

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. 32

July 2009

SUMMER WATER

For the first time in 7 years, we have some water – at least intermittently – at Rio Bosque Wetlands Park during the growing season. Since late April, we've been testing the park's new water-supply well, operating it for up to a week at a time. We're learning its capabilities and trying to maximize the distance water from the well can travel in the park's main channel.

That channel follows an old bend of the Rio Grande that was cut off when the river was straightened in the mid-1930s. It winds through the park for just over 2 miles. How much of the channel have we been able to flood?

The well produces an estimated 700-800 gallons of water per minute. An impressive flow, but very quickly that water begins seeping back into the soil. By the time it has traveled 0.5 miles, the amount of seepage matches the flow from the well. The flow in the channel ends.

Along the flooded stretch, there are 8 cottonwoods and willows. All are thriving right now. The bulk of our cottonwoods and willows, though, are farther downstream, in the dry stretch. The Friends of the Rio Bosque's water trailer continues to get weekly use delivering water to many of these trees.



The new well at the park's inlet in operation, April 29, 2009.

To meet our goals for restoration of wetland and riparian habitats at Rio Bosque, we need a small, steady flow the length of the channel during the growing season. Initial indications are the new well is a positive first step, but other water sources will be needed before meaningful restoration of these habitats can be achieved at the park. ✂

THE KITE REPORT

The White-tailed Kites that began nesting at Rio Bosque in February have had quite a spring. The pair has been consistently present at the



Friends of the Rio Bosque Membership Application

Name: _____

Address: _____

E-mail: _____

- Bosque Buddy (12 and under)\$6
- Student or Senior (62+)..... \$10
- Individual \$15
- Family \$20
- Bosque Booster \$50
- Cottonwood Commando \$75-\$249
- Restoration Patron \$250-\$499
- Wetlands Society \$500-\$999
- Life Member \$1,000

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 23

Thurs., Aug 27

Thurs., Sep 24

6:30 - 7:30 p.m.

414 Burges Hall
UTEP

Info: 915-747-8663

park since January 12.

White-tailed Kites are a recent addition to the El Paso-area avifauna, first documented locally in October 2000. The first record from the Rio Bosque area came in June 2001. Most subsequent local records have been from Rio Bosque.

The kites built their first nest at the park in an isolated tornillo. Unfortunately, that nest was not successful. But they persevered and started a new nest in April, this one nestled in the top of a large wolfberry shrub. Alas, it too was not successful.

This pair is tenacious. In June, we discovered a third nest, once again in a tornillo. As this newsletter goes to press, the female is on the nest, with the male on guard nearby. Will the third time be the charm for these birds? (To be continued...) ✂

VANDALS HIT VISITOR CENTER

After 4.5 years of relative freedom from theft and vandalism, the park's visitor center was broken into and vandalized on five occasions between March 14 and April 18. Newly installed deadbolts thwarted a sixth attempt on May 30. The first two break-ins, on successive nights, were the most damaging. After the second, we removed all remaining items of value from the building. The items stolen suggested novice thieves: Valuable tools went untouched, low-value items were taken, as were several expensive items of narrow utility and not very saleable on the street, like a conductivity/total-dissolved-solids meter. The biggest loss? Loss or damage to monitoring equipment meant we could not collect groundwater or weather data for 4 months. ✂

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:

JULY

Sat., July 11	Bird Tour	8 a.m.
Sat., July 18	Community Workday	8 a.m.
Sun., July 19	Introductory Tour	8 a.m.
Sat., July 25	Faunal Monitoring	8 a.m.

AUGUST

Sun., Aug 2	Bird Tour	8 a.m.
Sat., Aug 8	Introductory Tour	8 a.m.
Sat., Aug 15	Community Workday	8 a.m.
Sat., Aug 22	Faunal Monitoring	8 a.m.

SEPTEMBER

Sat., Sep 5	Bird Tour	8 a.m.
Sat., Sep 12	Introductory Tour	8 a.m.
Sat., Sep 19	Community Workday	8 a.m.
Sat., Sep 26	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.

Return Service Requested

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