

HABITAT!

Bosque del Apache National Wildlife Refuge



Volume 20, 2014

WHAT'S NEW AT THE REFUGE

In 2013, Bosque del Apache National Wildlife Refuge saw several events that brought it into the national spotlight and reaffirmed the importance of this natural resource to wildlife and the regional economy. In July a wayward visitor from South America, a rufous-necked wood rail, appeared and paraded for eager onlookers at our Marsh Boardwalk. Although the rail was only seen for 10 days, the refuge attracted 100's of birdwatchers from around the country enthusiastic to add this U.S. first to their life list.

August brought heavy rains, bringing the Rio Grande and its tributaries above flood stage for an extended period. The wetland areas desiccated by three years of drought were finally able to set a bountiful feast for our winter waterfowl. After the muddy roads and government shutdown were behind us, refuge staff, volunteers, partners, and Friends pulled together on an unprecedented level to get the refuge ready for the winter birds and peak visitation.



New Resources

The Friends of the Bosque, through generous donations from visitors, were able to produce and print a new Jr. Refuge Ranger Activity Book. This 12-page booklet, designed for ages 3-12, will engage and educate our young visitors as they tour the refuge and complete activities to earn a Jr. Ranger badge.

Have a few minutes to learn a little more about cranes? Make sure to check out our new videos online (www.friendsofthebosque.org) or in the refuge visitor center. *Cranes of the Rockies* chronicles the activities and migration of our Rocky Mountain Population sandhill cranes over a year. *Wintering Cranes at Bosque del Apache National Wildlife Refuge* follows our charismatic winter residents through a typical day, characterizing their diet, dancing, and social interactions.

The Bosque Nature Store has always been a great source for books, clothing, art, and many other fine gifts. We are now proud to offer two new high quality products to make your refuge experience even better – Tilley hats and stainless steel insulated water bottles. Whether you are hiking to the top of Chupadera Peak or waiting for that perfect sunset, you will be grateful for the shade and hours of ice cold water (or hot chocolate!). If you are looking to create a little refuge in your yard, check out the store's new stock of seed birdfeeders and birdhouses; they are built to last with a sense of style.

Out on the Refuge

In 2012 the wetlands within the Marsh Overlook Trail remained dry during the winter season to set back the plant community and reduce encroaching cattails. During the 2013-2014 winter season this area will be flooded, and thanks to management actions and late summer rains, the food production is excellent and bird use should be outstanding.

The North Loop has always been a draw for cranes (and visitors!) because of the crop fields, and the refuge is currently evaluating new habitat options and the potential for winter water along this Loop. The Intermittent Tour Road will be open from noon on Friday until noon on Monday for three long weekends this winter (11/29-12/2; 12/20-12/23; 1/24-1/27) and potentially at other times during the year. Don't miss this unique viewing opportunity.

Celebrations

In 2014 the refuge will mark the 75th anniversary of its establishment in 1939 with the founding purpose to provide "a refuge and breeding ground for migratory birds and other wildlife." Follow the refuge on Facebook (/BosquedelApacheNWR) to see how we will celebrate this milestone throughout the year.

Be part of the movement to support our National Wildlife Refuges through the Get Your Goose On! (GYGO) campaign. The U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service is calling on you to hike, birdwatch, fish, photograph, and otherwise experience with childlike wonder America's great outdoors at refuges across America. Purchase a GYGO rally towel at the Bosque Nature Store and photograph your friends and family having fun on the refuge. Send your pictures to the Friends for inclusion in local and national photo logs!

Inside:

What's New	2
Fall	3
Winter	4
Spring	5
Summer	6
What You Need to Know	7
Map of the Refuge	8
Hiking Trails	9
Attractions	10
Pets on the Refuge	11
Mountain Lion Country	11
Biking Basics	11
Join the Friends	12

Cover photo courtesy
Lindsay Balmer



NEW MEXICO *True*
Co-op Participant



C Sanders

Fall is a sensory experience of the best New Mexico has to offer. The pleasantly pungent smell of roasting green chiles permeates the air in nearby San Antonio in September and October, and no trip to the refuge is complete without a lunch break at one of our local mainstays – the Owl Café, the Buckhorn, or the San Antonio Crane. Step out of your car to hear the distant call of the cranes and scan the skies to find them overhead. Make sure to bring your jacket, because moderate days

quickly turn cool. Head to the Crane Ponds and relax in the setting sun, as you welcome those first few birds to this stop on a journey they have made for thousands of years.



