

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. 79

July 2022

THE DRY SEASON

2014 and 2015 were transformational years at Rio Bosque Wetlands Park. In 2014, the park's 2nd electric-powered well became fully operational. For the first time since 2002, water flowed in spring and summer almost the full 2-mile length of the former bend of the Rio Grande that winds through the park. Wetland and riparian vegetation along the channel flourished. In 2015, the pipeline delivering water from the Roberto Bustamante Wastewater Treatment Plant went into operation. From May through September, it could now deliver additional water to the old river channel and to the park's wetland cells.

2022 has been very different. When winter water deliveries from the Bustamante Plant ended February 14, we immediately began operating our two wells. This year, though, the wells could no longer maintain a flow the entire length of the old river channel. Day by day, the water retreated. By May 1, 80% of the channel was dry.

It stayed dry throughout May. Water deliveries via the pipeline were delayed until June 4. As temperatures climbed and dry conditions persisted, young trees planted or started naturally over the past year began to die. Mature cottonwoods and willows were severely stressed. For some, their fate is still uncertain. Throughout May, we trucked water to the park



By May, most of the former bend of the Rio Grande within Rio Bosque Wetlands Park was dry.
(Photo: May 21, 2022)

to give some of the trees a boost. Once water deliveries via the pipeline resumed, reflooding of the channel proved to be a slow process as the water soaked into the dry channel bed. On July 4, the downstream end of the channel was still dry for 1,100 feet.

There are two ways to view these events: 1) They are frustrating setbacks in our efforts to restore native habitats at the park, or 2) they reflect the periodic droughts that influenced the river-valley environment historically. Either way, 2022 is giving us a stark reminder: For wetland and riparian habitats, water is a vital resource. ✂

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.



FRIENDS OF THE

Next Meetings

Wed., July 27
Wed., Aug 24
Wed, Sep 28
6:30 – 7:30 p.m.
206 Kelly Hall
UTEP

Info: 915-747-8663

¡GRACIAS!

Our partners keep doing great things for Rio Bosque! Sincere thanks go to:

- **Insights El Paso** for providing, through its Student-Led Environmental Stewardship Initiative, two microscopes for use in educational programs at the park, a trail camera for monitoring wildlife activity, and a new printing of the brochures in the park's [educational brochure series](#).
- **UTEP's Building Maintenance Shop** for fabricating and installing the frame that now holds our new entrance sign at the park's Wetland Trailhead.
- **El Paso Water** for helping us with yet another water emergency. On June 22, we discovered a breach in the dam at the park's inlet that keeps water from backflowing from the old river channel to the



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500 West University Ave.
El Paso, TX 79968-0684

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

Riverside Drain. We quickly sought help from the Bustamante Plant, and, in less than an hour, a front-end loader and operator were onsite to deliver multiple loads of soil and repair the breach. ✂

EXPERIENCING THE BOSQUE

Since last fall, many workshops, tours, educational activities, performances and other public events have taken place at Rio Bosque Wetlands Park as part of a project called [Experiencing the Bosque](#). Each activity has had a purpose. The reflections and insights of the participants are informing the creation of an ambitious performance installation that will take place at the park on **Sat., November 5**. Through music and dance, performers will explore the importance of water to our river valley and the importance of Rio Bosque as a model of environmental stewardship. Look for full details in the October newsletter. ✂

RIO BOSQUE CALENDAR

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

JULY			AUGUST			SEPTEMBER		
9 (Sat.)	Birding Tour	7 a.m.	14 (Sun.)	Introductory Tour	8 a.m.	10 (Sat.)	Birding Tour	8 a.m.
16 (Sat.)	Workday	8 a.m.	20 (Sat.)	Workday	8 a.m.	17 (Sat.)	Workday	8 a.m.
17 (Sun.)	Introductory Tour	8 a.m.	27 (Sat.)	Birding Tour	8 a.m.	18 (Sun.)	Introductory Tour	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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Want to help support Rio Bosque?
Make a tax-deductible contribution to the
[Rio Bosque Wetlands Park Gift Fund!](#)