

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. 52

January 2015

PIPELINE UPDATE

At this writing in early January, work on the new pipeline from the Roberto Bustamante Wastewater Treatment Plant to Rio Bosque Wetlands Park is complete except for a ~600-foot gap where the pipeline would cross the right-of-way for the old Rio Intercepting Drain, north of the park. El Paso County Water Improvement District #1 (El Paso #1) has not yet granted El Paso Water Utilities a license to cross this right-of-way. The next opportunity for a decision on the requested license will be at El Paso #1's board meeting on January 14. ✂

WATER NOTES

It has been an unusual fall and winter at Rio Bosque. As of January 4, the park had received water from the Bustamante Plant for only one week in mid-November. For much of the rest of the time, pipeline construction required keeping key areas dry. Thanks to water from one of our wells and from El Paso #1's turnout on the Riverside Canal, we've maintained a flow in the old river channel within the park, but the wetland cells – the large shallow basins normally flooded in late fall and early winter – have been dry. Although 2014 was a banner year for North American nesting ducks, waterfowl activity at the park so far this winter has been almost nil. ✂



This Great Pondhawk at Rio Bosque on Oct 6, 2014 represented the first record for El Paso County and third for Trans-Pecos Texas. Photo: Liz DeMoultre.

WILD THINGS

Even with limited water, there has been some notable wildlife activity in recent months:

- In mid-to-late September, a juvenile **Sabine's Gull**, an Arctic-nesting bird rarely found in El Paso, frequented the Riverside Canal for several days and could be seen at times from the park.
- When Liz DeMoultre photographed a **Great Pondhawk** at the park on



Friends of the Rio Bosque Membership Application

Name: _____	<input type="checkbox"/> Bosque Buddy (12 and under)\$6
Address: _____	<input type="checkbox"/> Student or <input type="checkbox"/> Senior (62+) \$10
_____	<input type="checkbox"/> Individual \$15
E-mail: _____	<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
_____	<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

Wed., Jan 21
6:00 – 8:30 p.m.
The El Paso Club
201 E. Main, El Paso
Thurs., Feb 26
Thurs., Mar 26
6:30 - 7:30 p.m.
209-A Burges Hall
UTEP
Info: 915-747-8663

October 6, it represented not only a 1st documented record of this dragonfly for El Paso County but just the 3rd for Trans-Pecos Texas.

- **White-tailed Kites** have not nested successfully at Rio Bosque since 2011. In mid-November, a 2nd kite joined the single bird that had been present all summer and fall. With serious courtship behavior already evident, we have high hopes for 2015.
- On a sad note, the **collared peccary** or javelina that first appeared at the park in early June was killed in a collision with a truck along the Riverside Canal levee road in early November.
- With water limited in summer, the 3 Wood Duck nest boxes at Rio Bosque have never held nesting ducks, but **Western Screech-Owls** roost in them occasionally. This fall and winter, screech-owls have occupied all 3 boxes at one time or another. ✂

NEW BURROWING OWL DISPLAY

Burrowing Owls are common, charismatic and conspicuous birds at Rio Bosque. Thanks to the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department (TPWD), the El Paso Zoo and the El Paso Zoological Society, the park now has an eye-catching and informative new interpretive display featuring this species. You can find it along the Wetland Trail loop in the interior of the park.

Lois Balin and Cesar Méndez of TPWD provided the content for the display, Paul Dumond of the Zoo's staff provided the graphic-design work, and the El Paso Zoological Society's Conservation Fund sponsored the project. Many thanks to all! ✂



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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:

JANUARY			FEBRUARY			MARCH		
10 (Sat.)	Bird Tour	8 a.m.	8 (Sun.)	Bird Tour	8 a.m.	8 (Sun.)	Bird Tour	3 p.m.
18 (Sun.)	Introductory Tour	3 p.m.	14 (Sat.)	Introductory Tour	3 p.m.	14 (Sat.)	Introductory Tour	9 a.m.
24 (Sat.)	Workday	9 a.m.	21 (Sat.)	Workday	9 a.m.	21 (Sat.)	Workday	9 a.m.
						28 (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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