SEPTEMBER



OCTOBER

NOVEMBER



S Noll

Fall is the season to spend some time out on the refuge, while the weather is nice, perfecting your shots of wildlife in their habitat. Handfuls of cranes start trickling through in October, presenting the perfect opportunity to capture a graceful skein against the golden cottonwoods. Late season sunflowers add a punch of bright yellow to the fields and are a colorful contrast to the red-winged blackbirds that swoop and dart as if tethered in one big cloud. Coyotes prowl for ducks weary from their long migration and deer mingle in open fields, wary of lurking predators.

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The Festival of the Cranes, always the week before Thanksgiving, offers more than 100 workshops, tours, lectures, and hikes over six days. Topics range from cultural history to natural history, photography to astronomy, and expressive arts to birdwatching. The weekend features learning activities, exhibits, games, and several workshops that are geared toward kids. Spend a day, or spend a week. Learn more at www.FestivaloftheCranes.com.



As fall brings gold to the cottonwoods along the Rio Grande, there is no better place to take a walk than along the Rio Viejo Trail. The tree canopy is alive with the calling and fluttering of fall migrant songbirds, and you may even see raccoons, mule deer, or turkeys moving through the forest. This easy trail is great for families and those with a limited amount of time to explore. *A Field Guide to the Plants and Animals of the Middle Rio Grande Bosque*, available at the Bosque Nature Store, can help you with all of your identification needs.

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S Zelasko

Breathe, meditate, relax, and appreciate the natural world



R Eltrich



Grab your journal, sketchbook, or easel and head out on the refuge in the fall. Find peace in the rustling of the cottonwood leaves and the cool breezes as you contemplate the busy northern shovelers, teal, and northern pintails with their tails in the air dabbling for dinner. Often where there is water you will find birds, and maybe the Dabbler Deck or the Willow Deck will offer an opportunity to relax amongst the wildlife without heavy human traffic. The arboretum, with its ample benches, also provides a nice respite near the Visitor Center. There are paved sidewalks leading to the garden and hard-packed walks within.

KEY: Do something to write home about

Watch the wildlife and set up that tripod

Develop an educational experience for yourself and others





M DeJong

Nothing at Bosque del Apache Refuge compares to the thundering sound of wing beats and calls as 40,000 light geese (snow and Ross's) lift en masse and fly directly over your head, followed

by the leisurely lift offs of the sandhill cranes. The backdrop of this "fly-out" spectacle may be a famous New Mexico sunrise made more intense by endless skeins of ducks across the horizon. A comparable experience occurs around sunset as waves of birds return to their nightly roost, referred to as the "fly-in." Since the preferred sites for the birds vary throughout the season, ask at the Visitor Center for the current details.

Our winter resident birds are diverse and charismatic. Raptors abound in the colder months, so watch for majestic bald eagles on snags in the wetlands and listen for red-tailed hawks screeching overhead. White-crowned sparrows often crowd the feeders around the Visitor Center, and there are at least 10 other sparrows that winter here regularly. The flocks of cranes and geese often dominate your views, but be aware that there are up to 15 species of ducks that may be found in their midst. Favorite shots of cranes and geese can be made as a full moon is rising or setting (remember we



M Endres

open 1 hour before sunrise and close 1 hour after sunset).

Full moon dates are 12/17, 1/16, and 2/15.

WINTER



DECEMBER



JANUARY

FEBRUARY



Winter is a popular time for school and other tour groups to visit the refuge due to the abundance of sandhill cranes and light geese. It is the perfect time to learn about migration and the value of refuge wetlands to these overwintering birds. The Friends offers stipends to schools for bus and driver costs – learn more at the Visitor Center or at the Friends website (www.friendsofthebosque.org). Consider checking out our new crane behavior short films, also on the website, or pick up the pocket-sized Sandhill Crane Display Dictionary (\$6) from the Bosque Nature Store to learn what all that dancing is about.



A Brophy



The Marsh Overlook Trail is an accessible trail where you can get exercise and spend time along the marsh edge. A great blue heron may burst from the cattails as you pass or harriers, with their distinctive white rump patch, may be flying low over the fields and wetlands. A spur on the south end takes you to a spectacular overlook of the south end of the refuge. If you are interested in some desert hiking you can take the connection to the Marsh Boardwalk Trail off the western side of the loop. The Boardwalk is a

popular wildlife viewing spot year round, and winter is a good time to see western grebes and rafts of common mergansers.



R Dunn



The Marsh Overlook loop is an easy walk and an optional short climb to one of the most spectacular vantage points on the refuge. From the bench on top you will be able to sit and watch ducks, geese, and cranes in the wetland and agricultural fields below. See the dark mesa to the east? Between 1250 and 1350 A.D. that was the site of a 37-room Piro pueblo called San Pascualito. Take a moment to contemplate the history of this valley, from the early Piro settlements, to the Spanish traders along El Camino Real de Tierra Adentro, up to the establishment of the refuge in 1939. Learn more about the history of the refuge in *Bosque del Apache A Brief History* available in the Bosque Nature Store.





