

RIO BOSQUE NEWS

A newsletter reporting on events at Rio Bosque Wetlands Park

Center for Environmental Resource Management
University of Texas at El Paso



No. 11

April 2004

RESTORATION REPORT

The drought continues to make wetland and riparian restoration a challenging proposition at Rio Bosque Wetlands Park. The Park last received water January 12. Groundwater levels are again dropping steadily. At this writing, 5 new irrigation wells are being installed next to the Park. This winter, we did some limited plantings of Rio Grande cottonwood and coyote willow poles, but with the steadily dropping water table, their fate is uncertain. The water trailer the Friends of the Rio Bosque built last year is already in regular service as we work to keep these trees and others alive.

One change you might not notice when you visit Rio Bosque is the slow, steady disappearance of saltcedar as we remove it throughout the Park. Some former stands now host just a few scattered saltcedar, some are recently saltcedar free. See if you can find these areas on your next visit. ✂

FACILITIES UPDATE

By the time you read this newsletter, construction of the Park's visitor-contact station/education shelter should be underway. Also, the curbing and 2nd footbridge are now complete on the unbuilt portion of the Bosque Trail. The next steps are to install the trail sub-base and surface. ✂



The new footbridge on the Bosque Trail.

WILDLIFE NOTES

Burrowing Owl numbers have declined at Rio Bosque in recent years, and one reason is loss of viable burrows. At least 6 formerly active burrows have collapsed or filled with sediment in the past 4 years and are no longer in use. On February 21, to help offset this trend, Park volunteers installed 4 artificial burrows, a project made possible by support from Chihuahuan Desert Wildlife Rescue and the El Paso/Trans-Pecos Audubon Society. Just 2 weeks later, the first burrow was in use, and at this writing owls have been observed at 3 of the 4 sites.

The long-term faunal monitoring program is gathering steam. In February, the



Friends of the Rio Bosque Membership Application

Name:	_____	_____	Bosque Buddy (12 and under)	\$4
	_____	_____	Student	\$8
Address:	_____	_____	Senior (62+)	\$8
	_____	_____	Individual	\$10
	_____	_____	Family	\$15
E-mail:	_____	_____	Bosque Booster	\$50
	_____	_____	Cottonwood Commando	\$75-\$249
	_____	_____	Restoration Patron	\$250-\$499
	_____	_____	Wetlands Society	\$500+

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.

Next Meetings

Thurs., Apr 22
Thurs., May 27
Thurs., June 24
6:30 - 7:30 p.m.
125 Bell Hall, UTEP
Info: 915-545-5214

Friends of the Rio Bosque completed installation of a series of pitfall traps with drift fences for use in monitoring reptiles, amphibians and invertebrates at the Park. They are now checking the traps on the 4th Saturday each month. Want to help? Please contact Rene Espinoza (857-6834, respi@juno.com). ✂

KUDOS

Well-earned congratulations are in order for these friends and allies of Rio Bosque Wetlands Park:

- **John Taylor**, Refuge Biologist at Bosque del Apache National Wildlife Refuge, is the 2004 recipient of the National Wildlife Refuge Association's Refuge Employee of the Year award.
- **Steve Marasovich**, a stalwart on El Paso's Ducks Unlimited Committee, is the incoming Texas State Chairperson for Ducks Unlimited.
- **Sal Quintanilla**, volunteer extraordinaire, is the new president of Friends of the Rio Bosque. He succeeds **Chuck Kooshian**, who skillfully guided the Friends through their initial year. ✂

TOURS

Upcoming free walking tours at the Park:

<u>Introductory Tour</u>	<u>Birds</u>
Sun., Apr 18 (4 pm)	Sat., Apr 10 (9 am)
Sun., Apr 25 (4 pm)	Sat., May 8 (8 am)
Sun., May 16 (9 am)	Sun., Jun 6 (8 am)
Sat., Jun 12 (9 am)	

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.

E-NEWSLETTER

This newsletter is also available online through our website in downloadable PDF format. Want to receive an e-mail notification with a link to the newsletter whenever a new issue comes out? Please contact John Sproul (see below). If you would like to help us save paper and postage by receiving the newsletter only electronically, let John know. ✂

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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GET INVOLVED!

Upcoming community workdays at the Park:

Sat., Apr 17 Sat., May 15 Sat., Jun 19

In April, we start at 9 a.m.; in May and June, at 8 a.m. The meeting place is the same as for the tours: the bridge crossing Riverside Canal.

Also, 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.