

## ALAMO GROUP MEETINGS

General membership meets at *(new time)* 6:30 p.m., third Tuesday each month, Witte Museum, 3801 Broadway.

### Tues., Oct. 19: Clean Cities

Chris Ashcraft, Clean Cities Coordinator for the Alamo Area Council of Governments, will speak about the Clean Cities program, including electric vehicles. Peter Bella, Natural Resources Director of AACOG will give an overview of air quality in our region. Electric vehicles will be parked at the Witte to view.

### Tues., Nov. 16: Cutting Waste

Recycling goals for the 21st Century can significantly reduce waste. Learn how we can join other Central Texas communities to create jobs through sustainable production and consumption. Austinite Robin Schneider, Executive Director, Texas Campaign for the Environment, will present.

## SIERRA SOCIALS

*Drinks, food, fun. If planning to attend, contact Loyd Cortez, 674-9489, loydcortez@earthlink.net.*

**Fri., Oct. 22:** Little Italy Restaurant, 824 Afterglow Street, 6-8 p.m.

*Due to Thanksgiving and Christmas, no Sierra Socials are scheduled for November and December.*

# The Alamo Sierran

The Alamo Group of the Sierra Club Newsletter

VOLUME 44, NUMBER 9

OCTOBER 2010



SIERRA CLUB  
FOUNDED 1892

## Bat Man Dispels Bat Myths at September Meeting

What do you believe about bats? That they will get into your hair? That they have terrible eyesight (blind as a bat)? That they drink your blood? That they all carry rabies?

Mostly not true, according to Fran Hutchins, coordinator at Bracken Bat Cave near San Antonio, who spoke at the Alamo Group's monthly meeting at the Witte Museum Sep. 21. Bats actually have very good eyesight, said Hutchins, and they do not get tangled in your hair. A few bats – about 1 percent – do carry rabies, but you're more likely to get the disease from a raccoon. Three of the 1150 species of bats do eat blood, Hutchins said, but two of those species prey on birds, and the lone feeder on mammals lives in South America.

Despite their spooky reputation, bats actually do a tremendous amount of good, Hutchins said. For instance, Bracken's 20 million Mexican free-tailed bats (the largest bat colony in the world) eat about 200 tons of insects each night. In Texas alone, insect-eating bats save cotton farmers \$2 million annually -- in pesticides

that they *don't* have to buy. Other bats benefit farmers by serving as pollinators – much like bees.

Unfortunately, these beneficial creatures are facing threats worldwide from habitat destruction and disease, Hutchins said. White-nose Syndrome, a fungus that affects hibernating bats and results in a 90 percent mortality rate for an infected colony. Bats also serve as "bush meat" in certain cultures, according to Hutchins. They are killed and consumed by hungry people.

To help solve these problems, Hutchins works for Bat Conserva-

tion International, which has initiated a number of programs to protect bats. For instance, BCI works with ranchers to make live-stock watering devices safe for bats, and BCI has established a Bats and Mines Program in which old mines are preserved as roosts for hibernating bats.

If you want to find out more about bats, go to the Bat Conservation International website at [batcon.org](http://batcon.org). Visits to Bracken Cave are limited to BCI members and their guests, but you can join BCI for \$35 (\$30 for educators, students and seniors). Membership information is on the website.



## Holiday Pot Luck Set for December 7

The Alamo Group's annual holiday pot luck supper and silent auction will be held Tuesday, Dec. 7, from 6 - 8:30 p.m. at Lion's Field Club House, Broadway at Mulberry.

Please consider offering donations for the auction. If you have a donation, please contact Peggy Day, 829-5632.

Club member Scott Wolfe led an outing to Grand Teton in late August. Shown above are Mount Owen and Grand Teton. At right are two of Scott's group, Sherri Hudson and Kenneth Hilla.



“On view in the exhibit hall will be the latest electric vehicles and charging equipment.”

“The company is called ZAP, which stands for Zero Air Pollution.”

Annual U.S. Postal Service requirement satisfied by Statement of Ownership, Management, and Circulation.

## Event Focuses on Electrified Transportation

The Alamo Area Council of Governments Clean Cities Coalition, in partnership with the San Antonio and Bexar County, will conduct the first ever Advancing the Choice event on electrified transportation Oct. 21-22 at the Henry B. Gonzalez Convention Center.

*Electrification of Transportation: Advancing Transportation Choices and Economic Development* will continue the steps toward building a region-wide alternative fuel infrastructure, which in turn will create greater Texas energy security, job creation, and improved air quality.

To maintain the momentum from previous years, this conference will educate local governments, utilities, businesses, the media, and the general public on the benefits of electrified transportation.

With fuel prices back on the rise it is important that we demonstrate the potential cost savings of these new technologies to vehicle fleets and general public in the Alamo Area.

