

Frontera group aids conservation efforts in El Paso

By Frontera Land Alliance / Special to the Times

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There is a lot of water and wildlife conservation happening in El Paso!

For example, the Frontera Land Alliance has owned Resler Canyon, a 91-acre urban arroyo, since Dec. 23, 2005. You can see its value as a natural waterway during the 2006 flood that the arroyo responded to as nature intended it should.

For El Paso Water Utilities to ensure the arroyo remained safe, they needed to replace the existing culverts and create a structure that could handle the fast-moving waters that are channelized into the arroyo from streets and neighborhoods at higher elevations. The changes they made will help dissipate the water's velocity. The structure was built and completed in March.

Then, through donations from members, CDM Endeavors Inc., and El Paso Water Utilities, Frontera raised the funds to purchase the wattles and seeds to control erosion along the banks. Frontera currently is installing the wattles and will be spreading the seeds with volunteer labor from groups such as El Paso Electric Company, Texas Master Naturalists, the El Paso Academy, The Frontera Land Alliance and the Franklin Mountain Wilderness Coalition.

Another project that is moving forward is the Resilience Grant from the Rockefeller Foundation.

The agreement was executed by the City Council in April. The city will move forward with developing a Resilience City Plan that will help El Paso withstand shocks while still maintaining its essential functions. The Rockefeller Foundation defines resilience as "the ability of a system, entity, community, or person to withstand shocks while still maintaining its essential functions and to recover quickly and effectively." Simply put, resilience is what enables people to survive, adapt, and thrive in the face of acute shocks and chronic stresses. See <http://100resilientcities.rockefellerfoundation.org/> for more information.

Frontera will stay in touch with the resilience program, participating and adding our own special objective of developing a mapping tool that identifies and classifies lands that best accommodate development and gray infrastructure along with lands to be conserved. The Land Conservation Inventory Tool is a collaborative approach specifically designed to obtain community input, create goals, assist in designing policies, identify land protection focus areas and develop funding mechanisms to create a lasting legacy in our region. This tool will strengthen and provide scientific data to assist in managing Plan El Paso, the Northwest Master Plan, and the El Paso Sustainability Plan, the El Paso Open Space Plan, the Doña Ana County Comprehensive Plan and other regional efforts that identify large connected natural areas in need of preservation.

To learn more about Frontera, contact Frontera Land Alliance at info@FronteraLandAlliance or 915-351-8352.

