

NEW WELL INSTALLED

Thanks to **Western Dewatering**, we've taken a big first step in our project to provide a water-supply well for Rio Bosque Wetlands Park. On August 28-29, Western drilled, cased and developed the well, located near the Park's inlet. The next step, with which **El Paso Water Utilities** is assisting, is to install a pump. Currently, the Park only reliably receives water in late fall and early winter. It is dry most of the year. The well will allow us to provide some water at least intermittently in spring and summer to establish and maintain native wetland and riparian habitats. Our goal is to have the well operating by next year's irrigation season. We greatly appreciate Western Dewatering's generosity in donating the installation of the new well. ✂

FIRE HITS WATER GATE



SUMMER RAIN

Exceptional events play an important role shaping ecosystems. The rain in El Paso this summer – 13.65 inches at the airport between July 28 and Sept 14 – was certainly exceptional. At Rio Bosque, it brought a wealth of new growth. Annual plants found seldom or not at all in most years became



years and usually support little more than Russian thistle after summer rains. This year's rains brought a surprising new element to the area: young tornillo seedlings popping up everywhere.

We've caged many of these seedlings to discourage herbivores and blocked off much of the area to prevent vehicle traffic. Keep an eye on this area in the months and years ahead. Another transformation of the Rio Bosque landscape may be unfolding before our eyes. ✂

BOSQUE BANTER

Last winter was great for **waterfowl** at Rio Bosque. This year looks equally promising. U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service surveys in May indicated a 14% increase in North American breeding ducks. We're now anxiously awaiting the return of water to the Park and the arrival of our wintering water birds. Want to know when the water is back? Check the "What's New" section on our website (next column).

In the meantime, we're busy getting ready for the return of water. Thanks go to UTEP's **Environmental Advocates** for their recent help clearing accumulations of dead tumbleweeds, or Russian thistle, from the Park's water channels.

Upland Sandpipers visited Rio Bosque on 4 dates in late August, representing the 216th bird species recorded at the Park.

The last **faunal monitoring** session for the year takes place Oct. 28. Join us to learn more about the Park's invertebrates, reptiles, amphibians and small mammals. This session is a Celebration of Our

Mountains event, limited to 20 participants. Contact Maria Trunk (545-5214) for reservations. ✂