J McCormack

If you are anxious to shake off winter's chill and stretch your legs, pedal on over to the Low Flow Conveyance Channel East Service Road. This gravel roadway offers almost nine miles of easy riding with no vehicular traffic, plus the opportunity to catch a glimpse of some of the more secretive

wildlife that call the refuge home. Be on the lookout for bobcats, javelinas, deer, or turkeys, as well as several species of raptors perched in the trees or flying overhead.

This service road, along with NM Highway 1, the Point of Lands Scenic Overlook, and Bosque Road, are open year-round to bicycling. Please see page 11 for biking regulations.

The wetlands that held thousands of ducks, geese, and cranes in the winter are slowly drawn down in the spring, creating expansive mudflats and shallow areas for migrating shorebirds. At least 25 species of shorebirds visit the refuge each spring, including various sandpipers, stilts, plovers, phalaropes, godwits, dunlins, and curlews. Other spring migrants include flycatchers, vireos, and around a dozen different warblers. Consider fine-tuning your ear to their calls with some of our audio references available in the Bosque Nature Store.



D Hancock

SPRING



MARCH



APRIL

MAY



There are more than 150 species of cacti and other Chihuahuan Desert plants in the cactus arboretum. Some have descriptive names, such as the golden barrel, the horse crippler, and the beaver tail. All are remarkable examples of adaptations to desert life. How do these plants survive without moisture, and why do they have all those spines?!? Although unfriendly to fingers, these prickly plants and their fruit provide shelter for nesting birds and tasty treats for javelinas, quail, and other wildlife. The cacti bloom from mid-spring through the summer, shifting from the crimson claret cups early in the season, to the yellow and purple chollas, various barrels, and yellow prickly pears. The Bosque Nature Store carries more than 50 titles on plants and desert gardening to continue your botanical study.



J Bertrand



The Chupadera Trail is the perfect way to shake off that winter chill and celebrate new life on the refuge. If it has been a wet winter there will be wildflowers by early April, and, with monsoon season a couple of months off, you may be in for some beautiful weather up top. The Chupadera Mountains were formed by volcanic activity. As you venture through the red canyon you will see spires of solidified volcanic ash. As you ascend you will be able to see the vertical geologic formations of the Rio Grande rift zone, evidence of this area of New Mexico splitting millions of years ago to create what is now the Rio Grande Valley.



R Dunn



Spring is a time to appreciate renewal at the refuge. With good winter moisture there will be spring wildflowers, and new growth of vegetation in the wetlands promises the coming fall's bounty. Wildlife prepare for mating season and the gobble of turkeys, the calling of quail, and the cooing of roadrunners fill the air. The sky over the wetlands is filled with the frenzied courtship flights of several species of waterfowl, while below avocets and stilts begin establishing nesting sites. Dragonflies, emerging from their aquatic beginnings, soar over the wetlands in search of food and mates.

KEY: Do something to write home about

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Develop an educational experience for yourself and others



Without a boat or a desire to take a road trip, there are few places in this part of New Mexico where you can drop in a line and take home a catfish dinner. Areas along the Low Flow Conveyance Channel, the Interior/Elmendorf Canal, and

the Marsh Boardwalk are open to licensed fishermen and youngsters with a licensed adult to come and try their luck. Carp are a fun, and weighty, challenge off of the Boardwalk, which is accessible and safer for kids. The ditches can be more diverse, yielding bluegill, catfish, suckers, and bass. Please abide by all New Mexico Department of Game and Fish and refuge regulations.

The Desert Arboretum is bursting with color and crawling with activity in the summer. The garden transitions from cactus blooms in June to shiny purple prickly pear fruits and various wildflowers later in the season. National Pollinator Week, June 16-23, 2014, is the perfect time to come



S Noll

out and “capture” the birds, bees, and other critters flitting about ensuring the health and persistence of our native plant species. The arboretum is ideal early in the morning for spotting our scaly residents, such as spiny lizards or western diamondback rattlesnakes, emerging to bask in the rising sun, or quail families of a dozen or more chicks scurrying about under the cacti.



SUMMER



JUNE



AUGUST

JULY



The Canyon Trail is alive with birds, reptiles, and other desert dwellers in the cool, early morning hours of summer. The tracks in the sand tell the stories of adventures and battles from the night before. Desert holes, scat, and tracks may be carefully examined and identified using field guides sold at the Bosque Nature Store. The full 2.2 mile trail is a fun, but challenging, adventure for families. Take plenty of water and plan for a break in the shade of the canyon walls before ascending to some rewarding views of the refuge.