On view in the exhibit hall will be the latest electric vehicles and charging equipment, including cars, buses, scooters, ATVs, bikes, and other forms of transportation.

The event will provide attendees with a comprehensive overview of (1) economic, environmental and energy security factors shifting the market's move to electrified transportation; (2) which fleets are best candidates for successful electrified transportation programs; (3) rebates, tax credits, and grant programs for electric vehicles; (4) expected growth in electrification of transportation and related economic development opportunities; (5) electric vehicles and electric vehicle supply equipment; (6) electrified transit, bikes, personal vehicles, and fleet vehicles; (7) the electrification of transportation in cities throughout Texas.

## ZAP Electric Vehicles Offer Three-Wheeled Economy

If you're in the market for an electric car, check out the small, cute, three-wheeled vehicles made by a company called ZAP, which stands for Zero Air Pollution.

ZAP is a California company that currently offers a Xebra Electric Sedan and a Xebra Electric Truck. The truck seats two and has a small bed. The sedan seats four. Both vehicles

will go 25 miles on a single charge, or 40 miles with an occasional, short-term charge. Top speed for both is 40 miles per hour. The vehicles sell for \$11,700 each.

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# A Word from the Alamo Group Chair

## By Margaret "Peggy" Day

Our Alamo Group has engaged in several important conservation concerns recently. Of interest are the hearings for Texas Parks and Wildlife Department management and EPA coal ash regulation.

On Aug. 25 the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department hosted its third annual public hearing, this time in San Antonio. Forty-four concerned citizens spoke to the audience, commissioners, and management on a wide range of issues. Among the high and low notes were some wonderful programs, coastal resources being loved to death, and a very troubling decision by the TPW Commission.

If you don't know about the Texas Outdoor Partners or the Texas Brigades, you should look into these transformative TPWD programs for families and youth. They received many glowing reports from parents, children, and elderly. Many kids wowed everyone with the poise, passion and public speaking they picked up while learning skills, leadership, and teamwork in the Brigades and TOP.

The most common conservation

concern was from South Coast fishermen, recreationists, and outfitters and their myriad interest groups who agreed that the coast needs more regulation to prevent further coastal aquatic habitat destruction and collapse of some fisheries.

Another dangerous development is the TPW Commission's precedent-setting decision to violate a park deed. During negotiations for the transfer of Houston Lake State Park to the City of Houston in 2006, concerned parties were assured that lengthy deed restrictions would protect natural resources values. Although athletic facilities are expressly prohibited, the Commission voted to allow a 25-acre archery facility, among many other built amenities. The irony is the area was renamed Houston Lake *Wilderness* Park. Alamo Sierrans stand by the Houston Group's conservation chair in opposition to this creative license, and will help appeal. If you want more information, check out this article in the Bayou Banner: <http://www.texas.sierraclub.org/houston/news/2010/0901.pdf>

Toxic coal ash is another top campaign that Alamo Group has addressed. Several members joined with hundreds of citizens, including

officials, scientists and legal experts, at the EPA hearing in Dallas on Sep. 8, one of seven around the country. People came from all over to share emotional tales of the detrimental effects of coal ash in their lives and communities and to lobby for strong new regulations.

Currently coal ash is mostly unregulated, yet its toxicity and widespread contamination is well documented. This is a real problem for Texans, since Texas ranks second in the country for coal ash generation. Dozens of coal ash ponds and landfills dot the state, new plants are planned, and use of coal ash in building and construction is growing. More and more people are exposed to dangerous elements in this ash—arsenic, cadmium, chromium, lead, selenium, and others—polluting our air and water.

It seems inconceivable, with these dangers and as America's second largest industrial waste stream, that there are no strong, enforceable federal regulations of coal ash. If you'd like to know more about the coal ash problem go to: [www.sierraclub.org/coalash](http://www.sierraclub.org/coalash) Check out "In Harm's Way," a report that exposes toxic coal ash waste water pollution in Texas:

**"If you don't know about the Texas Outdoor Partners or the Texas Brigades, you should look into these transformative TPWD programs for families and youth."**

## Alamo Group Outings: Fall Brings Fall Foliage Hikes

### Saturday, Oct. 23: New Medina River Greenway (Dog Friendly)

Meet 8:30 a.m. in the parking lot just south of the Medina River on the west side of Applewhite Road. Depart 8:45 a.m. [sharp](#). Anticipated completion time 12:15 p.m. Exit 149 (Spur 422/SH 16) off south IH 35. Left at light toward Poteet. Left after 5.3 miles onto Lonestar Pass (Spur 66) toward main gate of Toyota Plant. At main gate, right (south) on Applewhite Road to parking lot. **Difficulty:** Easy seven miles. Bring one liter water. **Donations** to Sierra Club encouraged. Call leader **Stan Drezek**, 493-0939 to reserve spot.

