

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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SPOTLIGHT ON MAMMALS

Mammals have garnered a lot of attention lately at Rio Bosque. **Bobcats** are now well established. Visitors are seeing them regularly, and some have documented their encounters with stunning photographs (right). The park's resident **beaver** (or beavers) is not seen often, but signs of its presence – mainly limbs gnawed off Goodding's willows – are all along the former bend of the Rio Grande that winds through the park. This beaver (or succession of beavers) has been present more than 2 years now. Finally, the trail cameras Lois Balin uses in her Burrowing Owl studies at Rio Bosque have documented another new mammal for the park: a **ringtail!** ✂



Bobcats are being seen with increasing frequency at Rio Bosque. (Photo: Kathleen Maas, Sept. 3, 2020)

NORTH, SOUTH, EAST, WEST

Change continues, in every direction, around Rio Bosque Wetlands Park:

To the West: The 18-foot-tall steel-mesh border wall built along the west side of the park in 2008-09 was replaced last fall and winter by a larger wall consisting of closely spaced 30-foot-tall steel bollards topped with solid steel plates.

To the East: El Paso County Water Improvement District No. 1 (EPCWID#1) worked all fall and winter concrete-lining the unlined segment of the

Riverside Canal along the park's east boundary. At this writing, the work is nearly complete. Formerly a broad, shallow, unlined canal that provided habitat for a wide range of migrating and wintering waterbirds, it is now a narrower, deeper, concrete-lined structure.

To the North: Also completed this winter was the Camino Real Regional Mobility Authority's [Winn Road Project](#), which involved resurfacing Pan American Drive and widening and extending Winn Road from its intersection with Pan American to the Zaragoza Port of Entry. The project is intended to alleviate traffic congestion by providing new ingress and egress routes for international truck traffic using the port of entry.

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
TBD

We hope to resume monthly meetings later this year, as pandemic conditions improve.
Info: 915-747-8663

The project could also spur new development north of Rio Bosque. Much of the road work took place within the footprint of the planned [Riverside International Industrial Center](#), ~200 acres of City property El Paso Water manages. At its southern end, this property is 0.3 miles north of the park, on the other side of the Riverside Canal. In 2016, El Paso Water, in anticipation of the property increasing in value due to the Winn Road Project, began efforts to lease it for industrial development, including clearing much of the land in 2018.

To the **South**: Look at early planning documents for the wetland project at Rio Bosque and you will see a large area immediately south of the park labeled “Phase II.” It is the former site of the Socorro Wastewater Treatment Plant, which ceased operation when

the Roberto Bustamante Plant became operational in 1991. “Phase II” was envisioned as a large reservoir that could receive water from a variety of sources, including water that had flowed through the park. The open-water habitat at the reservoir would enhance and complement the wetland habitat at Rio Bosque.

Back in 1995-97, the stars were not yet aligned for such a project. Last September, though, the City of El Paso’s Public Service Board determined the 302 acres at the former treatment plant “inexpedient to the water system,” and the City subsequently sold this land to EPCWID#1. EPCWID#1 is now pursuing funding and carrying out planning and engineering studies for a proposed Riverside Regulating Reservoir immediately south of Rio Bosque. ✂



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RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

RIO BOSQUE CALENDAR

Tours and workdays have resumed at Rio Bosque, but they remain subject to possible cancellation if COVID-19 conditions so dictate. Due to the pandemic, these events are limited to 9 participants plus the tour leader, and masks are required. Check www.riobosque.org for up-to-date information on any schedule changes.

APRIL			MAY			JUNE		
10 (Sat.)	Intro. Tour	4:30 p.m.	8 (Sat.)	Birding Tour	7 a.m.	5 (Sat.)	Introductory Tour	8 a.m.
17 (Sat.)	Workday	8 a.m.	15 (Sat.)	Workday	8 a.m.	19 (Sat.)	Workday	8 a.m.
25 (Sun.)	Birding Tour	8 a.m.	16 (Sun.)	Introductory Tour	8 a.m.	26 (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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