Summers here are hot, so prepare for any trek or bike ride with ample water and sunscreen, both available in the Bosque Nature Store. The Tour Loop is open to bikes in the summer. Pedal down toward the Boardwalk early in the morning to see secretive marsh birds, such as sora and bitterns, and watch as turtles vie for sunning rights on exposed logs. Continue on around the South Loop looking for javelinas and bobcats along the field edges. Alternatively

head straight across on Bosque Road and bike the Low Flow Conveyance Channel East Service Road. The flat, wide roads are great for families or any riders looking to take in some wildlife viewing along the trail.



S Zelasko



M Creveling



In the hot days of summer, consider finding peace (and shade!) in and around the Visitor Center and while away the time watching hummingbirds and orioles at the feeders. Black-chinned hummingbirds arrive in the spring and number in the dozens during the summer. Calliope, broad-tailed, and rufous hummingbirds arrive later in the summer. There is also a shady quail pond near the arboretum that has a calming trickle of water that draws birds for an early morning dip. Be sure to check out the selection of birdfeeders and backyard birdfeeding guides in the Bosque Nature Store.

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What You Need To Know While at Bosque del Apache...

Climate The refuge is at the northern edge of the Chihuahuan Desert at an elevation of about 4500 feet. Days are usually sunny, and a temperature change of 30° and more between dawn and noon is common. Thus, a hat and other sun protection, plus layers of clothing that can be added and removed, are recommended.

Hours The Tour Loop is open from 1 hour before sunrise to 1 hour after sunset every day of the year. The Visitor Center is open from 8:00am to 4:00 pm. It is closed July 4th, Thanksgiving Day, Christmas Day, and New Year's Day.

Bosque Nature Store The Friends of the Bosque del Apache NWR operates the Bosque Nature Store inside the Visitor Center. It offers an excellent selection of books, beverages, snacks, clothing, and a broad selection of nature-related items from the Southwest.

Restrooms The fully accessible restrooms are in an adjacent building to the west of the Visitor Center. There is an accessible vault toilet located at the end of Bosque Road and at the Flight Deck.

Entry Fees The one-day entry fee is \$5.00 per private vehicle and covers all occupants or \$50 for a commercial vehicle. The fee can be paid at the Visitor Center (credit cards, cash or checks accepted) during open hours or at the seasonal fee booth (only cash or checks accepted). If the fee booth is not open, self-pay envelopes are provided. Federal passes are available for purchase at the Visitor Center or fee booth during open hours.

Vehicles and Parking The refuge lies along both sides of NM Highway 1, which connects to I-25 at exit 139 in the town of San Antonio and with I-25 at exit 115 south of the refuge. NM Highway 1 is a 45-55 mph state highway. Stopping suddenly on the roadway to look at birds or other wildlife is dangerous, so please use the wide turnouts along both the north and south approaches. The Visitor Center parking lot can accommodate RVs, as well as cars. RV drivers are welcome to unhitch and use your tow vehicle on the Tour Loop. Please drive carefully on

the gravel roads and stay on the designated roads and turnouts. The speed limit is 25 mph. There are both one-way and two-way sections, so observe signs carefully. You should expect vehicles ahead of you to stop – sometimes suddenly – as visitors spot interesting birds or other wildlife. Tour Loop roads are wide, so please pull over to allow others to pass safely.

Picnicking The refuge provides a picnic pavilion near the Visitor Center with trashcans. You may also eat at other locations of your choice, but be careful not to leave litter. If you packed it in, please pack it out. No fires or cooking grills are allowed anywhere on the refuge.

Camping There is no camping on the refuge for the public. This rule also applies to RVs; no over-night parking is allowed. Staff at the Visitor Center can advise about camping and RV parks in the area. The reserved camping signs refer to permitted environmental education groups who are carrying out work projects for the refuge.

Hiking and Biking The refuge provides many opportunities for hiking and some limited biking on designated routes. For either activity, it is important that you stay on the designated trails and roads. Please see separate hiking and biking subsections in this publication.

Photography Photography is welcome in areas to which public entry is permitted. Area closed signs apply to all visitors, including photographers. Normal courtesy with respect to viewing rights of others is expected. (See “Other Uses of the Refuge” section covering commercial photography workshops.)

Hunting and Fishing Both hunting and fishing are allowed in designated areas during certain seasons, subject to New Mexico Department of Game and Fish license and regulation requirements as well as Federal regulations (50 CFR 32.50). Ask for the hunting information sheet in the Visitor Center for specific information on open areas and regulations.

Swimming No wading, swimming, canoeing, boating, or floating is allowed in refuge waters, including the Rio Grande.

Horseback Riding Limited horseback riding is only allowed in support of hunting, restricted to areas of the refuge east of the Rio Grande during state hunt seasons. No horseback riding is allowed west of the Rio Grande. Call the refuge for more information.

