

# 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



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## WHAT'S IN A NAME?

On December 14, 1973, the U.S. Department of the Interior conveyed 276.92 acres located along the Rio Grande in southeast El Paso to the City of El Paso under the Federal Lands to Parks Program. The parcel became El Paso's largest City-owned park. Adjacent lands added in later years brought it to its current size of 372 acres.

The City named its new property Rio Bosque Park – “Rio” for its location next to the Rio Grande, “Bosque” for the extensive woodlands found at the site. Those woodlands included a few native cottonwoods, willows and mesquites, but the vast majority of the trees were exotic saltcedars.

Today, the landscape is much different. An 18-foot-tall border wall separates the park from the Rio Grande, severing any connection between the two. And the saltcedars, once widespread throughout the park, have been reduced to 2 remnant stands.

Still, Rio Bosque remains an appropriate name, but now for different reasons. The "Rio" defining the park today is the former bend of the Rio Grande that winds through the park for ~2 miles. Cut off when the river was channelized in the 1930s, this bend was re-built in 1997 as part of the wetland project at the park. And “Bosque” now applies to two defining



A cottonwood-willow bosque continues to develop along the old river channel at Rio Bosque Wetlands Park.  
(Photo: December 6, 2019)

features: the cottonwoods and willows growing more extensive every year along that old river bend and the screwbean mequite (tornillo) bosques now widespread in the park's uplands. The name Rio Bosque is even more appropriate today than it was in 1973! ✈

## BIRD BASH REHASH

The Big Bosque Bird Bash held at the park Nov 10 was a big hit! Many thanks go to the Friends of the Rio Bosque for organizing the bird bash and the City of El Paso's Parks and Recreation Department for its great support



### Friends of the Rio Bosque Membership Application

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

- Life Member ..... \$1,000
- Wetlands Society ..... \$500-\$999
- Restoration Patron ..... \$250-\$499
- Cottonwood Commando ..... \$75-\$249
- Bosque Booster ..... \$50
- Family ..... \$20
- Individual ..... \$15
- Student or \_\_\_ Senior (62+) ..... \$10
- Bosque Buddy (12 and under) ..... \$6

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 22  
Wed., Feb 26  
Wed., Mar 25

6:30 – 7:30 p.m.  
206 Kelly Hall  
UTEP

Info: 915-747-8663

providing and setting up tents, tables and chairs for the event. Thanks also go to the El Paso/Trans-Pecos Audubon Society, Frontera Land Alliance, Texas Parks and Wildlife Department, and Trans-Pecos Chapter of the Texas Master Naturalists for participating and sharing their knowledge of our region's environment with visitors that day. ✂

## **NEW RIO BOSQUE WEBSITE**

Fans of the Rio Bosque website were dismayed when they could not access it in recent weeks. Now it is back. The site is part of the broader website of UTEP's Center for Environmental Resource Management (CERM). CERM has been updating its site, a process that included a move to a new web address.

The park's pages on this new site are now live at: <https://www.utep.edu/cerm/rio-bosque/rio-bosque-home.html>. A mouthful to be sure, but our handy alias, [www.riobosque.org](http://www.riobosque.org), should also send you to this new address. At present, much of the content from the former Rio Bosque site is not yet on the new site. The park's information-technology staff hopes to restore it in the days (months? years?) ahead. ✂

## **FRIENDS OF THE RIO BOSQUE**

January is when annual dues are due for the Friends of the Rio Bosque. Are you a member? You'll soon receive a renewal notice. If you are not, now is a great time to join (see front). The Friends are the heart of the Rio Bosque project and deserve your support. ✂



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## **RIO BOSQUE CALENDAR**

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

<b>JANUARY</b>			<b>FEBRUARY</b>			<b>MARCH</b>		
11 (Sat.)	Birding Tour	8 a.m.	2 (Sun.)	Birding Tour	8 a.m.	1 (Sun.)	Birding Tour	3 p.m.
18 (Sat.)	Workday	9 a.m.	8 (Sat.)	Introductory Tour	3 p.m.	14 (Sat.)	Introductory Tour	9 a.m.
19 (Sun.)	Introductory Tour	3 p.m.	15 (Sat.)	Workday	9 a.m.	21 (Sat.)	Workday	9 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](http://www.riobosque.org)

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