



THE ALAMO SIERRAN

THE ALAMO GROUP OF THE SIERRA CLUB NEWSLETTER - VOL. 44 No. 4 APR 2010

Tues., Mar. 16: Proposed Tree Ordinance Reviewed

At our club meeting Mar. 16, San Antonio's proposed revised tree ordinance was reviewed by Richard Alles, a member of the Alamo Group and Citizens Tree Coalition. Alles was a timely substitute for representatives of Big Bend Ranch State Park, who were unable to make their scheduled presentation.

Alles said San Antonio's current tree ordinance needs revision for three reasons: to close loopholes allowing too many trees to be cut, to stem the rapid loss of tree canopy that the city is experiencing, and to meet the goals of the recent Urban Ecosystem Study. Alles maintained, however, that the proposed

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Alamo Group Nominees Win Lone Star Chapter Awards

The Alamo Group of the Sierra Club is thrilled to announce that four of our submissions received 2010 Sierra Club Lonestar Chapter Awards.

Conservation Award. Alamo Group Conservation Chair Loretta Van Coppenolle, for her outstanding contributions to the club for more than two decades.

Environmental Reporting Award. The Current's Greg Harmon, for his dogged, in depth and reporting on the environment and the nuclear energy issue.

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Word from the Chair

After the prolonged draught and extreme cold, it's time to get out into nature and enjoy this springtime. Our Alamo Group and others around the state offer many excursions for safe, educational and enjoyable trips. We hope to develop many more. Consider joining our outings training on May 1, where we will walk around the Blue Hole riparian and historic area at the University of the Incarnate Word and impart the skills to lead your own outings.

Another service option is to help us staff some of the many spring fairs around the region. We have signed on for 15 events, so please contact me about volunteering for a few hours. Four Earth Day celebrations need extra help, one on Saturday, Apr. 17, the Botanical Garden's Walk Across Texas, and three on Thursday, Apr. 22, at San Antonio College, UTSA and Whole Foods in the Quarry. We also need participants in the garden themed King William parade on Saturday, Apr. 24, coordinated by MaryEllen Garcia, 344-1581.

Our group and partners continue to work on an endless stream of crucial environmental campaigns. Our main effort remains a clean energy future, and from City Public Service to the White House there is rarely a pause. We also are in a public input phase on transit options for the Loop 1604 extension over the aquifer recharge zone. And, a vote looms on yet another inadequate tree ordinance revision. This one would allow developers to continue to bulldoze all significant and heritage trees. In our perennial water battle, a Texas Water Development Board representative says the key now is for San Antonio Water System to invest in a coastal desalination plant that will produce water at a cost 1,000 per cent higher. The EPA's recommendation to undo the unscientific ozone standard is challenged by our governor. And the list goes on.

Springs may dry up, but hope springs eternal with our army of Sierrans. Become more active and call, write and speak to your elected officials.

General Meeting: 7:00 P.M., 3rd Tuesday each month at the Witte Museum located at 3801 Broadway just south of Hildebrand Ave. Socializing begins at 6:40, program at 7 P.M.

Tues., April 20: Water Quality of Edwards Aquifer

Geary Schindel of the Edwards Aquifer Authority will speak on the hydrogeology of the aquifer, emphasizing chemical and biologic water quality. Results from the EAA's research and data collection programs will be used to discuss the conceptualization of groundwater flow in karst aquifers in general and in the Edwards Aquifer in particular. Schindel has been Chief Technical Officer for the EAA in San Antonio since 1999.

Tues., May 18: Bicycle to Conserve Energy

Lydia Kelly, Bicycle/Pedestrian Transportation Planner at the San Antonio-Bexar County Metropolitan Planning Organization, will discuss bicycling in San Antonio. Discussion will include programs offered by the MPO, recent bicycle related studies, as well as safety tips for both motorists and cyclists sharing common roadways.

Free Film Showing

The local non-profit Outreach for Animals and the Earth, invites members of the Sierra Club to attend a free screening of the film *Crude*, which has just won the prestigious International Green Film Award. The showing will be May 4, 6:30 p.m., at HEB Central Market on Broadway in one of the second floor meeting rooms. The room holds only 50 people so please arrive early for seating.

In this documentary, Ecuadorian indigenous leader Emergildo Criollo tells the story of how Chevron poisoned his three-year old son, who died after swimming in a river polluted by the company's deliberately sub-standard operations in the Amazon. Another infant son was born with severe development disabilities and died at six months, and Emergildo's wife developed uterine cancer.

Crude tells the inspiring story of how Emergildo has become a leader and tireless advocate for his community, fighting for Chevron to clean up the environmental disaster it left behind in Ecuador.

Tree Ordinance Continued

ordinance does not satisfactorily address these areas.

Under the proposed ordinance, Alles said, up to 85 percent of old heritage trees (at least 12 inches in diameter) could be destroyed, and up to one-third of a subdivision may be excluded from the new regulations. In addition, the ordinance would not provide for the needed 55 percent canopy cover over the Edwards Aquifer.