Signs Please read the signs. Some prohibit all public access. Others prohibit vehicles but invite hiking and biking. Temporary barricades and/or Area Closed signs protect nesting, roosting, and feeding areas and protect visitors from hazardous situations. Please respect them.

Animals Only service animals are allowed in refuge buildings. Please clean up after your pet. (Please see the Pets Section for more information on where you may walk your pets.) Releasing fish, turtles, other animals, or plants on the refuge is prohibited. They disrupt the biology by compromising the habitat and/or wildlife we are trying to protect and are a source of disease. Do not attempt to feed birds or other wildlife – observe and enjoy them as they are.

Collecting Do not pick, disturb, or collect any plants, animals, rocks, or artifacts on the refuge. If you wish to study or research an item later, take photos or make sketches. Virtual geocaching is permitted in areas open to the public; however, physical geocaching is not permitted on the refuge.

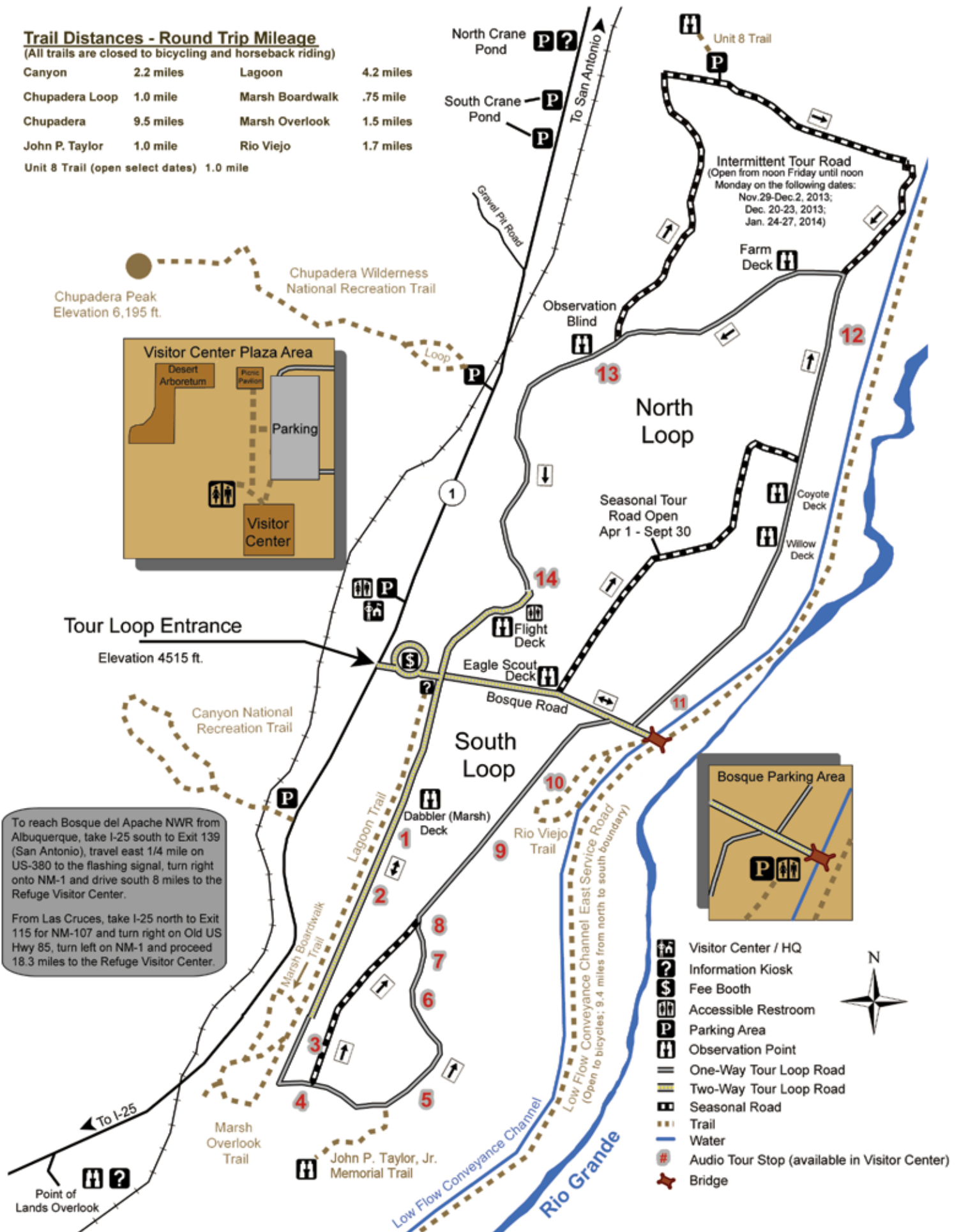
Other Uses of the Refuge Workshops, such as photography workshops, commercial tours, film crews, and other commercial uses of the refuge may be allowed by special permit and upon payment of the appropriate fee. Such activities must not impede public use of the refuge.

