

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. 51

October 2014

PIPELINE PROGRESS

In July, the City of El Paso's Public Service Board (PSB) awarded CMD Endeavors of El Paso the contract for building the planned pipeline from the Roberto Bustamante Wastewater Treatment Plant to Rio Bosque Wetlands Park. On September 2, El Paso Water Utilities (EPWU) gave CMD notice to proceed with the project. Work on the 36"-diameter pipeline is underway!

With the pipeline, more water will become available to Rio Bosque during the growing season. We'll be able to distribute that water more efficiently, especially to the large, shallow basins (wetland cells) where opportunities to establish wetland habitat at the park are best. We'll be able to manage the flow of water through the park in a way that better mimics natural processes. And the additional water will provide groundwater recharge that can help offset the big seasonal water-table declines the park now experiences. Conditions at Rio Bosque are about to become much more favorable for establishing wetland and riparian (riverside) habitat.

The PSB and EPWU deserve thanks and high praise for their vision in making the pipeline project possible. Construction is expected to be complete by December 21. Next year will be an exciting one at Rio Bosque! ✨



Young Goodding willows are now growing at many locations along the former bend of the Rio Grande that winds through Rio Bosque. Photo: Sept. 29, 2014.

SUMMER WATER

Of course, this year has also been eventful at the park. Thanks to the park's wells, the former bend of the Rio Grande that winds through Rio Bosque had water flowing for most of its length during summer for the first time in 12 years. A narrow ribbon of wetland and riparian habitat quickly began to develop. Walk along the channel today and you'll find new Rio Grande cottonwood and Goodding willow sap-



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

Next Meetings
Thurs., Oct 23
Thurs., Dec 4
6:30 - 7:30 p.m.
209-A Burges Hall
UTEP

Info: 915-747-8663

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.

lings in many locations, harbingers of the riparian-forest habitat that will emerge over time. ✂

THE BEETLES

In 2009, subtropical tamarisk beetles (*Diorhabda sublineata*) were released at several sites along the Rio Grande near Presidio, Texas, as part of efforts to control the exotic tree saltcedar biologically. The beetles quickly began spreading upriver. They reached El Paso in 2013.

This summer, their numbers surged throughout the El Paso area, including Rio Bosque. The beetles and their larvae feed exclusively on saltcedar. They eat the leaves and girdle small branches, defoliating the tree. After several years, repeated cycles of defoli-

ation and regrowth can weaken a tree to the point where it dies.

When the site-preparation work for the wetland project at Rio Bosque took place in 1997, saltcedar was removed from large areas. Two stands, though, were deliberately left to retain some woodland habitat at the park. Our long-term plan: remove them once extensive native woodlands became established.

This summer, with the beetles and their larvae munching away, those remnant saltcedar stands experienced dramatic changes. Normally green, they became a mottled mix of green and brown. It looks like we have a new partner in our saltcedar-removal efforts at Rio Bosque. ✂



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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:

OCTOBER			NOVEMBER			DECEMBER		
11 (Sat.)	Bird Tour	8 a.m.	9 (Sun.)	Introductory Tour	9 a.m.	7 (Sun.)	Bird Tour	3 p.m.
18 (Sat.)	Workday	9 a.m.	15 (Sat.)	Workday	9 a.m.	13 (Sat.)	Introductory Tour	9 a.m.
19(Sun.)	Introductory Tour	4 p.m.	22 (Sat.)	Bird Tour	3 p.m.			
25 (Sat.)	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.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

www.riobosque.org

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