

RIO BOSQUE NEWS

A newsletter reporting on events at Rio Bosque Wetlands Park

Center for Environmental Resource Management
University of Texas at El Paso



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A WALK IN THE PARK

It's no secret the river valley in the Paso del Norte region is a very different place today than it was historically. The wetlands, riverside forests and other rich habitats once found in the valley are now largely gone. What was that bygone valley like?

Imagine you are hiking along the river. It's late fall. The cottonwoods and willows have turned a brilliant golden yellow. You notice that a beaver has recently worked over several trees. Gnawed-off limbs lie at the water's edge.

As you walk along, several large coveys of Gambel's Quail explode from adjacent cover. Big groups of waterfowl rise in waves from a nearby wetland. A black-tailed jackrabbit bolts across your path and zig-zags through a nearby saltbush flat. A harsh, insistent call comes from the tornillo stand to your right. You spot a Harris's Hawk as it lifts off a limb and joins two others already airborne. In quick succession, a desert cottontail and hispid cotton rat scoot across the trail and disappear into cover.

Now, you're next to a shallow body of open water. Ducks dot the surface. From the corner of your eye, you glimpse a bolt of brilliant fiery red. You wheel to see a male Vermilion Flycatcher land on a dead sunflower stalk right in front of you.



Cinnamon Teal numbers peak at Rio Bosque in January and early February (Ray Waite photo).

The day is winding down. You approach a thickly wooded area, and an owl flushes from the trees. You stop and peer in. You see nothing. Then, what had looked like a broken limb begins staring back at you with bright yellow eyes. You keep looking and find other Long-eared Owls in this communal roost.

As you stop to admire the sunset, a group of coyotes begins a serenade to your right. Soon, a lone coyote answers to your left. As the colors of the sunset deepen, a Merlin flies quickly and purposefully to a dead cottonwood snag, its favored evening roost.

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+

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., Jan 24

Thurs., Feb 28

Thurs., Mar 27

6:30 - 7:30 p.m.

411 Burges Hall
UTEP

Info: 915-545-5214

A hike 100 years ago? No. As you've no doubt guessed, it took place last fall, at Rio Bosque Wetlands Park. With each year, a walk in the Park offers a clearer glimpse of our valley's past. Join us for a tour or visit on your own and see for yourself. ✂

BUILDING A BOSQUE

This spring, you'll have another special opportunity to "visit" Rio Bosque. The Friends of the Rio Bosque and UTEP's Centennial Museum are now working hard preparing for the upcoming exhibit, "**Building a Bosque: 10 Years of Habitat Restoration at Rio Bosque Wetlands Park**". When you visit the museum, you'll find one exhibit hall transformed into a virtual Rio Bosque. As you walk along a winding path, you'll be introduced to the diverse plant and animal resources of the Park. In another room, you'll learn the story of our changing river valley, the dramatic changes at Rio Bosque these past 10 years, and the project partners who've made it all possible. The planned opening is **April 23**, and the exhibit will run through late June. Watch for our next (April) newsletter for full details. ✂

VOLUNTEER POWER

Congratulations and thanks to everyone who volunteered at Rio Bosque in 2007! You worked a record-breaking total of **at least** 1,258.5 hours on habitat management, education programs, facilities installation and ecosystem monitoring at the Park. That figure is conservative. It only includes hours we could document, and it doesn't include work on education, outreach and other activities away from the Park. Any way you measure it, volunteers were vital to Rio Bosque in 2007. ¡Mil gracias! ✂

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:

JANUARY

Sat., Jan 12	Bird Tour	3 p.m.
Sat., Jan 19	Community Workday	9 a.m.
Sun., Jan 20	Introductory Tour	3 p.m.
Sat., Jan 26	Bird Survey	sunrise

FEBRUARY

Sat., Feb 2	Bird Tour	9 a.m.
Sun., Feb 10	Introductory Tour	3 p.m.
Sat., Feb 16	Community Workday	9 a.m.
Sat., Feb 23	Bird Survey	sunrise

MARCH

Sun., Mar 2	Bird Tour	3 p.m.
Sat., Mar 8	Introductory Tour	3 p.m.
Sat., Mar 15	Community Workday	9 a.m.
Sat., Mar 22	Faunal Monitoring	9 a.m.

Meeting place for all activities except bird surveys 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. Bird surveys start at the Park's visitor center.

