardwalk would be a dismount section for cyclists with an optional on-road route along Riverlea Road, Hudson Street and Howell Avenue. RESI is currently in discussions with HCC regarding appropriate signage and chicane design to encourage compliance. However, it is also fair to say we still have reservations on the level of compliance we can expect from cyclists. We will be keenly observing the actual outcome and making further representations if safety on the boardwalk is compromised. Hopefully our fears will not be realised, and we can look forward to sharing our park and suburb with visitors from around the country and indeed the world.

### FYI

- RESI has purchased two new **bat monitors**. To borrow one contact Trish 0224902133.
- There have been changes to **Pest Free Riverlea**. The Urban Rat Project is defunct so Riverlea residents' data is now to be recorded with [www.trap.nz](http://www.trap.nz). To register your trap and enter catch data go to the website (also available as a mobile app) and search for 'Pest Free Riverlea' as the project. Follow the instructions to register your trap location and record your catch.

### Donate to RESI

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

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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.*