



# On the Water Front

April 2017 | A Message from John Balliew, P.E., President/CEO

## El Paso Water adds Playa Drain Trail to land projects benefitting the city

Smart, sustainable growth for El Paso depends on effective water and land management. While many El Pasoans are familiar with our innovative water resource management, our lesser known land stewardship also contributes significantly to the city's quality of life.

Since the 1950s, we have managed thousands of acres of land across the city. Flood control became a top land management priority in 2008 when we took on the stormwater utility. And we take seriously the ordinance requirement that we use 10 percent of the revenues for projects that manage stormwater while preserving wilderness areas and open spaces.

Since 2010, we have purchased 443 acres of open space that reduces flood risk while protecting wildlife habitats. We also incorporate walking paths, skate parks and other features when we build stormwater facilities and convert barren ponding areas to dual-purpose park ponds.

### Playa Drain Trail

Our recent collaboration with the Paso del Norte Health Foundation and the City Parks and Recreation Department will result in a walking and biking trail that provides recreational opportunities and promotes a healthy lifestyle.

The Playa Drain Trail will be transformed from a litter-filled ditch to a beautiful 3.4-mile trail stretching from Ascarate Park to Riverside High School. It will provide much needed recreational space in the Mission Valley area.

We began discussions with Paso del Norte Health Foundation on the trail years ago. We purchased the Playa Drain in July 2015 from the El Paso County Water Improvement District No. 1 with the trail in mind. The ditch previously served as a drain for salt water from cotton field irrigation, but it now collects stormwater from nearby inlets.

The Paso del Norte Health Foundation obtained a grant to fund the trail's design and construction. The City's Parks and Recreation Department will add park benches, shade and other amenities. Together, it's a win-win partnership for El Paso.

Over the years, we've partnered with many other non-profits to preserve spaces and create opportunities for recreation and exploration. To read more about these projects, [click here](#).

Our Chihuahuan Desert city might be arid, but its natural landscapes and habitats are filled with beauty and wildlife. As we celebrate Earth Month, we encourage you to get out and enjoy the outdoors.



Walking paths at Pollard Pond.



Rio Bosque provides habitats for wildlife.

