

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. 34

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WILD IN THE CITY

Any time is a great time for wildlife at Rio Bosque Wetlands Park, but late fall and early winter – when water returns to the landscape – are especially productive. Here are some highlights from the past 3 months:

- Between October 7 and 11, two young birds fledged from the park's **White-tailed Kite** nest, completing the first documented successful nesting for this species in Trans-Pecos Texas.
- A male **Eurasian Wigeon**, first seen October 3, returned to the park for the 5th straight winter.
- With the return of water in late September, a **beaver** (or beavers) moved back to the park. It (they?) quickly discovered the nice stand of Goodding willows along the east edge of Wetland Cell 1 that had been growing undisturbed since 2002. Trees began falling left and right, and we spent most of November caging willows to make them less vulnerable.
- After above-average rainfall in 2008, we had abundant small-mammal populations in 2009. During the monthly live-trapping that is part of our faunal monitoring program, we captured 136 small mammals in 301 trap-nights during March-October 2009.
- The abundant small mammals are supporting lots of predators. One example: Two groups of **Harris's**



Beaver activity in Wetland Cell 1, Nov. 4, 2009.

Hawks nested successfully at Rio Bosque in 2009. In late October, a third group moved into the area, and up to 15 birds are now present! ✂

¡GRACIAS!

Sincere thanks go to the many generous organizations and individuals who made contributions in response to the vandalism, multiple break-ins and thefts at the park in 2009. Especially timely and helpful has been the Supplemental Environmental Pro-



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: Friends of the Rio Bosque, CERM-UTEP, 500 W. University Ave., El Paso, TX 79968-0684.

Next Meetings

Thurs., Jan 28

Thurs., Feb 25

Thurs., Mar 25

6:30 - 7:30 p.m.

209-A Burges Hall
UTEP

Info: 915-747-8663

ject ([SEP](#)) program of the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality. This program gives entities that incur environmental fines the chance to direct part of that fine to an appropriate environmental project in their community. Right around the time of the September break-ins, we learned a significant SEP award had been designated for Rio Bosque. We're using it to replace stolen tools.

Finally, kudos go to the El Paso Police Department for catching some of the thieves and recovering some of the tools stolen in September. The incriminating evidence? Fingerprints on a beer can left at the crime scene. ✂

RIVERSIDE CANAL PROJECT UNDERWAY

On October 17, El Paso County Water Improvement District No. 1 began work on its project to concrete-line 3 miles of the Riverside Canal, including 1.5 miles next to Rio Bosque Wetlands Park. Work this winter involves replacing the check structure located where the Franklin Feeder Canal splits from the Riverside Canal and building a short length of lined canal immediately upstream of the new structure. Work will stop next month with the start of the 2010 irrigation season, then resume next fall when the bulk of the canal lining is expected to take place.

On May 12, 2009, the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation released a [final environmental assessment \(EA\) and finding of no significant impact](#) for this project. The only public notification of this action was a legal notice in the classified section of the El Paso Times on June 18. As with previous drafts, the final

EA concludes lining the canal will have no impact on wildlife, groundwater, or Rio Bosque Wetlands Park. Time will tell if that assessment is correct. ✂

FOR MORE INFORMATION

www.riobosque.org

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

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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 9	Bird Tour	3 p.m.
Sat., Jan 16	Community Workday	9 a.m.
Sun., Jan 24	Introductory Tour	3 p.m.

FEBRUARY

Sat., Feb 6	Bird Tour	8 a.m.
Sun., Feb 14	Introductory Tour	3 p.m.
Sat., Mar 20	Community Workday	9 a.m.

MARCH

Sat., Mar 6	Bird Tour	3 p.m.
Sun., Mar 14	Introductory Tour	3 p.m.
Sat., Mar 20	Community Workday	9 a.m.
Sat., Mar 27	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

Center for Environmental
Resource Management
University of Texas at El Paso
500 West University Ave.
El Paso, TX 79968-0684

