

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. 72

April 2020

CORONAVIRUS DISEASE 2019

The world has changed with the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic, including Rio Bosque Wetlands Park. Since mid-March, tours, workdays and other public events at the park have been canceled. As you'll see in the calendar, we've scheduled events for May and June, but that schedule is tenuous. Check www.riobosque.org for updates as we get closer to the event dates. On April 2, the restrictions ratcheted up another notch: Pursuant to the amended "Stay Home, Work Safe" [emergency directive](#) the City of El Paso enacted April 1, we closed the park to public use until further notice. We look forward to the day when it is safe for these restrictions to be lifted. ✂



Girl Scouts plant a cottonwood pole at Rio Bosque Wetlands Park, Feb 22, 2020. All 5 of the trees the girls planted that day are now thriving.

WINTER WATER NEWS

It was a good winter for water at Rio Bosque. In most years, deliveries of treated wastewater end in early February, the wetland cells go dry, and the ducks leave. This year, thanks to El Paso County Water Improvement District #1, the deliveries continued until March 15. This was a boon not only for the ducks and other waterbirds but also for the cottonwood and willow poles we planted this winter. It prolonged the period when groundwater recharge from the wetland cells took place, thereby prolonging the high water table that is helping those plantings get established.

More good water news: Our well near the park's visitor center, down since last July, is again in action. Thanks go to El Paso Water for bringing it back to life! It wasn't easy. Ultimately, the pump, motor and a variable-frequency drive all had to be replaced, and a damaged section of water line repaired. The irrigation season started in mid-March this year, almost 3 months earlier than last year. With irrigation water available and both of our 2 electric-powered wells now operating, water continues to flow in the old river channel at the park. In May, deliveries of treated wastewater will resume and partly reflood the wetland cells. ✂

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., May 27
Wed., June 24

6:30 – 7:30 p.m.
206 Kelly Hall
UTEP

Info: 915-747-8663

VOLUNTEER VIGOR

A great group of volunteers helped with our cottonwood and willow pole plantings this winter. Friends of the Rio Bosque, Texas Master Naturalists, Girl Scouts, and UTEP and El Paso Community College students all contributed. Many thanks to all!

The last events at the park before COVID-19-related restrictions came into play were tours for 3rd graders from Nixon Elementary School on March 10 and 12. Thanks go to Margaret Amada, Rosie Cubillos, Liz DeMoultrie, Ellen Faifer, Benny Pol, Heather Prather and Mariana Villalobos – all certified or in-training Master Naturalists – for making these visits memorable for our visitors. Ever since its inception, the Trans-Pecos Chapter of the Texas Master Naturalists has been an invaluable partner of Rio Bosque. ✕



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RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

IN THE SHADOW OF THE WALL

On Feb 27, U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) released a [request for input](#) (updated Apr 1) on proposed “border barrier” projects in El Paso County, Texas, and Doña Ana and Luna counties, New Mexico. The largest involves a 37-mile-long section of border wall built in El Paso County in 2008-09 – the wall that currently looms over the western boundary of Rio Bosque Wetlands Park. The proposal? Replace the existing 18-foot-tall wall with a larger, more formidable, 30-foot-tall “bollard-style” wall. It would be paid for using funds Congress authorized for the Department of Defense but the Trump administration redirected to border-wall construction under a “national-emergency” declaration. That maneuver is currently under legal challenge. The deadline for submitting input to CBP is **May 15**. ✕

RIO BOSQUE CALENDAR

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

APRIL

11 (Sat.) Intro. Tour 4:30 p.m.
18 (Sat.) ~~Workday~~ 8 a.m.
26 (Sun.) Birding Tour 8 a.m.

MAY

9 (Sat.) Birding Tour 7 a.m.
16 (Sat.) Workday 8 a.m.
17 (Sun.) Introductory Tour 8 a.m.

JUNE

7 (Sun.) Introductory Tour 8 a.m.
20 (Sat.) Workday 8 a.m.
27 (Sat.) Birding Tour 6:30 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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