

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. 21

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NEW WELL INSTALLED

Thanks to **Western Dewatering**, we've taken a big first step in our project to provide a water-supply well for Rio Bosque Wetlands Park. On August 28-29, Western drilled, cased and developed the well, located near the Park's inlet. The next step, with which **El Paso Water Utilities** is assisting, is to install a pump. Currently, the Park only reliably receives water in late fall and early winter. It is dry most of the year. The well will allow us to provide some water at least intermittently in spring and summer to establish and maintain native wetland and riparian habitats. Our goal is to have the well operating by next year's irrigation season. We greatly appreciate Western Dewatering's generosity in donating the installation of the new well. ✂

FIRE HITS WATER GATE

Five of Rio Bosque's water-control gates have wooden walkways leading to them. When the Park is getting water, the walkways provide access so we can adjust the gates and keep them clear of debris. Some time during the early morning of June 21, a fire started near the gate at the Park's inlet. By dawn, the wooden walkway had gone up in smoke, completely destroyed. Thanks to the Friends of the Rio Bosque, we recovered quickly from this setback. The Friends rebuilt the walkway on August 19. ✂



Friends of the Rio Bosque rebuild the walkway to Water Control Gate 1 on Aug 19, 2006.

SUMMER RAIN

Exceptional events play an important role shaping ecosystems. The rain in El Paso this summer – 13.65 inches at the airport between July 28 and Sept 14 – was certainly exceptional. At Rio Bosque, it brought a wealth of new growth. Annual plants found seldom or not at all in most years became common. Our native-grass plots grew thick and lush. And the rain triggered a potential expansion of tornillo, or screwbean mesquite, to a new area.

At the Park's southern end are some large expanses of compacted hardpan soils that can be largely barren in dry



Friends of the Rio Bosque Membership Application

Name: _____	<input type="checkbox"/> Bosque Buddy (12 and under) \$4
Address: _____	<input type="checkbox"/> Student \$8
_____	<input type="checkbox"/> Senior (62+) \$8
_____	<input type="checkbox"/> Individual \$10
E-mail: _____	<input type="checkbox"/> Family \$15
	<input type="checkbox"/> Bosque Booster \$50
	<input type="checkbox"/> Cottonwood Commando \$75-\$249
	<input type="checkbox"/> Restoration Patron \$250-\$499
	<input type="checkbox"/> 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., Oct 26

Thurs., Nov 30

6:30 - 7:30 p.m.

411 Burges Hall
UTEP

Info: 915-545-5214

years and usually support little more than Russian thistle after summer rains. This year's rains brought a surprising new element to the area: young tornillo seedlings popping up everywhere.

We've caged many of these seedlings to discourage herbivores and blocked off much of the area to prevent vehicle traffic. Keep an eye on this area in the months and years ahead. Another transformation of the Rio Bosque landscape may be unfolding before our eyes. ✂

BOSQUE BANTER

Last winter was great for **waterfowl** at Rio Bosque. This year looks equally promising. U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service surveys in May indicated a 14% increase in North American breeding ducks. We're now anxiously awaiting the return of water to the Park and the arrival of our wintering water birds. Want to know when the water is back? Check the "What's New" section on our website (next column).

In the meantime, we're busy getting ready for the return of water. Thanks go to UTEP's **Environmental Advocates** for their recent help clearing accumulations of dead tumbleweeds, or Russian thistle, from the Park's water channels.

Upland Sandpipers visited Rio Bosque on 4 dates in late August, representing the 216th bird species recorded at the Park.

The last **faunal monitoring** session for the year takes place Oct. 28. Join us to learn more about the Park's invertebrates, reptiles, amphibians and small mammals. This session is a Celebration of Our

Mountains event, limited to 20 participants. Contact Maria Trunk (545-5214) for reservations. ✂

FOR MORE INFORMATION

<http://www.riobosque.org>

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Want to help us save postage and paper by receiving this newsletter only via e-mail? Let John know.

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RIO BOSQUE CALENDAR

Join us at the Park for a free walking tour or to help with habitat management, Park maintenance or faunal monitoring. Coming up:

OCTOBER

Sat., Oct 7	Bird Tour	9 a.m.
Sat., Oct 21	Community Workday	9 a.m.
Sun., Oct 22	Introductory Tour	9 a.m.
Sat., Oct 28	Faunal Monitoring	8 a.m.

NOVEMBER

Sun., Nov 5	Bird Tour	3 p.m.
Sat., Nov 18	Community Workday	9 a.m.
Sun., Nov 19	Introductory Tour	3 p.m.

DECEMBER

Sat., Dec 2	Bird Tour	9 a.m.
Sun., Dec 10	Introductory Tour	3 p.m.

The meeting place for all of these activities 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.

