



Jan-Feb 2016

## Greater Fort Worth Sierra Club

# Sierra Sentinel

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## Fade Away

By Michael Brune, Sierra Club Executive Director



Six months ago, it would have been a sucker's bet. A serious climate plan from the province of Alberta, Canada? Sure.... and Senator James Inhofe is about to swear off snowballs to find work as a solar panel installer. Are we talking about the same Alberta that sits on top of the world's largest known reservoir of tar sands oil? For Alberta to cut back on tar sands would be like the Koch brothers fighting over who gets to ask Hillary Clinton to the prom.

But as we just saw in Paris when 195 nations signed the most important climate agreement in history, the world is changing. No longer can a rational person look at Alberta's tar sands without also seeing how dangerous this gargantuan "carbon bomb" is to our climate. When the entire world is challenging itself to cut carbon emissions, extracting and burning tar sands oil starts to feel like conspicuous combustion.

And so, last November 22, the new premier of Alberta, Rachel Notley, announced a new climate action plan that, for the first time, will place a limit on emissions from tar sands extraction. In other words, tar sands mining will continue but be capped at 100 megatons of carbon emissions a year. (The plan also includes phasing out coal-fired power plants by 2030 while increasing renewable energy and curbing methane pollution.)

*(Continued Next Page)*

## January Monthly Meeting Presentation on Lewisville Lake Environmental Learning Area



Richard Freiheit of Lewisville

Lake Environmental Learning Area (LLELA) will introduce us to the programs, volunteer opportunities, and environmental work at this wonderful outdoor learning center less than 1 hour from Fort Worth. The property is owned by the US Corp of Engineers but managed jointly by the Lewisville ISD, City of Lewisville, and UNT. There are campsites, canoeing, hiking, and kayaking opportunities for everyone there. We meet at 7 PM in the Azalea Room of the Fort Worth Botanic Garden Center, 3220 Botanic Garden Blvd. at University Drive, just north of I-30 in Fort Worth. All are welcome!

(Fade Away, Continued from Page 1)

So is a cap on tar sands emissions a good thing? Certainly, the fewer emissions the better. But the takeaway from the Paris climate agreement is unmistakable: Tar sands, like many fossil fuel reserves, will need to remain in the ground. Now, had Premier Notley suggested that in oil-rich Alberta, she would probably have been tarred and feathered, so she deserves kudos for sticking her neck out even halfway. But the goal should never be just to *limit* tar sands emissions, but to *eliminate* them. If even a climate-ambitious politician like Notley can't do that, who can?

We will. And by "we" I mean the global climate movement that includes the Sierra Club and everyone else who cares about protecting our climate. Here's our immediate task: Stop the tar sands industry from expanding. That's why it was so important to stop the Keystone XL pipeline. But Keystone XL was just one pipeline project, and that victory was just the beginning of our resistance.

[I've written before about Enbridge's Alberta Clipper](#) -- the only pipeline I know of that's actually named after a type of extreme weather (a type of storm that also travels from Canada to the U.S.). Enbridge wants to circumvent the approval process for expanding the Clipper by diverting the tar sands oil through an existing pipeline just for the border crossing.

The Sierra Club has been part of a coalition of tribal and environmental groups fighting the Clipper in federal court for more than a year. On December 9, U.S. District Judge Michael Davis ruled the court [didn't have jurisdiction over the matter](#). Does that mean clear sailing for the Alberta Clipper? Not a chance. We will fight that pipeline -- and every tar sands pipeline -- until tar sands extraction stops for good. And although the courts may not be willing to call Enbridge on its pipeline duplicity, the Obama administration still can. The court's decision simply refocuses attention on the key decision-maker for the Clipper pipeline: President Obama.

Fossil fuels will fade away. You know it. I know it. Even oil executives have begun to feel it in their bones: [Their product's days are numbered](#). But for the transition to clean energy to happen fast enough to save our climate, we must keep the pressure on the dirtiest, most polluting energy sources like tar sands. We will be relentless because, with so much at stake, we have no choice. As the Keystone XL fight showed, we're in it for the long haul. It might not happen today. It might not happen tomorrow. But we will win.

