

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. 12

July 2004

VISITOR CENTER A REALITY

Rio Bosque Wetlands Park has seen a flurry of activity these past 3 months. The biggest change is the construction of the new visitor center/education shelter. A wonderful addition for all Park visitors, the facility was designed with school groups especially in mind.

There are still a few unfinished details (like the water system), but the structure is in place. Wright & Dalbin Architects designed this striking facility. The general contractor was F. T. James Construction. Sincere thanks go to G & J Electric of Las Cruces for donating the electrical work, to El Paso Electric Company for providing electric service to the site, and to the Planning and Construction Section of UTEP's Facilities Services for managing the project. Finally, special thanks are due The Meadows Foundation of Dallas, Texas, whose support made this project possible. ✈



Rio Bosque's new visitor center.

BOSQUE TRAIL MOVES AHEAD

We've also been doing some trail building. In June, the City of El Paso's Parks and Recreation Department and the Friends of the Rio Bosque teamed up to finish surfacing 1100 feet of the Bosque Trail, the Park's hard-surfaced loop trail. Thanks go to both groups and to the Paso del Norte Health Foundation,

whose support made it all possible. The trail is open for use, but there is still one 1100-foot segment that is unsurfaced. We are currently seeking funding to complete it. ✈

RESTORATION REPORT

Rio Bosque continues to be a dry place. Through the first 6 months of 2004, the Park has received water for only 12 days. Groundwater levels at most of our monitoring wells have hit all-time lows since we began data collection in 2001.

The Rio Grande cottonwoods and coyote willows started as pole plantings this past winter are showing



FRIENDS OF THE

Friends of the Rio Bosque Membership Application

Name: _____

Address: _____

E-mail: _____

_____ Bosque Buddy (12 and under)	\$4
_____ Student	\$8
_____ Senior (62+)	\$8
_____ Individual	\$10
_____ Family	\$15
_____ 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., July 22

Thurs., Aug 26

Thurs., Sep 23

6:30 - 7:30 p.m.

Andre's Pizza
3233 N. Mesa

Info: 915-545-5214

some signs of stress, but all are OK. The reason? The Friends of the Rio Bosque bring water to them weekly with their trusty water trailer. ✂

NATURE NOTES

Painted Buntings are one of the signature birds of Rio Bosque. They are also a good indicator of the progress of our restoration efforts. These multi-hued, summer-resident songbirds nest in the City of El Paso only at the Park. Twenty years ago, to find Painted Buntings at Rio Bosque you looked in the saltcedar stands. Today, though they are still found in saltcedar, the best places to look are stands of native tornillo, which is rapidly becoming more prominent as we remove the exotic saltcedar.

The most impressive floral displays at the Park come in late April and early May when bitterweed (*Hymenoxys odorata*) is in bloom. This past spring offered the best show yet. The western half of Wetland Cell 1 was a 20-25-acre sea of yellow flowers. Smaller patches were scattered along the margins of

Cell 2 and near our main water channel. All of the areas with extensive bitterweed blooms experienced brief, very shallow flooding or wetting during the winter. ✂

FRIENDS OF THE RIO BOSQUE

In a continuing quest for the perfect meeting place, the Friends will gather for the next 3 months at Andre's Pizza, 3233 North Mesa. For dates and times, check the blue box at the bottom of the previous page. ✂

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

Printing courtesy of Epson El Paso.

TOURS

Upcoming free walking tours at the Park:

Reptiles/Amphibians Birds

Sat., Jul 10 (8 am)	Sat., Jul 31 (8 am)
Sat., Aug 14 (8 am)	Sun., Aug 22 (8 am)
Sat., Sep 11 (8 am)	Sat., Sep 25 (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.

GET INVOLVED!

Upcoming community workdays at the Park:

Sat., July 17 Sat., Aug 21 Sat., Sep 18

We start 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.