

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. 23

April 2007

BOSQUE IN BLOOM

With each new day in April, Rio Bosque Wetlands Park grows increasingly golden. The bitterweed (*Hymenoxys odorata*) is now coming into bloom! It will peak in late April and early May, when, over large areas of the Park, the landscape becomes a sea of lemon yellow blossoms.

We'll have two special tours in April to highlight the bitterweed display (see back). The first will be on Earth Day, **April 22**; the second, on **April 28**. Both start at 4 p.m. Of course, you needn't limit yourself to the tours. Visit anytime and enjoy the show! ✂

BOY SCOUTS AT WORK

Volunteers do the bulk of the work at Rio Bosque, and local Boy Scouts are among our most valued contributors. Here's what they've been up to lately: In March, **Boone Leachman** and fellow Scouts from Troop 59 installed a new interpretive-display kiosk along the Park's Wetland Trail and 3 artificial burrows for Burrowing Owls. In April, **Martin Doporto** and fellow Scouts from Troop 279 will work on completing the final section of post-and-cable barrier at the Park's north end. Thanks go to Boone, Martin and all their co-workers. Great work! These 2 projects are the 10th and 11th Eagle Scout service projects at the Park. ✂



Boone Leachman (2nd from left) and Troop 59 colleagues admire handiwork, Mar 3, 2007.

THE RIO BOSQUE ALTERNATIVE

To reduce seepage and evaporation, El Paso County Water Improvement District No. 1 has long desired to concrete-line the Riverside Canal in the vicinity of Rio Bosque Wetlands Park. It is seeking funding from the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation for this work, and, in late January, the Bureau released a draft environmental assessment (EA) for the project.

As part of its comments on the draft EA, UTEP asked that a new alternative – the Rio Bosque Alternative – be evaluated and named the preferred alternative. This



Friends of the Rio Bosque Membership Application

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

Thurs., May 31

Thurs., June 28

6:30 - 7:30 p.m.

209-A Burges Hall
UTEP

Info: 915-545-5214

alternative incorporates into the canal lining 3 relatively straightforward design modifications and 2 administrative proposals aimed at improving Park access and getting some water to the Park during the growing season without taking water from local irrigators. For more on the draft EA and the Rio Bosque Alternative, visit our website (next column).

Many agencies, organizations and individuals have commented on the draft EA. On March 27, the El Paso City Council unanimously passed a resolution supporting the Rio Bosque Alternative. Will any elements of this alternative become part of the project? Stay tuned. ✂

RIVER CONSERVATION

Our ecosystem-management work at Rio Bosque aims to restore, over time, an approximation of the mix of highly productive habitats historically found in the river valley in our region. Why this focus? Two recently released reports bring home the need for ecological restoration in the river valley.

In February, the American Bird Conservancy released the *Top 20 Most Threatened Bird Habitats in the United States*. Number 5 on the list is South-west riparian habitats, including those in New Mexico and West Texas. You can find the report at www.abcbirds.org.

And in March, the World Wildlife Fund released *World's Top 10 Rivers at Risk*. On the list: the Rio Grande, with excessive water extraction identified as the main threat to its freshwater ecosystems. You can find this report at www.worldwildlife.org. ✂

FOR MORE INFORMATION

<http://www.riobosque.org>

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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:

APRIL

Sun., Apr 15	Bird Tour	8 a.m.
Sat., Apr 21	Community Workday	8 a.m.
Sun., Apr 22	Wildflower Tour	4 p.m.
Sat., Apr 28	Faunal Monitoring	8 a.m.
Sat., Apr 28	Wildflower Tour	4 p.m.

MAY

Sat., May 12	Bird Tour	8 a.m.
Sat., May 19	Community Workday	8 a.m.
Sun., May 20	Introductory Tour	9 a.m.
Sat., May 26	Faunal Monitoring	8 a.m.

JUNE

Sun., June 3	Bird Tour	8 a.m.
Sat., June 9	Introductory Tour	9 a.m.
Sat., June 16	Community Workday	8 a.m.
Sat., June 23	Faunal Monitoring	8 a.m.

Meeting place for all activities is a bridge crossing the Riverside Canal. 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.