Wilderness Area Access The Indian Well, Chupadera, and Little San Pascual Wilderness Areas are open for hiking year-round from one hour before sunrise to one hour after sunset. Motorized vehicles, bicycles, and overnight camping are not allowed in the refuge wilderness areas. You may hike off trail in these areas. Travel is at your own risk and you should notify a friend/family member of your trip plans. These areas are also open to hunting during certain seasons. Horses are only allowed in the Little San Pascual Wilderness when used in support of legal hunting.

Trail Distances - Round Trip Mileage

(All trails are closed to bicycling and horseback riding)

Canyon	2.2 miles	Lagoon	4.2 miles
Chupadera Loop	1.0 mile	Marsh Boardwalk	.75 mile
Chupadera	9.5 miles	Marsh Overlook	1.5 miles
John P. Taylor	1.0 mile	Rio Viejo	1.7 miles
Unit 8 Trail (open select dates) 1.0 mile			



Trail name	Distance/Time	Level of Difficulty	Notes
Chupadera Wilderness National Recreation Trail	9.5 miles round-trip 4-5 hours	Strenuous: 1800-foot gain	Please plan your trip to make sure you are back by dark. Dawn departures are suggested in the summer when temperatures can exceed 100°F by midday or afternoon thunderstorms make hiking dangerous. Take precautions, and remember you are in rattlesnake country. Light colored clothing, a hat, sunscreen, and hiking boots are recommended. At any time of the year you should carry plenty of water.
Chupadera Loop Trail	1 mile loop 1-2 hours	Moderate	
Canyon National Recreation Trail	2.2 miles round-trip (including loop) 1-2 hours	Moderately strenuous	The Canyon Trail is a fun, but challenging hike for families and school groups. Look for the natural arch in the sandstone and test your track identification skills in the soft, sandy areas of the trail.
Lagoon Trail	4.2 miles round-trip 1.5-2.5 hours	Easy	From April 1 through September 30 licensed anglers may fish along the Lagoon Trail, where catfish and the occasional white bass reside.
Marsh Overlook Trail	1.5 mile loop 0.5-1 hour	Easy-moderate	This is an accessible trail except for the spur. Insect repellent is recommended spring through fall.
Marsh Boardwalk Trail	0.75 miles 0.5 hours	Easy	The trail up to and including the wooden boardwalk is accessible, but the extension that winds through the upland and connects with the Marsh Overlook Trail is not. This Boardwalk provides a safer fishing area for children than the ditches, which have flowing water and steep banks.
Rio Viejo Trail	1.7 miles (including loop), 0.7-1 hour	Easy	This trail may be temporarily closed or inaccessible due to muddy conditions in the spring or summer. Mosquito repellent is highly recommended spring through fall.
John P. Taylor, Jr. Memorial Trail	1 mile 0.5-1 hour	Easy	This is an accessible trail. The dedication plaque at the end of the trail features an image of the bosque and cranes from 1846 that inspired John Taylor's restoration vision.
Unit 8 Trail	1 mile 0.5-1 hour	Easy	The refuge will post open dates for the Intermittent Tour Road and the trail during the year based on weather/road conditions and to preserve the value of this area for wildlife.

HIKING TRAILS

From sweeping vistas to quiet marshes, the eight hiking trails of Bosque del Apache Refuge offer a variety of sights, sounds and wildlife depending on the season. The trails vary in accessibility and difficulty but all provide wonderful opportunities to experience nature and observe wildlife in solitude or with family and friends. Between April 1st and September 31st bring a leash and enjoy the trails with your dog! Trail guides for some of the trails are available in the Visitor Center. Refer to the map on page 8 for trailheads.

Chupadera Wilderness National Recreation Trail

The Loop and Chupadera Trails wind through typical Chihuahuan desert scrub habitat dominated by four-wing salt bush, creosote bush,

and mesquite. A gentle climb will lead you to a bench (about 1.5 miles from the trailhead) that offers a panoramic overlook of the refuge and surrounding areas. Hikers may continue on the loop and return to the trailhead and parking area, or they may head to the peak of Chupadera Mountain. An incredible variety of desert plants, reptiles and birds, as well as interesting geological formations can be observed as you gain altitude from the valley floor to the peak.

Canyon National Recreation Trail

This trail takes visitors through native Chihuahuan Desert and into Solitude Canyon, a deep ravine carved into sandstone by flash floods over the ages. Scenic vistas of the canyon and the refuge are favorite photo opportunities. The abundance of burrows, holes,

and middens gives evidence to the snakes, lizards, birds, bats, rabbits, kangaroo rats, and other desert wildlife that are active along the trail, especially in the cooler morning and evening hours. This trail also provides access to the Indian Well Wilderness Area.

