

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. 54

July 2015

MAGIC

“If there is magic on this planet, it is contained in water.”

--Loren Eiseley

The Immense Journey (1957)

On May 1, for the first time, Rio Bosque Wetlands Park began receiving water via the new pipeline from the Roberto Bustamante Wastewater Treatment Plant. The Friends of the Rio Bosque and many supporters gathered at the park that day to celebrate this special occasion.

In keeping with our focus on stewardship of the river-valley environment, the morning began with a Native American blessing of the land and water. Brief remarks followed on the importance of the pipeline and the many partners who have helped shape the Rio Bosque project. Then – to a rousing cheer – park supporters opened a valve allowing water to flow from the pipeline to the former bend of the Rio Grande that winds through the park. Two additional discharge points deliver water from the pipeline directly to the park’s two main wetland cells.

The results have been magical. Water is flowing the entire 2-mile length of the old river channel. For the first time in 13 years, parts of both wetland cells are



Water discharges from the new pipeline into Wetland Cell 1 at Rio Bosque Wetlands Park, June 30, 2015.

consistently flooded in summer, currently 5 acres in Cell 1 and 6 acres in Cell 2. Within an hour of the start of deliveries, water birds began exploring the newly flooded areas. These areas are now hotbeds of activity, alive with a diverse and constantly changing mix of ducks, wading birds and shore birds. As wetland vegetation begins to emerge, they have become lush and green. In Cell 1, seedling willows now dot the shoreline in many places.

Less visible, but equally important, is the groundwater recharge the new water deliveries provide. In

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., July 23
Thurs., Aug 27
Thurs., Sep 24
6:30 - 7:30 p.m.
206 Kelly Hall
UTEP

Info: 915-747-8663

2014, the Rio Bosque water table dropped more than 5 feet from January 1 to July 1. This year, it rose almost 2 feet. We began 2015 with groundwater levels 6 feet below where they were on Jan 1, 2014. Now, we're 1 foot above where we were last July 1.

Deliveries via the pipeline will continue through the end of September. We expect a dry period in October, then a resumption of deliveries, and full flooding of the wetland cells, in November. ✂

KITE TALES

Not all the action this year has been in the wetland cells. An uptick in rainfall the previous 2 years led to increased small-mammal numbers, to the benefit of the park's mammalian and avian predators, most

notably our pair of White-tailed Kites. They nested successfully this year for the first time in 4 years. After showing courtship behavior as early as last December, they re-occupied a nest used unsuccessfully last year. By late February, the female was on eggs. By late March, the first eggs hatched. In early May, 3 birds fledged, the most ever at the park!

But that was only the first surprise. In mid-to-late April, with the young half-grown, the adults built a second nest 250 yards away! By early May, before the young had left the first nest, the female was consistently on the new nest. By mid-June, we saw signs of young in the new nest. At least 2 are now growing rapidly. Double-clutching, we've since learned, is fairly common in White-tailed Kites when conditions are favorable. ✂



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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:

JULY			AUGUST			SEPTEMBER		
11 (Sat.)	Bird Tour	7 a.m.	9 (Sun.)	Introductory Tour	8 a.m.	12 (Sat.)	Bird Tour	8 a.m.
18 (Sat.)	Workday	8 a.m.	15 (Sat.)	Workday	8 a.m.	19 (Sat.)	Workday	8 a.m.
19 (Sun.)	Introductory Tour	8 a.m.	22 (Sat.)	Faunal Monitoring	7 a.m.	20 (Sun.)	Introductory Tour	8 a.m.
25 (Sat.)	Faunal Monitoring	7 a.m.	23 (Sun.)	Bird Tour	8 a.m.	26 (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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