

RIO BOSQUE NEWS

A newsletter reporting on events at Rio Bosque Wetlands Park

Center for Environmental Resource Management
The University of Texas at El Paso



No. 49

April 2014

YEAR TWELVE

Water deliveries to Rio Bosque from the Roberto Bustamante Wastewater Treatment Plant ended Feb 2. The park's wells are currently the only sources of water for the site. For the 12th straight year, we expect a spring and summer with Rio Bosque largely dry. Continuing drought and a continuing low water table presage another challenging year at the park.

Our situation is better than last year, though. The new well El Paso Water Utilities (EPWU) installed near the visitor center last fall is contributing additional water to the old river channel within the park. Also, the park's 2 windmills were not in place and operating last year until late April. This year, we began operating them in mid-February.

The big change, though, involves the well near the park's inlet. The past 3 years in spring and summer, water from this well flowed ~2,100 feet in the old river channel before it all seeped into the channel bed. This year, the water is currently flowing ~7,150 feet...and is still advancing. We think fine sediments in water delivered to the park last fall/winter may have partly sealed the channel bed. The channel reach now being kept wet includes many cottonwoods and willows that required supplemental watering in recent years. As the weather warms, the water in the channel may retreat, but for now our watering needs are much reduced. ✈



Bitterweed (*Hymenoxys odorata*) is now blooming throughout Rio Bosque. The peak should be in mid-to-late April. Photo: April 2, 2014.

EPWU, CORPS INK AGREEMENT

In January, EPWU and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps) entered into a Feasibility Cost Sharing Agreement for the Corps to study the feasibility of doing an aquatic ecosystem restoration project at Rio Bosque under Sec. 206 of the Water Resources Development Act of 1996. The multi-year study, now underway, is scheduled to finish in June 2016. It will result in recommendations for measures that



Friends of the Rio Bosque Membership Application

Name:	<input type="checkbox"/> Bosque Buddy (12 and under)\$6
	<input type="checkbox"/> Student or <input type="checkbox"/> Senior (62+) \$10
Address:	<input type="checkbox"/> Individual\$15
	<input type="checkbox"/> Family\$20
	<input type="checkbox"/> Bosque Booster\$50
	<input type="checkbox"/> Cottonwood Commando\$75-\$249
	<input type="checkbox"/> Restoration Patron.....\$250-\$499
E-mail:	<input type="checkbox"/> Wetlands Society\$500-\$999
	<input type="checkbox"/> 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 24
Thurs., May 22
Thurs, Jun 26

6:30 - 7:30 p.m.
209-A Burges Hall
UTEP

Info: 915-747-8663

can further restoration of wetland and riparian habitat at Rio Bosque and provide complementary recreational benefits. Stakeholder and community involvement is an integral part of the project. The Corps expects to hold public scoping meetings under the National Environmental Policy Act in May 2015. The Corps “is committed to making this project meet local goals, objectives, and expectations and to complement ongoing and planned efforts for restoration.” Stay tuned. ✂

BOSQUE NOTES

- The Texas Department of Transportation is now performing a transportation-planning study – the **Border Highway East Study** – for the area between I-10 and the Rio Grande from Loop 375 near the

Zaragoza Port of Entry south to the Fabens Port of Entry. One option under study: a potential new highway that would pass just east of Rio Bosque on the opposite side of the Riverside Canal from the park. It would be in an area that now provides an open-space buffer for the park and that includes the area planned for a new entrance to the park from Socorro Rd. More details: [Border Highway East](#).

- Congratulations and thanks go to **Sal Quintanilla**, who in January completed 4 years as president of the Friends of the Rio Bosque. We welcome **Richard Teschner** as the new president, with Sal now serving as vice president.

- As the photo on the previous page shows, the park is enjoying a fine display of **bitterweed** this spring. To see the display, join us for one of our April tours (see below) or check it out on your own. The best sites border the areas that flood in winter. ✂



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Return Service Requested

RIO BOSQUE CALENDAR

Join us at Rio Bosque for a free walking tour or to help with habitat management, park maintenance or faunal monitoring. Coming up:

APRIL			MAY			JUNE		
19 (Sat.)	Workday	8 a.m.	10 (Sat.)	Bird Tour	7 a.m.	8 (Sun.)	Introductory Tour	8 a.m.
19 (Sat.)	Introductory Tour	4 p.m.	17 (Sat.)	Workday	8 a.m.	14 (Sat.)	Bird Tour	6:30 a.m.
26 (Sat.)	Faunal Monitoring	8 a.m.	18 (Sun.)	Introductory Tour	8 a.m.	21 (Sat.)	Workday	8 a.m.
27 (Sun.)	Bird Tour	8 a.m.	24 (Sat.)	Faunal Monitoring	7 a.m.	28 (Sat.)	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.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

www.riobosque.org

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