The Urban Ecosystem Analysis states that between 2001 and 2006, San Antonio lost 3.4 percent of its tree canopy, and that the recharge zone lost 17.1 percent of its tree canopy and open space/grasslands.

Awards Continued

Special Service Award. Bill and Lanny Sinkin and Solar San Antonio for their long-time contributions to alternative energy.

Environmental Justice Award (an honor not bestowed yearly, but rather as meritorious recipients arise). The Esperanza Peace and Justice Center, for its partnership and stepped up role in the antinuclear, pro alternative energy battle, as well as for its past record of environmental and social justice.

Award recipients were honored at an awards banquet in Austin on April 10. All of them were instrumental in our ongoing City Public Service campaign, and will continue to be, we hope, allies in Sierra Club efforts to protect the environment.

**Tabling Events Offer
Chance to Serve
List 2010**

Our Alamo Group needs volunteers to work Sierra Club tables at the following events. Please contact the event coordinator, or Loyd Cortez, 674-9489, if you are interested in helping.

Sat. Apr. 17: Earth Day

Woodlawn Lake Park. Contact Teresa Ronquillo 844-8720.

Sat., Apr. 17: Walk Across Texas

Botanical Gardens Fiesta/Earth Day Event. Contact Peggy Day, 829-5632.

Thu., Apr. 22: San Antonio College Earth Day Celebration,

Loftin Student Center on SAC's main campus, 9 AM - 1 p.m.. Contact David Wells, 271-0640.

Thu., Apr. 22: Earth Day

UTSA, 11 AM - 2:00 p.m. at the University Center. Contact Peggy Day, 829-5632.

Thur., Apr. 22: Earth Day

Whole Foods Earth Day Celebration, 11AM - 2 p.m., at the Quarry, 255 East Basse Rd. Contact Peggy Day, 829-5632.

Sat., Apr. 24: New Braunfels Roots and Shoots

Earth Day Celebration, 1-5 p.m. Landa Park Dance Slab, New Braunfels. Contact Carolyn Wells, 271-0640.

Sat., Apr. 24: King William Parade,

Garden theme. Contact MaryEllen Garcia, 344-1581.

Sat., May 1: Solar Fest

Maverick Park, 9-4. Contact Loretta Van Copenolle, 492-4620.

**Help Parkway North
High School**

Sierrans, please help Parkway North High School win up to \$30,000.00 in scholarships and grants, much of which will go to solar panels, in the Lexus Eco Challenge Final. All you need to do is a log onto their Website www.teamecos.org. See what their extracurricular environmental club is achieving.

Outings Training

An all day training course to certify new outings leaders will take place at the University of the Incarnate Word, Saturday, May 1. There will be two tracks, one for new leaders and another, a refresher with advanced skills, for experienced leaders. Space is limited, so act quickly. Get more details and apply online, or call Jerry Morrison, 497-5470, or Peggy Day, 829-5632.

**Student environmental
leadership**

Our Alamo Group is working with Sierra Student Coalition trained youth who have played a powerful role in greening campuses. A current objective is to establish "green funds" at campuses across Texas to provide money for sustainability efforts. According to one SSC organizer, Trevor Lovell of ReEnergize Texas, in March these students helped the UTSA Student Government Association to vote overwhelmingly to place a green fund referendum on an April ballot.

If UTSA, the University of North Texas, and UT El Paso, which also have upcoming referendums, approve the funds, a total of \$8.5 million will be available over the next 5 years, including \$4 million already approved in March at UT Austin and Texas A&M. These students have been an important part of the clean energy solution in Texas. We hope to widen and strengthen our partnerships with students, teachers, concerned citizens, and organizations to institutionalize Education for Sustainability by providing resources for the SSC to train students from 14 to 30 from all schools in the San Antonio region.

A Brief History of Energy

By John Miller

Back in prehistoric times, early humans discovered fire. It could warm them and cook their food. But fire from the burning of wood and peat was inefficient. Too much heat went up the chimney and the smoke burned their eyes and seared their lungs. Then, about the 16th Century, they discovered coal. It burned much better than wood or peat, but there was still that air pollution. The harder the coal, the cleaner it burned. In the 19th Century the Lackawanna Railroad advertised "My dress stays clean and white upon the route of Anthracite". But Anthracite was in limited supply and remained messy to handle and store.

By the third quarter of that century people had begun to worry about carbon. Even if they did not yet perceive global warming, they knew that the Industrial Revolution was leading to air pollution. Cities across the world thought the

answer was planting trees. From the Bois de Boulogne in Paris to "Greenbelts" around London to the Cook County Forest Preserve in Chicago, conservationists mobilized in the early part of the 20th Century. They failed to realize the magnitude of their problem.