And that's something you *can* bet on.

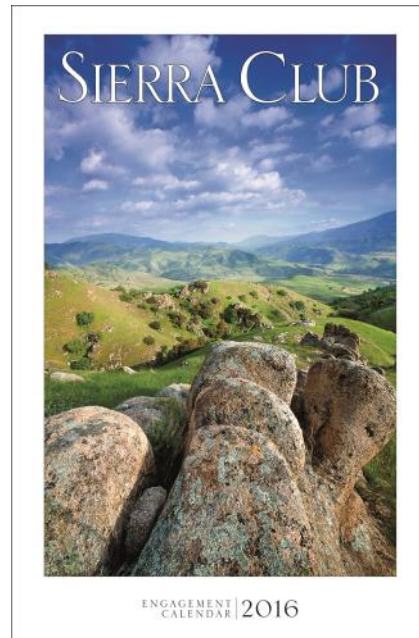
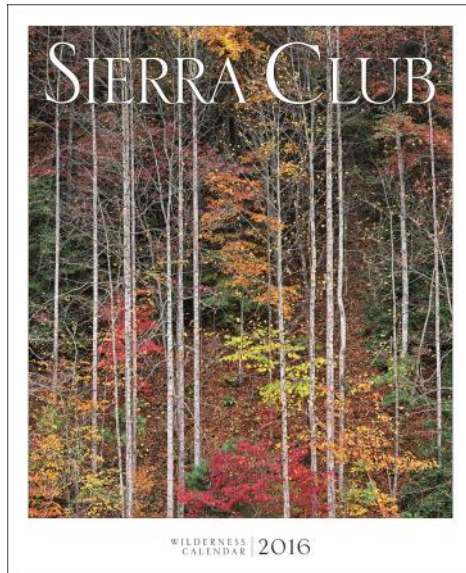
[Tell President Obama and Secretary of State Kerry to hold other tar sands pipelines to the same standard as Keystone XL.](#)

### **WED. FEB. 17, 7:00 PM-GENERAL MEETING**

Jim Marshall, a local bluebird enthusiastic who has fought to protect their habitat most recently along the Trinity Trail in Fort Worth against fracking interests, will be this month's speaker. He will provide the history of efforts to rebuild the population of Eastern Bluebirds in Fort Worth that began in 2007. Information will also be provided on bluebird habitats, nest box installation, nesting and reproduction activities, and predator threats and controls. We meet at 7 PM in the Azalea Room of the Fort Worth Botanic Garden Center, 3220 Botanic Garden Blvd. at University Drive, just north of I-30 in Fort Worth. All are welcome!



## 2016 Sierra Club Calendars on Sale!



These calendars will dazzle all year with dramatic and awe-inspiring color photographs of wild places all across the country, taken by world renowned nature photographers. Both calendars will be available at our upcoming monthly meetings. The sale price for each calendar is \$7.00. Get yours while they last!

### ***Tuesday, Jan. 26, 5:30 PM*** ***Meet and Greet at Bar Louie***

**Beat the winter doldrums** by joining us for a meet and greet at Bar Louie.

Tuesday is \$1 burger night from 5:00 p.m. until closing, so you can chow down on a hamburger, turkey burger, or Portobello burger for only a buck. Bar Louie is located at 2973 W. 7th St., Fort Worth, at the corner of W. 7th Street and Norwood Street in the Cultural District. We will meet at the large tables to your right as you walk in the door. Learn more about the Greater Fort Worth Sierra Club and our activities, and meet some new people who are also interested in enjoying the great outdoors and conserving our land and resources. Hope to see you there!



### **Beyond Paris: Support a Strong and Just Clean Power Plan!**

On the heels of the Paris climate summit, a strong and just Clean Power Plan is essential to meeting our climate commitments. Send a message now to the EPA to support the Clean Power Act!