Lagoon Trail

This trail parallels the South Loop and the Interior/Elmendorf Canal between the entrance kiosk and the Marsh Overlook Trail. The canal is a popular spot for great blue herons and sunning turtles. The cattails, bulrushes, and willows are favored by flocks of red-winged blackbirds.

Marsh Overlook Trail

This trail takes you through willows and cattails around a seasonally-flooded wetland.

HIKING TRAILS, CONTINUED

Look for secretive marsh birds like bitterns and Virginia rails in the marsh. The trail includes a quarter-mile (round-trip) optional spur trail to a reflection bench on top of a bluff. The expansive view of the south end of the refuge makes this ten minute detour well worth the climb.

Marsh Boardwalk Trail

This trail takes you across a semi-permanent wetland that has year-round wildlife viewing opportunities. Cattails and bulrushes hide bitterns, rails, and busy muskrats, and turtles

bask on exposed snags in open water. Cormorants and grebes are common in this area.

Rio Viejo Trail

This trail takes you along a former channel of the Rio Grande and winds through a native cottonwood forest. Golden cottonwoods, whispering grasses and an abundance of migrating songbirds make it a must-hike in the fall.

John P. Taylor, Jr. Memorial Trail

This trail takes you into a restored section of cottonwood savanna and salt grass meadow along a historic channel of the Rio Grande. This restoration is a work in progress that is

a tribute to late refuge biologist John Taylor, whose years of research in salt cedar eradication and native habitat restoration provided a vision for the future of the refuge.

Unit 8 Trail

This trail has 3 separate viewing areas, each providing a different view of the forests and wetlands. The centerpiece of the area is the landscape. The trail overlooks a seasonal wetland to the east that will host cranes, geese and ducks in the fall and winter. Surrounded by cottonwoods and willows with openings in small meadows filled with sunflowers, this trail is spectacular any time of the year.

ATTRACTIONS

Visitor Center and Bosque Nature Store

The Visitor Center is the perfect place to start and end your adventure at Bosque del Apache Refuge. Information about wildlife, trails and recreational opportunities on the refuge are readily available from one of our friendly rangers or volunteers. Interpretive exhibits tell stories about the wildlife, management, and history of the refuge and have great activities for the kids. The viewing window is a great spot to see migrant songbirds, resident quail and their chicks, and even busy packrats, depending on the season. The Bosque Nature Store, operated by the Friends of the Bosque del Apache to raise funds for refuge programs, offers the region's finest selection of Southwest and nature-themed books, clothing, jewelry, kids items, artwork, and gifts, plus refuge entrance passes. A water fountain and bottle filler is located just inside the Visitor Center, and restroom facilities are located in the adjacent building. During summer the outdoor benches on the west side of the Visitor Center are a great place to take a break or snap some pictures of the colorful hummingbirds.

Desert Arboretum

The Desert Arboretum is located near the Visitor Center. This peaceful garden exhibits many of the cacti and other plants of the Northern Chihuahuan Desert. In the spring the arboretum is awash in color as the claret cups, prickly pears, chollas, barrels, and other cacti bloom in succession. During the warm summer and fall months, blossoming wild-

flowers appear and several species of lizards dart underfoot. A small vernal pool provides a quiet, shady place for visitors to sit and enjoy the busy lives of insects such as native bees and butterflies.

Tour Loop and Decks

The 12-mile Tour Loop winds through wetlands, screwbean mesquite savannas, and cottonwood forests that the refuge manages for wildlife. During winter, up to 100,000 sandhill cranes, snow geese, and ducks fill the refuge's wetlands and agricultural fields, some of which may be seen from the Tour Loop. During summer, the wetland areas are dried to encourage plant growth, and songbirds, raptors, deer and coyotes are frequently seen. Seeds and plant material grown during the summer become important food sources for the birds in the winter. Five accessible observation decks are located along the Tour Loop and provide an elevated platform for wildlife observation and photography. Location, season, water availability, habitat conditions, and time of day influence the wildlife visible from a particular deck. Audio tours for either the "summer" (May-October) or "winter" (October-April) seasons are available in the Bosque Nature Store and through the seasonal fee booth. Each audio tour is full of wildlife observation tips, natural history facts and much more. Please help keep the wildlife and other refuge visitors safe by observing the 25 mph speed limit and parking only in designated areas.

Observation Blind

The Observation Blind, donated by the Central New Mexico Audubon Society, is just a short walk from the North Loop. It provides a unique opportunity to observe and photograph undisturbed waterfowl up close. The quack of mallards, fluting trill of pintails, chatter of snow geese, and voices of many other species of waterbirds make this a great place to enjoy a picnic lunch in the winter.

