

On the WATER Front

A Message from Ed Archuleta, P.E., President/CEO

April 2009



Expanding Franklin Mountains State Park

Everything is bigger in Texas, and that includes our state parks. The Franklin Mountains State Park, the largest urban wilderness park in the United States, will grow even bigger this spring – and I'm proud to say we are a part of it. This month, the El Paso Water Utilities Public Service Board will hand over the deed for 1,659 acres of land to the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department.

The PSB has played an active role in the expansion of the park, which is a popular destination for nature enthusiasts and those who enjoy outdoor activities like hiking, rock climbing and camping. In the summer of 1989, just two years after the park was opened to the public, the State purchased nearly 7,000 acres from the PSB.



Franklin Mountains State Park (northeast side)

Franklin Mountains State Park (west side)



Protecting a Local Treasure

In 2005, the PSB and Texas Parks and Wildlife worked with the State Legislature to provide the funding needed for this recent purchase. The property is being sold to Texas Parks and Wildlife for \$161,301, a small fraction of its current appraised value.

The Franklin Mountains State Park is located entirely within the El Paso city limits. The northeast area of the park, which is adjacent to Castner Range, will expand by 1,449 acres, and the remaining 210 acres are on the west side of the park. This will help protect the various species of Chihuahuan Desert plants and animals that are native to the park from any future urban development. This sale will also add direct access to the state park for the smart-growth communities planned for the east and west sides of the mountain – part of our comprehensive plan to preserve land in the area.

In 1979, when the Texas Legislature passed a bill allowing Texas Parks and Wildlife to acquire the Franklin Mountains, their intentions were to provide lasting protection to the scenic and historic features that surround the area. The PSB had a vision to add to this local treasure, and that's why they spearheaded this land transfer. Now, generations present and future will be able to enjoy more of the awesome beauty that is the Franklin Mountains State Park.

On the Water Front is a publication of El Paso Water Utilities. If you have any comments or questions contact Editor Christina Montoya at 915.594.5596 or by email at cmontoya@epwu.org

