

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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DAY AT THE PARK 2002

Join us at Rio Bosque Wetlands Park on **Saturday, January 26** for a Day at the Park! A year ago in January, work on the long-range Park development plan began with a similar event. You toured the Park, then gave us your ideas on how Rio Bosque should be developed in the future. Now, those ideas have been translated into a draft plan, and we again want your input. On January 26, we'll offer tours of the Park throughout the morning. We'll have exhibits displaying the draft development plan, and you can look at areas proposed for facilities on the ground instead of just on a map. Come any time between 9:00 a.m. and 1:00 p.m. The meeting place will be the same as for our regular monthly tours (see box below).



Trail construction at Rio Bosque Wetlands Park

TRAIL PROJECT ADVANCES

With funding from Texas Park and Wildlife and much appreciated help from the City of El Paso, National Park Service and Texas Master Naturalists, we're building a fully accessible trail at the Park. It begins in the southeast corner of the Park, where the main entrance is proposed, and will wind 0.7 miles through a representative mix of Park habitats. The surface for the 6-foot-wide trail is compacted chat mixed with a soil stabilizer. Current funding will allow us to build only about half the planned trail, so

we need to do additional fund-raising before it can be completed.

MEADOWS FOUNDATION PROVIDES VITAL SUPPORT

The Meadows Foundation of Dallas, Texas, recently awarded a \$200,000 grant to UTEP for construction of a number of key facilities needed to prepare Rio Bosque Wetlands Park for full public use. This generous grant will help provide for perimeter fencing, interpretive facilities, an education pavilion, a small permanent pond, and a visitor-contact station that can be expanded in the future into a full-fledged visitor center. The Meadows Foundation is a long-time friend of Rio Bosque. In 1996, it helped fund Ducks Unlimited's work on the design of the wetlands project. We greatly appreciate The Meadows Foundation's steady support!



El Paso Ducks Unlimited
23rd Annual Banquet
Friday, Feb. 22, 2002

TOURS

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

9-11 a.m.	Sat., Jan. 12	Introductory Tour
3-5 p.m.	Sun., Jan. 20	Birds
3-5 p.m.	Sun., Feb. 3	Introductory
9 am-noon	Sat., Feb. 9	Birds
3-5 p.m.	Sun., Mar. 3	Birds
9-11 a.m.	Sat., Mar. 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.

RESTORATION REPORT

In 2001, the availability of water throughout spring and summer led to major progress in our efforts to establish native wetland and riparian habitats at Rio Bosque. Prospects for 2002 are much dimmer. Due to low water levels at Elephant Butte and Caballo reservoirs, El Paso-area farmers will likely not receive a full allotment of Rio Grande water in 2002.

Local irrigators will thus be looking to maximize water from other sources, including treated wastewater from the Roberto Bustamante Wastewater Treatment Plant. The Bustamante Plant, of course, is the source of water for the Park. At this point, we don't know whether any Bustamante Plant water will be available to the Park in spring-summer 2002.

What is that new fenced-in area on the north side of the Park? It's a black-tailed jackrabbit enclosure. Jackrabbits exert a big influence on vegetation at Rio Bosque, and we want to study how the vegetation

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., Jan. 19
- 9 a.m.-noon, Sat., Feb. 16
- 9 a.m.-noon, Sat., Mar. 16

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

responds in their absence. The 100-foot by 330-foot enclosure will help us do that. It will be followed soon by a second enclosure, to be built by Boy Scout Troop 4 under the direction of Eagle Scout candidate Matt Maldonado. Funding for this work comes from the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation.

WILDLIFE NOTES

For **waterfowl** enthusiasts, now is the time to visit Rio Bosque. Up to 4,000 ducks are wintering at the Park ... Also, the **Bald Eagle** that overwintered last year has returned, now in adult plumage ... The bird list for the Park, currently 187 species, keeps growing. This fall's highlight: a **Zone-tailed Hawk** that Marcy Scott and Jimmy Zabriskie found September 27, the first ever reported in the El Paso area! ... In early October, we began flooding the Park's northmost wetland cell, only to lose some early-arriving ducks to **botulism**. We quickly drained the area, removed the dead birds, and waited until cooler temperatures in early November to re-flood it. These actions prevented further problems.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Visit us on the Web at:

<http://www.cerm.utep.edu/riobosque>

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

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