

RIO BOSQUE NEWS

A newsletter reporting on events at Rio Bosque Wetlands Park

Center for Environmental Resource Management
University of Texas at El Paso



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*Rio Bosque Wetlands Park represents a remarkable partnership. It is a **City of El Paso** park. **Ducks Unlimited** conceived and brought to fruition the wetlands project at the site. The **International Boundary and Water Commission** did the construction work. **El Paso Water Utilities (EPWU)** and **El Paso County Water Improvement District No. 1 (El Paso #1)** provide the water. **UTEP** manages the site, with guidance and support from throughout the El Paso community and beyond. Rio Bosque is a park with an exciting future. Through this newsletter, we hope to keep you informed about its progress.*

WATER

Thanks to El Paso #1 and EPWU, we had water at Rio Bosque throughout spring and summer in 2001! Prior to this year, the Park received water in fall and winter but was completely dry in spring and summer. The flows this spring and summer were less than in fall and winter, but enough to maintain a flow through the Park's main channel and flood 20-30 wetland acres. This spring-summer moisture was a major boon for Rio Bosque's vegetation and wildlife, and we greatly appreciated it!



Summer 2001 at Rio Bosque Wetlands Park

PARK PLANNING

On January 20, we held a highly successful **Day at the Park** to gather community input on how Rio Bosque should be developed in the future. After touring the Park in the morning, participants met at Socorro High School for lunch and took part in 4 discussion groups relating to the Park's future: Education, Nature, Park Concepts and Connections, and Tourism.

Margon Incorporated, the consulting firm hired to prepare the long-range Park development plan, is now preparing a draft plan. Once it is ready, we will hold follow-up meetings to make sure it captures and reflects your ideas for the Park.

On a related front, UTEP will soon release a draft **Biological Management Plan** for Rio Bosque. It defines our vision for the future of the Park's ecosystems and provides overall guidance for achieving that vision. Starting with a foundation of 6 major goals, the draft plan presents 17 associated management recommendations and a series of proposed actions for implementing each recommendation. To request a copy, contact John Sproul (915-747-8663) or Sue Watts (915-747-8453).

TOURS

Twice each month, UTEP offers free walking tours at the Park. Coming up:

8-11 a.m.	Sat., Oct. 13	Birds
4-6 p.m.	Sun., Oct. 14	Introductory Tour
3-5 p.m.	Sun., Nov. 4	Birds
9-11 a.m.	Sat., Nov. 10	Introductory
9 am-noon	Sat., Dec 1	Birds
3-5 p.m.	Sun., Dec 9	Introductory

The meeting place is a bridge crossing Riverside Canal. To get there 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.

WILDLIFE

The bird list for the Park now stands at 182 species. One recent addition was truly remarkable. On May 28, 3 **Fulvous Whistling-Ducks** appeared on the flooded area in Wetland Cell 2. This species had been observed in the El Paso area only once before...near Ysleta on May 22, 1940! The whistling-ducks stayed at the Park through July 25.

Among the nesting birds at Rio Bosque this summer: Mexican Mallard, Cinnamon Teal, Common Moorhen, Black-necked Stilt, American Avocet, Cassin's Sparrow, and Painted Bunting.

If you've visited the Park recently, you've no doubt noticed the wire cages surrounding most of our cottonwoods and willows. Last November, a **beaver** began frequenting the Park and started harvesting trees we had planted. So far, the cages have been an effective countermeasure.

The mammal list for the Park is growing and now stands at 15, thanks to UTEP biology student Ed

GET INVOLVED!

Each month, we have a community workday at the Park. It's your chance to get directly involved in shaping the future of Rio Bosque. Upcoming workdays:

- 9 a.m.-noon, Sat., Oct. 20 (Día del Río)
- 9 a.m.-noon, Sat., Nov. 17
- No workday in December

The meeting location is the same as for the tours: the bridge crossing Riverside Canal.

Espinosa. Ed live-trapped small mammals at the Park this summer. In 1200 trap-nights of effort, he caught 44 rodents, which included: white-footed mouse, deer mouse, Sonoran pocket mouse, and Western harvest mouse.

VEGETATION

The main water channel through the Park follows the old alignment of the Rio Grande before it was channelized in the 1930s. For the past 2½ years, we have been working to establish native river-valley vegetation along that channel. This winter, we planted another 200 poles of Rio Grande cottonwood, Goodding willow and coyote willow. Thanks go to the **U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service** and **El Paso/Trans-Pecos Audubon Society** for making these materials available from Bosque del Apache National Wildlife Refuge and Feather Lake Wildlife Sanctuary, respectively. With water present this summer, the pole plantings thrived. Even better, we saw extensive natural regeneration of native species along the channel.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Visit us on the Web at:
<http://www.cerm.utep.edu/projects.html>

Want to be added to the mailing list for this newsletter or ask a question about Rio Bosque? Contact:

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