<http://www.sierraclub.org/>

## CALENDAR OF EVENTS



**SUN. JAN 10, 2:00 P.M.—DAY HIKE AT FORT WORTH NATURE CENTER.** Meet at 2 pm at the Hardwicke Interpretative Visitors Center parking lot at Fort Worth Nature Center. After you enter the refuge, pay your entrance fee, and follow signs to Hardwicke. We will hike a 4 mile section of trails. Bring water, snacks, and rain gear. The Nature Center is located in NW Tarrant County on Lake Worth. Take Highway 199 exit west toward Azle off 820 West on western edge of Fort Worth. Leader: Claudia Blalock, 817-924-6242. For more information on Nature Center, visit [www.fwnaturecenter.org](http://www.fwnaturecenter.org). In the event of rain, hike is cancelled. No dogs, please.

**SAT. JAN. 16, 10:00 A.M.—TOUR OF HAGERMAN WILDLIFE REFUGE.** Visit our closest national wildlife refuge, Hagerman Wildlife Refuge, which is only 1½ hours from Ft. Worth and offers wildlife viewing and hiking trails in a unique setting. It was set aside in 1946 primarily as a resting place for geese and ducks, and includes nearly 13,000 acres of habitat adjacent to Lake Texoma. This trip gives us a chance to explore how federal lands are leased for various purposes, as you will note after seeing oil wells on this property. The refuge is located about 65 miles northeast of Fort Worth near Gainesville TX. In the morning we will explore the park on foot on the park's hiking trails. Bring a sack lunch for a group picnic after the hike. After lunch we will take a guided tour of the refuge via tram with a refuge bird expert for approximately 1 – 1.5 hrs, and view a Powerpoint presentation about the refuge. Optional stop on the way home at the famous Clark's Outpost BBQ in Tioga, TX. **SPACE IS LIMITED TO 10 PERSONS FOR THE GUIDED TOUR. MUST CONTACT TRIP LEADER TO REGISTER.** We will meet at the new Visitors Center inside the wildlife refuge at 10 AM if you are traveling independently. For carpooling from Denton TX, meet in Denton at the Cracker Barrel parking lot at the intersection of 380 and 35W at 9 AM (please eat before 9 AM). Directions: go north on I-35 W from Fort Worth to Highway 82 in Gainesville, TX. Head east (to the right) on 82 for about 20 miles until you see turnoff for Hagerman Refuge on the north side of the highway. Follow signs to Visitors Center. Website for refuge: <http://www.fws.gov/refuge/hagerman>. Contact Trip leader: Marilyn Turnage, 214-533-2481 or [marilynturnage@att.net](mailto:marilynturnage@att.net)

**WED. JAN. 20, 7:00 PM –GENERAL MEETING.** Richard Freiheit of Lewisville Lake Environmental Learning Area (LLELA) will introduce us to the programs, volunteer opportunities, and environmental work at this wonderful outdoor learning center less than 1 hour from Fort Worth. The property is owned by the US Corp of Engineers but managed jointly by the Lewisville ISD, City of Lewisville, and UNT. There are campsites, canoeing, hiking, and kayaking opportunities for everyone there. We meet at 7 PM in the Azalea Room of the Fort Worth Botanic Garden Center, 3220 Botanic Garden Blvd. at University Drive, just north of I-30 in Fort Worth. All are welcome !

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**SAT-SUN, MARCH 5-6—BEGINNER BACKPACK AT INKS LAKE STATE PARK** near Burnet, TX. This scenic park is close enough to Ft Worth to allow us to drive there Saturday morning and the backpack will start at 11 am that morning. We will backpack a 5-7 mile section of trails within the park on Sat. and a shorter section on Sunday. Focus will be on learning to adjust your pack and to become accustomed to packing it appropriately for an overnight trip. Preference will be given to recent attendees at the Sierra Club camping class in August 2015. Trip limited to 12 persons and require approval of trip leader. Leaders: Claudia Blalock and Craig Woodcook. Must contact Claudia Blalock to register for trip and requires approval by leader 817-924-6242 or [claudiablalock@att.net](mailto:claudiablalock@att.net)). Campsite fees will be shared and require prepayment of \$5 to reserve your place. Camping spaces are limited so register early for trip.



