

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. 42

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WATER NEWS

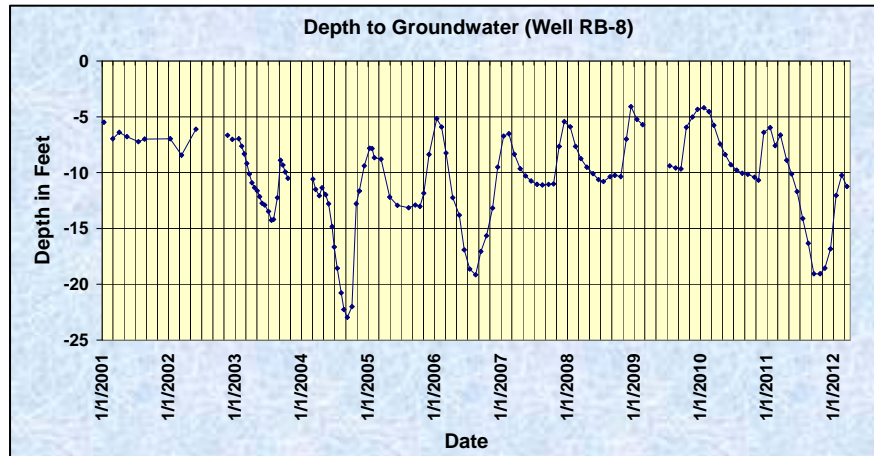
The rhythms of deluge and drought are instrumental in shaping South-western ecosystems. In wet years, plant and animal communities prosper. In dry years, they are challenged and tested.

We're now experiencing how drought affects the land at Rio Bosque. Last year was difficult. This year will likely be even more so.

The park received water for only 2.5 months this past fall and winter, and the volumes were not enough to flood many areas we normally flood. Less water at the site meant less groundwater recharge. Mid-winter groundwater levels at Rio Bosque were the lowest we've seen at that time of year since groundwater monitoring began at the park in 2001.

Now, another long, hot summer looms. Once again, instead of working to establish a functioning riparian ecosystem at Rio Bosque, we anticipate struggling just to keep our few cottonwoods and willows alive.

Though the immediate future is grim, there is a ray of hope on the horizon. Thanks to a partnership



At Rio Bosque, groundwater levels rise in late fall-early winter when the park receives water. They drop during the growing season when the park is mostly dry. In 2011, groundwater dropped to its lowest level since 2006. This past winter, due to limited water availability, it made only a limited recovery.

involving El Paso County Water Improvement District No. 1 (El Paso No. 1), the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the U.S. Section of the International Boundary and Water Commission, the Friends of the Rio Bosque and UTEP, there should soon be a turnout in place on the Riverside Canal that will make possible deliveries of irrigation water to the park. This new facility will be a major step forward in our ongoing efforts to address the park's greatest need: water during the growing season.



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 19

Thurs., May 24

Thurs., Jun 28

6:30 - 7:30 p.m.

209-A Burges Hall
UTEP

Info: 915-747-8663

The new turnout will give El Paso No. 1 the capability to deliver irrigation water to the park. For Rio Bosque to actually receive such water, we will need to develop agreements with water-rights holders who are willing to donate or sell some or all of their irrigation water for use at the park. If you fit this description, or know someone who might, we would love to discuss the possibilities with you. Please contact John Sproul (contact info to right).

Currently, the only water reliably available to the park during the growing season is the limited amount we produce from the park's well. When the well came online in 2009, its operation immediately became the park's largest single operating expense. Thanks go to the City of El Paso for providing the funds needed to operate this well.

Now, if we are successful in securing irrigation water for Rio Bosque, we can expect our water-supply costs to again increase significantly. Rio Bosque will be a customer of El Paso No. 1, and we will be paying the applicable annual taxes and water-delivery fees.

How can you help us meet these costs and bring additional water to the park? One avenue is through a tax-deductible contribution to the Rio Bosque Gift Fund. Checks, payable to UTEP, can be sent to: Rio Bosque Wetlands Park, CERM – UTEP, 500 W. University Ave., El Paso, TX 79968-0684. Please note on the check that your donation is for the Rio Bosque Gift Fund – Water. Many thanks for any support you can provide. ✂

FOR MORE INFORMATION

www.riobosque.org

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Want to help us save postage and paper by receiving this newsletter only via e-mail? Let John know.

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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 7	Bird Tour	8 a.m.
Sat., Apr 21	Community Workday	8 a.m.
Sat., Apr 28	Faunal Monitoring	8 a.m.
Sun., Apr 28	Introductory Tour	4 p.m.

MAY

Sun., May 6	Bird Tour	8 a.m.
Sat., May 19	Community Workday	8 a.m.
Sun., May 20	Introductory Tour	8 a.m.
Sat., May 26	Faunal Monitoring	7 a.m.

JUNE

Sun., Jun 3	Introductory Tour	8 a.m.
Sat., Jun 9	Bird Tour	7 a.m.
Sat., Jun 16	Community Workday	8 a.m.
Sat., Jun 23	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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