Point of Lands Scenic Overlook

The first known drawing of the area, an 1846 sketch by Lt. Abert, topographical surveyor for the U.S. Army, featured sandhill cranes with the imposing cliffs of Point of Lands in the distance. Located on Highway 1 approximately 5 miles south of the Visitor Center, the Point of Lands Scenic Overlook sits atop this historic landmark and provides a majestic view of the wetlands and three wilderness areas of Bosque del Apache Refuge. Almost all of the 57,331 acres of the refuge are visible from the overlook, including the mesa associated with the first Piro Indian settlements and El Camino Real de Tierra Adentro National Historic Trail.



Pets on the Refuge

To ensure that you and your pet enjoy a safe visit, follow all pet regulations while inside the refuge. Wildlife may be drawn to pets and their owners; pets can wander away and may never be found – the refuge is a wild place!

Pets are allowed on Bosque del Apache Refuge under the following conditions:

From October 1 thru March 31

- 🐾 Pets must be inside the vehicle at all times while on the Tour Loop.
- 🐾 Pets are not allowed on any trails adjacent to the Tour Loop (this includes: Marsh Boardwalk, Marsh Overlook, Taylor Trail, Rio Viejo Trail, the Observation Blind, the Lagoon Trail, and the Unit 8 Trail).
- 🐾 Pets are not permitted on observation decks or inside the Visitor Center, except service dogs.
- 🐾 Pets are permitted on all hiking trails west of Highway 1 (this includes: Chupadera Trail and Canyon Trail). They must be physically restrained at all times on a leash no more than six feet in length.
- 🐾 Pets are not permitted on the Low Flow Conveyance Channel East Service Road year round.

From April 1 thru September 30

- 🐾 Pets are permitted on all hiking trails though they must be physically restrained on a leash no more than six feet in length.
- 🐾 Pets are not permitted on observation decks or inside the Visitor Center, except service dogs.
- 🐾 Pets are permitted out of vehicles along the Tour Loop though they must be physically restrained at all times on a leash no more than six feet in length.
- 🐾 Pets are not permitted on the Low Flow Conveyance Channel East Service Road year round.

You Are In Mountain Lion Country

Mountain lions have been observed inside Bosque del Apache Refuge. Mountain lions can be dangerous; being smart, cautious, and aware may prevent incidents or attacks.

DID YOU KNOW:

- Attacks are extremely rare
- Running and unleashed pets can trigger an attack
- Lions are most active at dusk and dawn, so be aware

HIKE SMART:

- Do not approach dead animals; lions defend their prey
- Hike in groups and make noise to prevent surprising a lion
- Carry a walking stick and bear/pepper spray
- Keep children close at hand when hiking

IF YOU SEE A LION:

- Face the lion and slowly back away
- DO NOT run or play dead
- Make noise and make yourself look larger



Abernathy-Galceran



Biking Basics

The refuge encourages visitors to utilize bicycles, an environmentally friendly form of alternative transportation, to enjoy their national wildlife refuge. These seasonal rules for bicycle use provide miles of riding year-round while minimizing disturbance to the wildlife at Bosque del Apache.

From October 1 thru March 31

- Bicycling is allowed ONLY on Highway 1, Bosque Road, at the Point of Lands Scenic Overlook, and on the Low Flow Conveyance Channel East Service Road.
- Bicycling is NOT allowed on any trails or decks.

From April 1 thru September 30

- Bicycling is allowed on Highway 1, Bosque Road, at the Point of Lands Scenic Overlook, on the Low Flow Conveyance Channel East Service Road, and on the North and South Loops.
- Bicycling is NOT allowed on any trails or decks.





Friends of the Bosque del Apache Refuge

Membership Application



Name

Family Members (for Family Membership)

Street

City

State

Zip

Phone

Email

Membership Level:

- ☐ Individual \$20
- ☐ Family \$25
- ☐ Student \$15
- ☐ Senior \$15
- ☐ Special Friend \$60 or more
- ☐ Best Friend \$100 or more
- ☐ Lifetime \$1000 or more
- ☐ Business Sponsor \$200

Interests:

- ☐ Help with Friends activities
- ☐ Help with the Festival
- ☐ Serve on a Friends Committee

- ☐ Check to receive Newsletter electronically
- ☐ Check to receive notifications of Friends events electronically

***Please mail with your check to:
Friends of the Bosque del Apache Refuge
PO Box 340
San Antonio, NM 87832***

or join online at www.friendsofthebosque.org

Bosque del Apache National Wildlife Refuge

Refuge Manager

PO Box 280, San Antonio, NM 87832

www.FriendsoftheBosque.org, Phone 575-835-1828

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