### Sunday, Oct. 24: Landa Park and Comal Springs

Meet at 10:00 a.m. in Landa Park parking lot near Founder's Oak. From IH35 in New Braunfels, take Seguin Ave exit and go west past

the courthouse to Landa Park Drive. Follow drive to Founder's Oak. **Difficulty:** Easy two mile walk. Bring water and snack. **Donations** accepted. Contact leader **Bill Rogers**, (830) 885-2523, to RSVP.

### Saturday, November 6th: Lost Maples Hike (Fall Foliage Hike)

View Maple trees along the Sabinal River. Leave river and follow trail to top of the canyon for outstanding views of the hill country. Lunch in the picnic area afterwards. **Difficulty:** Moderate, less than 5 miles. One moderate climb. Pay park entrance fees and bring water and food. **Donations** are accepted. Children over 14 are welcome with parent/guardian. *Group size is limited.* Contact **Terry Platt** for more information and to sign up.

Saturday, Nov. 13: Friedrich in the

### Fall — Friedrich Wilderness Area

Park located at 21935 Milsa Rd. Take Dominion Drive exit from IH 70 W, mile N on access road and then turn around S on access road to Oak and W to Milsa. Meet 8:30 a.m. in Parking Lot. **Difficulty:** Moderate 3.5 mile hike with some steep, rocky sections. Completion time approximately 11 a.m. Bring water and wear sturdy ankle supporting shoes. **Donations** to Sierra Club accepted. Call leader **Stan Drezek**, 493-0939.

### Saturday, Nov. 13: Government Canyon State Natural Area

Length from 4 to 7 miles depending on group. \$6 entrance fee (\$3 seniors). Meet at Visitors Center by rainwater harvesting tower at 8:15 a.m. for an 8:30 a.m. departure. Finish by noon. Call Sierra Club co-leader **Chris Anderson**, 838-1952, for more information.

# Meeting Dates and Contact Information

General Meeting	3rd Tuesday, 6:30 p.m.	Peggy Day	829-5632
Executive Committee Mtg.	3rd Thursday, 6:30 p.m.	Peggy Day	829-5632
Newsletter Submissions	Deadline, 8th of each month	Wendell Fuqua	734-8281
Political Committee Mtg.	2d Thursday, 7 p.m.	Russell Seal	289-9088
Newsletter Mail Party	2d Tuesday, 7 p.m.	Jim Stewart	692-0727
Outings Committee Mtg.	1st Wed., every odd month., 7 p.m.	Jerry Morrisey	497-5470
Conservation Committee Mtg.	1st Thursday, 7 p.m.	L. Van Coppenolle	492-4620

**Alamo Group of the Sierra Club  
Executive Committee Officers & Members**

Margaret (Peggy) Day, Chair Person	829-5632
Loyd Cortez, Vice Chair Person	674-9489
Wendell Fuqua	373-0748
Hector Gonzalez	226-6069
Mary Ellen Garcia, Co-Secretary	344-1581
Karen Kimbell, Co-Secretary	365-3174
Dave Wells	271-0640
Scott Wolfe	724-2707
Denali Endicott	629-2434
Sharon Dukes (non voting), Treasurer	828-3721

**Administrative Contacts**

Programs	Barbara McMillin	734-4170
Fundraising	Denali Endicott	629-2434
Publicity	Vacant	
Mailings	Jim Stewart	692-0727
Membership	Karen Kimbell	365-3174
Newsletter	Wendell Fuqua	373-0748
Website	Richard Alles	494-2088

**Committee Contacts**

Outings	Jerry Morrisey	497-5470
Political	Russell Seal	289-9008
Outreach		
And Education	Carolyn Wells	271-0640

**Conservation Contacts**

Conservation Chair	L. Van Coppenolle	492-4620
Assistant Chair	R. Carroll-Bradd	216-6125
Endangered Species	Fred Wills	673-9566
Flouridation	L. Van Coppenolle	492-4620
Organic Gardening	Dave Klar	495-2148
Recycling	Carolyn Wells	271-0640
Tree Conservation	Richard Alles	494-2088
Volunteer Coord.	Vacant	
Water Issues	Jerry Morrisey	497-5470

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<b>U.S. Congresspersons</b>		<b>City Council (Continued)</b>	
Charlie Gonzalez	472-6195	Dist. 2: Ivy R. Taylor	207-7278
Lamar Smith	821-5024	Dist. 3: Jennifer Ramos	207-7064
Henry Cuellar	271-2851	Dist. 4: Philip A. Cortez	207-7281
Ciro Rodriguez	922-1874	Dist. 5: David Medina, Jr.	207-7043
		Dist. 6: Ray Lopez	207-7065
		Dist. 7: Justin Rodriguez	207-7044
		Dist. 8: W. Reed Williams	207-7086
		Dist. 9: Elisa Chan	207-7325
		Dist. 10: John G. Clamp	207-7276

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P.O. Box 6443  
San Antonio, Texas 78209**

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