## Will Eco-Bots Save the World?

If you've seen Pixar's WALL-E, then you know that there's an environmentalist inside every adorable 'Hello, Dolly'-loving robot. If you haven't seen the animated hit movie, then these robo-environmentalists are sure to convince you that droids can be tree-huggers, too. We've rounded up our favorite eco-savvy robots, who are tackling some of the toughest challenges facing our planet, from sustainable farming to wildlife conservation.



### FARMER-LESS FARMS

We seem willing to trust robots with pretty much anything, from [vacuuming our carpets](#) to [performing surgery](#). So why not let them grow our food, too? The [world's first farmer-less farm](#) is scheduled to open near Kyoto, Japan in 2017. The so-called "[vegetable factory](#)" will take lettuce from seedling to salad mix without a human hand ever touching it. Each day, the farm will harvest over 30,000 heads of lettuce while recycling 98 percent of its water. Plus, the farm is indoors, so pesticides and herbicides aren't needed.

In the United States, robotic farm tools are already pruning grape vines and picking oranges, but humans are still required to manage growing and harvesting. While farmer-less farms are great for conserving resources, it's important to remember that actual farmers will lose out if the trend takes off. (The unemployment rate for American farmworkers is already about [13.5 percent](#)—that's much higher than the [5 percent](#) national unemployment rate.)

### ENVIRONMENTAL (ROBO)MONITORS

Climate change and pollution may be anthropogenic, but scientists are looking to robots to help put things right. Plans are in the works for [robotic plants](#) that carry out soil monitoring and a [computerized tumbleweed](#) that collects data on desertification. Meanwhile, scientists at the National University of Singapore (NUS) are testing [robotic swans](#) that can monitor water quality and track down pollution without disrupting the natural landscape. The autonomous birds are equipped with GPS guidance and sensors that measure pH, turbidity, and dissolved oxygen, among other things. NUS researchers are also designing a [sea turtle robot](#) that they hope will eventually be able to perform environmental monitoring tasks that are difficult for humans to perform safely, such as deep-sea diving.

### CONSERVATION BOTS

But wildlife-inspired droids are already taking on important conservation-related tasks. This [female bird-bot](#) braved the feathering dating scene to help scientists at the University of California, Davis understand the sexual selection process of the greater sage-grouse. Until recently, the sage-grouse was protected under the Endangered Species Act. (Watch this [amazing gif](#) of a male sage-grouse's mating strut to understand what the UC Davis bird-bot was up against.)

These [imitation-deer](#) robots are also working to protect their animated brethren by helping law enforcement catch poachers. Automated decoys fool illegal hunters, giving officials hard evidence to arrest them.

- Catherine Schuknecht



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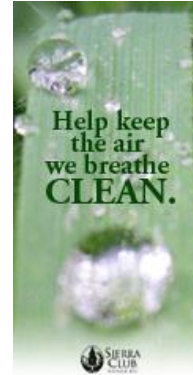
### *Sierra Club Mission Statement*

*To explore, enjoy, and protect the wild places of the earth; to practice and promote the responsible use of the earth's ecosystems and resources; to educate and enlist humanity to protect and restore the quality of the natural and human environment; and to use all lawful means to carry out these objectives. For more information, please visit [www.sierraclub.org](http://www.sierraclub.org).*

## C'mon, Join the Club!!

Did you know that for only \$15.00, you can join the Sierra Club and enjoy all the benefits of membership? Such as a one-year subscription to the Sierra Magazine and automatic membership in your local chapter. And for a limited time, receive a free gift when you join. So please help support the Sierra Club by joining today!

To join and find out more, please click here → → → →



## Have you Signed our Single-Use Bag Ban Petition?

If not, you can sign it by going to <http://www.thepetitionsite.com/622/890/475/support-a-single-use-plastic-bag-ban/>. We have over 400 signatures and counting. You can also like our Facebook page to keep up with the status of our campaign. <https://www.facebook.com/fwbagban>

Please help make Fort Worth an environmental leader by signing our petition to ban single-use plastic bags in Fort Worth. And remember, when you shop, bring your bag!



