

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. 37

October 2010

ON THE WATER FRONT

Hauling water to thirsty trees continues to be the order of the day at Rio Bosque Wetlands Park.

The former bend of the Rio Grande that winds through the park is 2 miles long, and the park's well can keep 0.5 mile wet when no other water is available to the park. When we planted cottonwoods last winter, all were in this 0.5-mile reach to take advantage of the well water.

Last spring, water deliveries to Rio Bosque ended March 7. We began using the well soon thereafter. Since we had planted the trees above the winter high-water mark, they were at some distance from the well's more modest flow (see photo). When well water is in the channel, the trees benefit from a 1-foot water-table rise, but we still needed to provide additional water to the trees to help get their roots established. With the new cottonwoods, other recent plantings and trees planted in prior years all needing water, we began hauling treated wastewater to the park from the adjacent Roberto Bustamante Wastewater Treatment Plant three full days a week.

In mid-July, the well pump abruptly failed. Several trees died. We minimized the losses by upping the watering schedule to four full days a week. Sincere thanks go to Jamie Ackerman, Judy Ackerman,



Young cottonwoods getting established along the old river channel at Rio Bosque, July 9, 2010.

Hugo Davalos, Bill Hoover, Carlos Humphreys, Pat Rios, Jarvi Ruiz, John Salas, Gloria Villaverde and Bob Vines for their help with the watering this year. Thanks are also due El Paso Water Utilities for making the Bustamante Plant water available and Western Dewatering for its outstanding help addressing the problem of the damaged pump.

At this writing in late October, water deliveries to Rio Bosque have not yet resumed. We are still dry, still hauling water, and eagerly awaiting the return of water deliveries to the park. ✕

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., Oct 28

Thurs., Dec 2

6:30 - 7:30 p.m.

209-A Burges Hall
UTEP

Info: 915-747-8663

PUBLIC ART PROJECT ADVANCES

In August, the artist-selection panel for the public-art project at Rio Bosque selected [Heath Satow](#) of Alhambra, California to design and create a sculpture and associated signage for the park. His proposed sculpture, to be placed near the park's planned access road and parking area off Socorro Road, will depict a Harris's Hawk swooping past a tree limb towards the park. Total height of the sculpture is expected to be about 21 feet, with the hawk's wingspan a condorsque 10 feet. It promises to be a dramatic, riveting landmark, readily visible from Socorro Road. We're excited at the prospect of this unique and important addition to the park! ✂

BOSQUE BANTER

In August, with much-appreciated help from El Paso Water Utilities, El Paso County Water Improvement District No. 1 (El Paso No. 1) and the City of El Paso Parks and Recreation Department, we installed the park's new storage building at the Bustamante Wastewater Treatment Plant. Most park tools and other supplies are now at this site.

Faunal-monitoring notes: August brought a new addition to the herpetofauna of the park, a Great Plains skink (*Plestiodon obsoletus*) ... The final tally for small mammals live-trapped in 2010 was 40 in 294 trap-nights, compared to 136 in 301 trap-nights in 2009. No wonder our raptors had poor nesting success in 2010.

This fall and winter, El Paso No.1 is concrete-lining a 3-mile-long section of the Riverside Canal, in-

cluding 1.5 miles along the east and south boundaries of the park. Please be aware that access to Rio Bosque may be affected by construction traffic and other activities during this time. For the latest on park access, check our website. ✂

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:

OCTOBER

Sun., Oct 3	Bird Tour	8 a.m.
Sat., Oct 16	Community Workday	9 a.m.
Sun., Oct 17	Introductory Tour	4 p.m.
Sat., Oct 23	Faunal Monitoring	8 a.m.

NOVEMBER

Sat., Nov 6	Bird Tour	8 a.m.
Sat., Nov 20	Community Workday	9 a.m.
Sun., Nov 21	Introductory Tour	9 a.m.

DECEMBER

Sat., Dec 11	Bird Tour	3 p.m.
Sun., Dec 19	Introductory Tour	9 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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