



rivers & trails

National
Park
Service



rivers, trails, and conservation assistance program

RIO GRANDE RIVERPARK

Project Goal

The development of a linear Riverpark/trail network in the El Paso region that offers recreational opportunities and access to historical, cultural, and natural resources.

Background

This project has catalyzed a broad-based effort to add new trails, protect open space, and river corridors in the city and county of El Paso. The overall vision of the project is to create a multi-use trail and open space network along the entire length of the Rio Grande as it flows through the El Paso region. This could include over 57 new miles of trail and may eventually extend into New Mexico.

Important features along the trail corridor include: Keystone Archeological and Wetlands site, International Boundary Marker #1, Paso de Norte and Old Fort Bliss, Chihuahuita Neighborhood, downtown El Paso, *Chamizal National Memorial*, El Paso Zoo, Ascarate Regional Park, Shawver County Park, Rio Bosque Wetlands, Franklin Canal, and the historic Camino Real de Tierra Adentro and El Paso Missions in the lower valley.

The Riverpark will be within the City's Empowerment Zone and several Hispanic low-income neighborhoods. This project has energized the community has become a priority project for both the county and city of El Paso. In recent community visioning events, local residents and community groups have expressed overwhelming support for the project and have participated in providing input to create a River Park and trail system that meets their needs.

The City and County of El Paso and the El Paso Del Norte Health Foundation are providing strong local leadership for the project, including substantial financial investments. This active support of the El Paso del Norte Health Foundation to help fund trails could be a model project for RTCA's trails and health initiatives

Project Results to Date

- Phased Regional River Park Plan completed.
- RiverPark Task Force organized.
- West Side portion of the River Park awarded a \$750,000 regional park grant from Texas Parks and Wildlife.
- East Side trail initiative awarded \$3.1 million in funding from 2001 TEA-21 transportation enhancement program. The money will be used to build 10+ miles of new trail in El Paso. The East Side trail funding will connect Ascarate Park to the Rio Bosque Wetlands Park and Historic Mission Trail in Socorro.

Rio Grande River in El Paso



continued

RIO GRANDE RIVER PARK

National Park Service Roles

- Organize a River Park Task Force (a diverse stakeholder group dedicated to the creation of a Rio Grande River Park) activities.
- Assist in integrating additional community support and input in River Park planning process, including organizing community design charettes.
- Provide design assistance for trail linkages, amenities, and sound trail development.
- Provide technical information on trails development at the Rio Bosque Wetlands Park.
- Assist segment leaders in organizing community events along the Rio Grande.
- Provide information to Taskforce members, trail advocates, and the general public on important trail topics such as trails and health, liability, safety and security, development guidelines and user etiquette.
- Provide guidance on funding opportunities and review grant applications as requested.

Community Charette Phase 1 River Park, Canutillo, HS



Project Partners

- City of El Paso
- County of El Paso
- El Paso del Norte Health Foundation
- International Boundary and Water Commission
- El Paso Water Utilities El Paso Bicycle Club
- Texas Parks and Wildlife
- Border Patrol
- El Paso Community Foundation
- World Wildlife Fund
- USEPA
- Rep. Silvestre Reyes

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