

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. 24

July 2007

VISITOR CENTER NEWS

Ever since its construction in 2004, we've been working to make the Park's visitor center fully operational. After a flurry of activity in recent months, we're almost there. Thanks to the City of El Paso's Parks and Recreation Department, the building now has electricity. Thanks to the El Paso/Trans-Pecos Audubon Society, Texas Commission on Environmental Quality and U.S. Bureau of Reclamation, we now have a water system in place. It both contributes to ecosystem maintenance and provides water to the visitor center's restrooms. And thanks to hard-working members of the Friends of the Rio Bosque, we have two new picnic tables under the ramada. There are still a few bugs to work out before the restrooms are operating. We hope to have good news soon regarding that crowning achievement. ✕

A LONG-EARED SURPRISE

When we spotted a **Long-eared Owl** during bird surveys at the Park on April 29, it was a nice surprise but not totally shocking. Though it was late in the season, this species had overwintered in good numbers in the El Paso area this year.

The shock came several weeks later when we discovered a fledgling owl! It was the first nesting



Long-eared Owl along Bosque Trail, May 21, 2007
(Bob Johnson).

record for the El Paso area in a long time. In June 1918, an immature bird was collected near Tornillo, Texas. Also, field notes from local birders indicate this species nested in 1934 and 1936 in a cottonwood bosque along the Rio Grande upriver from El Paso. The bosque was cleared when the river was channelized, and there are no more recent nesting records.

So, it was quite a surprise, but maybe we should have anticipated the possibility. Long-eared Owls tend to nest in dense tree stands next to open grasslands or shrublands, a habitat mix the Park certainly provides. ✕

Friends of the Rio Bosque Membership Application

Name: _____ Address: _____ _____ E-mail: _____ _____	<input type="checkbox"/> Bosque Buddy (12 and under) \$4 <input type="checkbox"/> Student \$8 <input type="checkbox"/> Senior (62+) \$8 <input type="checkbox"/> Individual \$10 <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+
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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 26
Thurs., Aug 23
Thurs., Sep 27
6:30 - 7:30 p.m.
411 Burges Hall
UTEP
Info: 915-545-5214

GOOD WORK

As students of Rio Bosque history know, staggering quantities of broken glass and other debris accumulated at the Park in the past. Many volunteers helped remove this debris over the last decade. In April, Cub Scouts in **Pack 209** and students from **Henderson Middle School** joined the fray. Together, they gathered 2 pallet loads of broken glass and made an impressive difference along the Park's Bosque Trail.

Ecological restoration at the Park also got a shot in the arm recently from our dedicated volunteers. On April 24, a contingent of **UTEP Teacher Education** students, armed with saws and loppers, took dead aim at a stand of saltcedar in the Park's interior and reduced it to stumps and kindling. Then on April 27, students from **Chapin High School** planted wolfberry seedlings along the Park's main watercourse. They had grown these plants from seeds collected at the Park in 2006. Volunteers continue to be the life blood of Rio Bosque Wetlands Park. ✂

FAUNAL MONITORING

On the heels of last summer's rains, relatively mild, relatively wet weather this spring continued to provide favorable conditions for the Park's small mammals, reptiles, amphibians and arthropods. Has this affected results from our monthly faunal monitoring sessions? Join us to find out (see calendar, next column). Most of the work starts at 8 a.m., but bird surveys begin at sunrise. Contact John Sproul (747-8663) to learn the start time for upcoming bird surveys. ✂

FOR MORE INFORMATION

<http://www.riobosque.org>

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

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:

JULY

Sat., July 14	Bird Tour	8 a.m.
Sat., July 21	Community Workday	8 a.m.
Sun., July 22	Introductory Tour	8 a.m.
Sat., July 28	Faunal Monitoring	8 a.m.

AUGUST

Sun., Aug 5	Bird Tour	8 a.m.
Sat., Aug 11	Introductory Tour	8 a.m.
Sat., Aug 18	Community Workday	8 a.m.
Sat., Aug 25	Faunal Monitoring	8 a.m.

SEPTEMBER

Sat., Sept 1	Bird Tour	8 a.m.
Sat., Sept 8	Introductory Tour	8 a.m.
Sat., Sept 15	Community Workday	8 a.m.
Sat., Sept 22	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.