## Do you Shop at Tom Thumb?

If your answer is yes, how about helping the Greater Fort Worth Sierra Club earn money while you shop? Just link your Tom Thumb Reward card to the Greater Fort Worth Sierra Club, and every time you purchase groceries, the store will donate a portion of the purchase amount to the Club. Just go to <http://www.tomthumb.com/IFL/Grocery/Home>, click on "Community Caring" at the bottom of the page, click on "Good Neighbor" in the column on the left, and then click on "Get Application and Start Saving Today." That link will take you to a form you can fill out to link your card to the Club. The Club's number is 4659. If you shop at Tom Thumb, please take advantage of this easy way to contribute. Thanks for your support!



## Do You Shop at Amazon.com?

If so, you can shop and support the Greater Fort Worth Sierra Club at the same time. All you have to do is go to our website, <http://www.sierraclub.org/texas/greater-fort-worth>, scroll to the bottom of the page, and you will see a link to the Amazon website. Just click on that link and start shopping away! Amazon.com will automatically gift a portion of the money you spend to the Greater Fort Worth Sierra Club. How easy is that? I hope you'll remember us next time you shop with Amazon.com. Thanks for your support. We appreciate it!

## Social Connections



Are you on [Facebook](#)? So are we. Like us to stay up to date on outings, conservation issues, and any events we are having.



[Meetup.com?](#)  
Find us there too and meet others who are interested in the same activities as you.



Visit the Greater Fort Worth Sierra Club's [web page](#) and see a list of our outings, events, and upcoming meetings, learn about our bag ban campaign, and find lots of good links!

### How to Join a List Serve and Why Should I?

If you would like to receive current information about club news, outings, and conservation issues, please sign up for our list serves. That way you won't miss out on any important news and will be informed if there are any last-minute changes to any of our outings. Occasionally an outing may be cancelled because of weather conditions, etc., so if you are on our Outings list serve, you'll be the first to know. And if you're on our News list serve, you'll receive a reminder about our general meeting each month. And don't worry, you won't get spammed. We don't distribute email addresses to anyone, so the only organization you'll be getting emails from is us! To sign up, go to the home page of our website or click on these links.

[Lonestar-FTW-News list serve](#)

[Lonestar-FTW-Outings News list serve](#)

[Lonestar-FTW-Conservation Forum list serve](#)

#### Cyberspace Contacts

Webmaster -Dewayne Quertermous 214-558-1407  
fw.sierra.webmaster@gmail.com

#### How to Volunteer and Where am I Needed?

Volunteers are essential to any organization, especially one that doesn't have a full-time paid staff. Currently the Fort Worth Sierra Club needs help with:

- Outings leaders for car camps, hikes, and backpacks
- Fundraising
- Volunteers to bring light snacks and drinks to our monthly general meetings

If you want more information or are interested in helping us, please contact Claudia at 817-924-6242 or [claudia.blalock@att.net](mailto:claudia.blalock@att.net)

**Greater Fort Worth Sierra Club**  
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[ftwsierra@gmail.com](mailto:ftwsierra@gmail.com)



## JOIN THE SIERRA CLUB NOW AND HELP US MAKE HISTORY.

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 Email \_\_\_\_\_

**YES! I would like to give a gift membership to**  
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Supporting	<input type="checkbox"/> \$75	<input type="checkbox"/> \$100
Contributing	<input type="checkbox"/> \$150	<input type="checkbox"/> \$175
Life	<input type="checkbox"/> \$1000	<input type="checkbox"/> \$1250
Senior	<input type="checkbox"/> \$25	<input type="checkbox"/> \$35
Student/Limited Income	<input type="checkbox"/> \$25	<input type="checkbox"/> \$35

Contributions, gifts and dues to Sierra Club are not tax deductible; they support our effective, citizen-based advocacy and lobbying efforts. Your dues include \$7.50 for a subscription to *Sierra* magazine and \$1 for your Chapter newsletters.

**Enclose a check and mail to** Sierra Club, P.O. Box 421041, Palm Coast, FL 32142-1041 **or visit our website** [www.sierraclub.org](http://www.sierraclub.org)

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