

RIO BOSQUE NEWS

A newsletter reporting on events at Rio Bosque Wetlands Park

Center for Environmental Resource Management
The University of Texas at El Paso



No. 48

January 2014

WINTER WATER

At Rio Bosque Wetlands Park, the wet season is here. Water is flowing the length of the old river channel in the park. The wetland areas are flooded. Over 2,500 waterfowl are present. It's a great time to visit Rio Bosque!

On Nov 3, El Paso Water Utilities (EPWU) began discharging treated water from the Roberto Bustamante Wastewater Treatment Plant to the Riverside Drain, through which El Paso County Water Improvement District No. 1 (El Paso No. 1) delivers it to the park. Then, on Nov 19, El Paso No. 1 opened the new turnout on the Riverside Canal, sending water for the first time directly from the canal to the park. Thanks go to El Paso No. 1 and EPWU for making water from these sources available.

Once the 2014 irrigation season begins, these flows will end; the park will again be largely dry. But as the year progresses, that could change. The new turnout is performing well. If we identify water-rights holders willing to assign irrigation water to the park, the turnout makes delivery of that water possible. Also, at its Nov 13 meeting, El Paso's Public Service Board gave EPWU the go-ahead to put the planned pipeline from the Bustamante Plant to the park out for bid. Once built, the pipeline will enable water deliveries to the park year-round. ✂



Riparian habitat is developing along the first half mile of the old river channel at Rio Bosque.
Photo: December 14, 2013.

AT THE WATER'S EDGE

Riparian areas are plant communities next to, and sustained by, surface and ground water associated with rivers, streams, lakes and drainage ways. They are the areas at the water's edge, usually transitional between wetland and upland habitats but distinct from each. Riparian areas are highly important biologically, especially in arid landscapes. Their close connection to surface or subsurface water



Friends of the Rio Bosque Membership Application

Name:	_____	<input type="checkbox"/> Bosque Buddy (12 and under)\$6
Address:	_____	<input type="checkbox"/> Student or <input type="checkbox"/> Senior (62+) \$10
E-mail:	_____	<input type="checkbox"/> Individual\$15
	_____	<input type="checkbox"/> Family\$20
	_____	<input type="checkbox"/> Bosque Booster\$50
	_____	<input type="checkbox"/> Cottonwood Commando\$75-\$249
	_____	<input type="checkbox"/> Restoration Patron.....\$250-\$499
	_____	<input type="checkbox"/> Wetlands Society\$500-\$999
	_____	<input type="checkbox"/> Life Member..... \$1,000

Please make checks payable to *Friends of the Rio Bosque* and mail to: Friends of the Rio Bosque, CERM-UTEP, 500 W. University Ave., El Paso, TX 79968-0684.

Next Meetings

Wed., Jan 22
6:30 – 8:30 p.m.
Ardivino's Desert
Crossing
Thurs., Feb 27
Thurs., Mar 27
6:30 - 7:30 p.m.
209-A Burges Hall
UTEP
Info: 915-747-8663

makes possible vigorous plant growth and abundant, species-rich animal communities.

Once common, native riparian areas are largely gone from our river valley today. At Rio Bosque Wetlands Park, we are working to bring wetland and riparian habitats back. Lack of water during the growing season makes this a challenging task.

Prolonged drought, as we've experienced in recent years, intensifies the challenge. Still, one area at Rio Bosque is showing progress. The well at the park's inlet keeps a 0.5-mile reach of the old river channel in the park consistently wet. Here, native riparian habitat is developing. It offers a glimpse of what can be accomplished elsewhere once additional water is available during the growing season. ✂

NUMBERS

- Maximum ground-water depth, in feet, at Monitor Well RB-8 in interior of park in 2010: **9.97**. In 2011: **19.36**. In 2012: **22.64**. In 2013: **17.95**.
- Precipitation, in inches, at park in 2011: **< 3**. In 2012: **< 3**. In 2013: **8.88** (**4.44** in September).
- Gallons of water hauled from the Bustamante Plant by truck to water trees in 2011: **227,000**. In 2012: **354,000**. In 2013: **381,000**.
- Small mammals live-captured during faunal monitoring at park in 2009: **136**. In 2013: **31**.
- Average number of bird species detected at point-count stations on monthly surveys in 2007-11: Mar-May **23.3**, Jun-Jul **22.8**, Aug-Nov **23.9**, Dec-Feb **26.4**. In 2012-13: Mar-May **21.2**, Jun-Jul **18.8**, Aug-Nov **18.8**, Dec-Feb **21.5**. ✂



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Return Service Requested

RIO BOSQUE CALENDAR

Join us at Rio Bosque for a free walking tour or to help with habitat management, park maintenance or faunal monitoring. Coming up:

JANUARY			FEBRUARY			MARCH		
11 (Sat.)	Bird Tour	3 p.m.	2 (Sun.)	Bird Tour	8 a.m.	1 (Sat.)	Bird Tour	3 p.m.
18 (Sat.)	Workday	9 a.m.	8 (Sat.)	Introductory Tour	3 p.m.	9 (Sun.)	Introductory Tour	4 p.m.
19 (Sun.)	Introductory Tour	9 a.m.	15 (Sat.)	Workday	9 a.m.	15 (Sat.)	Workday	9 a.m.
						22 (Sat.)	Faunal Monitoring	8 a.m.

Meeting place for all activities is a bridge crossing the Riverside Canal. From I-10, take Americas Ave. (Loop 375) to Pan American Dr., turn left onto Pan American and travel 1.5 miles to the bridge. Please be prompt.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

www.riobosque.org

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