

RIO BOSQUE NEWS

A newsletter reporting on events at Rio Bosque Wetlands Park

Center for Environmental Research and Management
University of Texas at El Paso



No. 35

April 2010

COTTONWOOD CORRIDOR

As part of the City of El Paso's stormwater master plan, El Paso Water Utilities (EPWU) recently deepened two stormwater basins in El Paso's Mission Valley – Basin G and Feather Lake II. At each site, many young Rio Grande cottonwoods had become established in the areas to be deepened and were to be removed as part of the projects.

Now, we hope to see them live on – at Rio Bosque Wetlands Park! Thanks to EPWU, we were able to harvest 104 cottonwood poles from these two sites before the construction started. We cut the poles in January while the trees were dormant, brought them to Rio Bosque, augered holes into the water table and planted the poles in January and February.

We planted the poles along the first half mile of the re-built former bend of the Rio Grande that winds through the park. With water from the park's new well, we can keep that stretch of channel wet intermittently in spring and summer, greatly improving prospects for the trees' survival.

The trees recently leafed out, and we're now nursing them through their critical first growing season. Over the next decade, we hope to see a lush cottonwood corridor develop along this stretch of channel. Thanks go to EPWU, both for making the trees



UTEP student Jarvi Ruiz and volunteer Judy Ackerman auger holes for cottonwood plantings, 10 Feb 2010.

available and for providing the pump that delivers the well water they will need to survive. ✂

PUBLIC ART / PUBLIC ACCESS

As many of you know, Rio Bosque can be hard to find and get to. We have long hoped to establish a new main entrance at the park's southeast corner, near the visitor center. This new entrance would provide direct, easy access from Socorro Road and link Rio Bosque with the Mission Trail.



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., Apr 22

Thurs., May 27

Thurs., June 24

6:30 - 7:30 p.m.

209-A Burges Hall
UTEP

Info: 915-747-8663

Now, thanks to the support of our partners, achievement of that goal is in sight. On Dec 22, 2009, the El Paso City Council approved the City's 2010 public-art plan. Included is \$200,000 for "improving signage and access at Rio Bosque Wetlands Park." Public art can make a new entrance off Socorro Road truly special. The process to select the artist is now underway.

Rio Bosque, of course, is on the opposite side of the Riverside Canal from Socorro Road. The new entrance makes sense only if there is a way to cross the canal here. Thanks to El Paso County Water Improvement District No. 1 (EP#1), that should soon be possible. Last winter, EP#1 replaced the Partidor Check Structure, located right at the point where a crossing is needed. And the new check structure includes a bridge. With appropriate safety features, visitors will be permitted to use this bridge for pedestrian access to the park.

Thanks to the foresight and generosity of the City's public-arts program and EP#1, the pieces for a new main entrance to Rio Bosque are starting to fall into place! ✂

BOSQUE BANTER

The cottonwoods aren't the only new plantings at Rio Bosque. On March 24, students from **Chapin High School** planted wolfberry seedlings and sand dropseed grass in several locations amongst the cottonwoods. Thanks, Huskies! ... Wildlife continues to make news: On Jan 21, following their successful nesting last year, **White-tailed Kites** returned, and a pair is again nesting. On Jan 30, we enjoyed our first **bobcat** sighting. And on Apr 10, a

female **Downy Woodpecker** foraging on a cottonwood represented the park's 229th bird species. ✂

FOR MORE INFORMATION

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

Sat., Apr 10	Bird Tour	8 a.m.
Sat., Apr 17	Community Workday	8 a.m.
Sat., Apr 24	Faunal Monitoring	8 a.m.
Sun., Apr 25	Wildflower Tour	4 p.m.

MAY

Sun., May 2	Wildflower Tour	4 p.m.
Sat., May 8	Bird Tour	8 a.m.
Sat., May 15	Community Workday	8 a.m.
Sat., May 22	Faunal Monitoring	7 a.m.

JUNE

Sun., Jun 6	Bird Tour	8 a.m.
Sat., Jun 12	Introductory Tour	8 a.m.
Sat., Jun 19	Community Workday	8 a.m.
Sat., Jun 26	Faunal Monitoring	7 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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