

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. 80

October 2022

EXPERIENCING THE BOSQUE

Saturday,
November 5, 2022
11 a.m. & 3 p.m.



Join us Saturday, November 5, to experience Rio Bosque Wetlands Park in a completely new and unexpected way! Through an immersive performance, you'll be invited to reflect on the importance of water to our region and its ecosystems.

There will be two shows, one at **11 a.m.** and one at **3 p.m.** Each will start with a welcome and beginning ritual by the park's visitor center. You will then walk the Bosque Trail and encounter movement and sound performance installations as you go. Three will be at set stations along the trail. There, you will witness the performers' investigation of living systems that depend on water in our river valley, emphasize sensory connection with the park and its living elements, and explore themes of cycles and change at Rio Bosque.

As you walk, you will also encounter other performers. Some will be scattered in multiple locations visible from the trail. Others will move along the trail with you.

Each show is expected to last 2 hours, but you can experience them at your own pace, for as long as you wish. Each will end at the visitor center with a closing activity and opportunity to reflect on all you have seen and heard. The event is free. You can travel to Rio Bosque on your own ([map and directions](#)) and park at one of our 3 trailheads. Or you can take advantage of complimentary transportation by bus from UTEP. For more: [Experiencing the Bosque](#). ✨

MEET OUR NEW WATER MANAGER

From a water-management perspective, 2022 continues to be a challenging year at Rio Bosque. In the previous 7 years, we had no difficulty getting water to flow in spring and summer the entire 2-mile length of the re-built former bend of the Rio Grande that winds through the park.

Not so, this year. By mid-June, even with all of our water sources available, water advanced only slowly in the channel. The downstream end remained dry. Trees in this stretch were stressed.

Many factors may have contributed to this situation: the longer-than-usual spring dry period, a water table at its lowest level in 8 years, reduced production from one of our wells, increased permeability of the channel bed, sediment accumulations in the channel and at water-control gates, vegetation retarding flows.

Still, we appeared to be making gradual progress ... until late June, when a new factor came into play. Our resident beaver, present for over 3.5 years now, decided the time had come to build a dam across the old river channel. We appreciate having a beaver present, and we appreciate it playing an active role shaping the Rio Bosque landscape. But the dam did present water-management concerns: high water levels upstream of the dam and reduced flows downstream.

In an effort to address both concerns, we installed flow-control pipes designed to pass water through the dam without the beaver realizing it – a beaver deceiver. The pipe system is a work in progress. We installed three 4"-diameter pipes July 13 and another three July 29.



Next Meetings

Wed., Oct 26
Wed., Nov 30
6:30 – 7:30 p.m.
206 Kelly Hall
UTEP

Info: 915-747-8663

They worked well, but water levels remained high upstream, and flows at the downstream end of the channel increased only slightly. To get more water past the dam, we've ordered some 10"-diameter pipe.

In the meantime, to increase the flow, we began cutting a notch in the top of the dam some days. Each night, the beaver closed the breach. Then, in September, it started work on a second dam 260 feet downstream of the first ... followed by a third dam 640 feet downstream of the second!

All of which raises questions: Is more than one beaver present? (So far, no evidence.) If we succeed in moving water past the current dams, will more dams follow? Can we get water to the downstream end of the channel in other ways, by addressing some of the other factors that may be limiting flows? Can

we coexist amicably with our beaver? For now, the beaver clearly has the upper hand. 🦫



Rio Bosque's beaver, hard at work at its first dam site.
(Photo: August 13, 2022)



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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 or park maintenance. Coming up:

OCTOBER			NOVEMBER			DECEMBER		
15 (Sat.)	Workday	9 a.m.	5 (Sat.)	Experience Bosque	11a, 3p	3 (Sat.)	Introductory Tour	3 p.m.
16 (Sun.)	Birding Tour	4 p.m.	19 (Sat.)	Workday	9 a.m.	11 (Sun.)	Birding Tour	8 a.m.
29 (Sat.)	Introductory Tour	8 a.m.	20 (Sun.)	Introductory Tour	3:30 p.m.			
			26 (Sat.)	Birding 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!](#)