

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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RESTORATION REPORT

Restoration of native habitats at Rio Bosque is a long-term undertaking. The Park's ecosystems are developing gradually over time, and each year different stresses and changes in environmental conditions influence how they develop.

So far, this year has been a tough one for Rio Bosque's riparian and wetland vegetation. The Park has been dry for 5 months now. Moreover, groundwater levels have been dropping steadily. Depending on location in the Park, groundwater is currently 4-7 feet below where it was in January.

The Park's cottonwoods and willows are stressed, and some won't make it. But many will. When conditions are favorable again, these survivors will provide the foundation for recovery of Rio Bosque's developing riparian habitats.

The uplands, which make up 75% of the Park, are faring much better. Especially noteworthy are the many young tornillo, or screwbean mesquite, now appearing throughout the Park. Conditions in recent years have been very favorable for tornillo seeds to germinate. They are now popping up everywhere in the uplands, with thickets in some places several acres in size.

Friends of the Rio Bosque MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

Name: _____ Bosque Buddy \$4
(Age 12 and under)
Address: _____ Student \$8
_____ Senior \$8
_____ Individual \$10
_____ Family \$15

Please make checks payable to *Friends of the Rio Bosque* and mail to: Maria Trunk, Treasurer, Friends of the Rio Bosque, 1100 Kelly Way, El Paso, TX 79902.



Flammulated Owl, May 3, 2003 (John Kiseda photo)

WILDLIFE NOTES

The bird and reptile lists for the Park have grown in recent months. New to the bird list: **White-tailed Kite, Eurasian Collared-Dove, Flammulated Owl and Plumbeous Vireo**. The White-tailed Kite, seen March 1-10, represented just the 2nd documented El Paso County record and 3rd El Paso-checklist-area record for this species. The Flammulated Owl, seen May 3, represented a 5th May record for this species in the checklist area.

TOURS

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

8-11 a.m.	Sat., July 5	Birds
8-10 a.m.	Sat., July 12	Reptiles/Amphibians
8-10 a.m.	Sat., Aug 9	Reptiles/Amphibians
8-11 a.m.	Sat., Aug 23	Birds
8-10 a.m.	Sat., Sept 13	Reptiles/Amphibians
9 a.m.-noon	Sun., Sept 21	Birds

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.

Eurasian Collared-Dove is a Eurasian species introduced accidentally into the Bahamas in 1974. It soon spread to the Florida mainland and has been spreading rapidly across Texas in recent years. After multiple recent sightings near Rio Bosque, its appearance in the Park June 21 was not a surprise.

The new additions to the reptile list are **glossy snake**, found April 28, and **longnose snake**, found May 29. The list of snake species discovered in the Park now stands at 8.

GRACIAS

In this dry year, we've been trucking water to the Park to maintain recent plantings. Thanks go to Pat Brown of Pat Brown Farms for loaning us a 525-gallon water trailer for this purpose during the spring. Thanks also go to the Friends of the Rio

GET INVOLVED!

Want to get directly involved in shaping the future of Rio Bosque? Upcoming community workdays at the Park are:

- 8-11 a.m., Sat., July 19
- 8-11 a.m., Sat., Aug 16
- 8-11 a.m., Sat., Sept 20

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

Also, **Thursdays** are now volunteer days at the Park. Each Thursday, we work on projects needing volunteer help. Come any time; work as little or as long as you want. Call John Sproul (747-8663) for details.

Bosque, who are using their resourcefulness, ingenuity and construction skills to build a water trailer for permanent use at the Park.

FRIENDS OF THE RIO BOSQUE



Want to help support Rio Bosque Wetlands Park? Join Friends of the Rio Bosque! There's an application form on the other side of this newsletter.

Friends of the Rio Bosque is the volunteer support group for the Park. It is an active, growing group, and its members provide invaluable help in all aspects of the Rio Bosque project. The Friends meet the 4th Thursday of every month from 6:30 to 7:30 p.m. in the UTEP Visitor Center, Room 201, Burges Hall, on the UTEP campus. Upcoming meetings are **July 24**, **Aug 28** and **Sept 25**. To learn more: Chuck Kooshian (mtandck@elp.rr.com, 545-5214) or John Sproul (747-8663).

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:

John Sproul 915-747-8663 jsproul@utep.edu

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