

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. 44

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RIO BOSQUE HAS WATER!

After a 287-day dry spell, the park began receiving treated effluent from the adjacent Roberto Bustamante Wastewater Treatment Plant on November 11. By November 19, over 1000 ducks were using the park, with more on the way. Thanks, as always, go to El Paso Water Utilities and El Paso County Water Improvement District No. 1 for making these deliveries possible.

WATER PROSPECTS BRIGHTEN

Our goal at Rio Bosque Wetlands Park is to approximate the mosaic of habitats characteristic of the Rio Grande and its floodplain in pre-settlement days. Since the start of the Rio Bosque project, the greatest obstacle to achieving this goal has been lack of water during the growing season. The 2002 [Biological Management Plan](#) for the park offers this guidance on securing water for Rio Bosque during that critical time of year:

Working with El Paso Water Utilities, El Paso County Water Improvement District #1, and other partners, secure a flow of water through the park in spring and summer. The minimum need is for a small base flow through the main channel, supplemented by occasional pulses of higher flow for overbank flooding and flood-irrigation of the wetland cells. This will maintain the saturated soil conditions required by the wetland vegetation and will help to maintain groundwater levels required by the riparian trees.



The USIBWC begins work on the channel that will connect a turnout on the Riverside Canal with Rio Bosque's main channel, November 13, 2012.

Now, thanks to our partners, a clear path towards providing these flows is taking shape. In November, work began on the planned turnout connecting the Riverside Canal with the park. The U.S. Section, International Boundary and Water Commission (USIBWC) is building a channel that can deliver water from the turnout to the park's main water channel. Once the delivery channel is in place, El Paso County Water Improvement District No. 1 (El Paso #1) will install the turnout. Funding for the turnout comes



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 24

Thurs., Feb 28

Thurs., Mar 28

6:30 - 7:30 p.m.

209-A Burges Hall
UTEP

Info: 915-747-8663

from the Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS).

The turnout will give us the ability to receive periodic deliveries of irrigation water, the pulses of higher flow we seek during spring and summer. For a steady base flow through the main channel, an additional source is needed.

Enter El Paso Water Utilities (EPWU) and the City's Public Service Board (PSB), which oversees EPWU operation and management. As EPWU and the PSB address the challenges brought into focus by the current drought, they want to increase reuse of treated water from the City's wastewater-treatment plants, including the Roberto Bustamante Plant next to Rio Bosque. Incorporating wetlands at Rio Bosque into a reuse project offers a way to deliver some water from the Bustamante Plant to the park year-round.

EPWU and the PSB are now moving actively in that direction. A key first step: they are working with the City of El Paso to transfer Rio Bosque into the PSB's land inventory. This move would enable EPWU to provide some water to the park year-round as part of its water-management operations, without cost to the park. Rio Bosque would continue to be a public park; UTEP would continue as site manager.

On November 14, the PSB unanimously approved a [joint resolution with the El Paso City Council](#) to accomplish the land transfer. It is scheduled to come before the City Council for approval **November 27**. Thanks to EPWU, the PSB, the City of El Paso, El Paso #1, the USIBWC, and the USFWS, a brighter water future for Rio Bosque is starting to emerge. Watch for more news in our next newsletter. ✂

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:

DECEMBER

Sun., Dec 9	Bird Tour	8 a.m.
Sat., Dec 15	Introductory Tour	3 p.m.

JANUARY

Sat., Jan 5	Bird Tour	3 p.m.
Sat., Jan 19	Community Workday	9 a.m.
Sun., Jan 20	Introductory Tour	9 a.m.

FEBRUARY

Sun., Feb 3	Bird Tour	8 a.m.
Sat., Feb 9	Introductory Tour	3 p.m.
Sat., Feb 16	Community Workday	9 a.m.

MARCH

Sat., Mar 2	Bird Tour	3 p.m.
Sun., Mar 10	Introductory Tour	4 p.m.
Sat., Mar 16	Community Workday	9 a.m.
Sat., Mar 23	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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