Industry was changing, too. Coal-burning furnaces were replaced by oil, and oil was replaced by natural gas. Air pollution was reduced but not eliminated, because everyone was still burning something, and people began to notice that the summers were getting hotter and wild plant and animal species were being affected. Some thought atomic power was the answer. True, there would be no carbon waste, but there would be a whole lot of other waste that would have to be stored somewhere. And in case of an accident, there would be a whole lot of pollution!

So the case for alternative energy was born. First came the effort to harness the energy of flowing water. In the early 20th Century it was recognized that flowing water could turn turbines that generated electricity, a non-polluting form of energy. Likewise the direct power of wind energy could be used to generate electricity. But these machines had moving parts that had to be maintained and could wear out.

But what about photo-chemistry? The sunlight on certain metals produces a chemical reaction that likewise generates electricity. In 1912 Giacomo Ciamician, the father of the Solar Panel, demonstrated how energy from the sun could illuminate a single light bulb in his laboratory. Solar panels currently being manufactured are warranted for at least 20 years and require no maintenance.

Our knowledge of energy sources has advanced from its beginnings in prehistoric times to the modern age, and we now have a clean and efficient engine to serve our needs. It is the sun.

CPS Energy Rebates, STEP Results

CPS Energy has a large number of rebates available to encourage energy efficiency. New among them is a \$400/ton rebate on qualifying geothermal (ground source) heat pumps, plus a \$50/ton bonus rebate for every 1.0 EER above the minimum.

Other rebates include those for central air conditioners and window units, compact fluorescent light bulbs, peak saver thermostats (provided and installed free), ceiling, roof and wall insulation, Energy Star windows, window films and screens, cool roofs, solar PV and hot water, and highly efficient washing machines (in conjunction with SAWS). CPS is also offering a variety of new residential construction incentives.

On the commercial side, CPS is offering incentives to encourage efficiency, largely including lighting, roofing, and HVAC/Chiller measures.

The San Antonio district that has most taken advantage of residential rebates is District 9, followed by District 7.

To learn more about the rebates and incentives mentioned above and others, go to www.cpsenergy.com.

CPS has made a commitment to reduce energy use in its service area by 771 MW by 2020 through efficiency and conservation. The utility reports that in 2008 39.8 MW were thus saved (doubling the original goal of 17 MW) and in 2009 it is estimated over 30 (possibly up to 45) MW were saved.

OUTINGS

SAT., APR. 24, EISENHOWER PARK EVENING HIKE

Meet at 6:45 p.m. at the main trail entrance for a 3-mile hike that will be completed in the moonlight by about 9 p.m. Come early at 6:15 if you would like to share a snack. Difficulty: Moderate to Strenuous. Leader: Jerry Morrissey, 382-2614 or jlmorrissey@aol.com.

AUG. 23 THROUGH AUG. 30 OR 31, GRAND TETONS AND YELLOWTONE

(At press time, this hike was fully booked, but you can add your name to a waiting list.) This will be a four-day backpack in the Grand Tetons, called Teton Crest, plus one or two days of hiking in Yellowstone. For Information: papawolfe@sbcglobal.net

APR. 23-24: ADOPT-A-BEACH CLEAN-UP, PADRE ISLAND NATIONAL SEASHORE

Saturday 9 a.m. to noon, pick up, catalog, and bag debris. Afterwards, swim and picnic. Those who want to camp a second night can do so. Difficulty: Easy. Cost: Free. For more

information contact Marsha Meredith at 675-4097, or MarshaM@satx.rr.com

SAT., MAY 29: SAWS RAIN-TO-DRAIN EDUCATIONAL DAY

Join fellow Sierrans for a full-day educational program learning about and traveling to components of our water system. For this unique opportunity, SAWS has graciously set aside a limited number of slots for our club. Report to SAWS Central Office, 2800 U.S. Hwy 281 North, at 8:30 AM. You will return there at 5 p.m. Difficulty: EASY. For information, contact facilitator for Sierra Club, Stan Drezek, 493-0939 or stanwendre@earthlink.net, and provide your e-mail or home delivery address. You will be sent a description of the day and a registration form. Both must be completed and sent directly back to SAWS. This is on a first-come first-served basis with a very limited number of slots, so call in early.

Sierra Socials

(Contact Loyd Cortez 674-9489 or loydcortez@earthlink.net if planning to attend.)

Apr. 23 on Fri, La Fogata, 2427 Vance Jackson Rd, 6-8 PM

Join us on the patio for good Mexican food and a margarita.

Fri., May 28. La Tuna, 100 Probandt, 224-8862, 6-8 p.m..

Good assortment of food to wash down with a beer. Join us outside and enjoy our beautiful weather.

MEETING DATES AND CONTACT INFO

General Meeting:	3rd Tuesday 7 p.m.	Peggy Day	829-5632
Executive Committee Meeting:	3rd Thursday, 7 p.m.	Peggy Day	829-5632
Newsletter Submissions:		Wendell Fuqua	jaleyd@grandecom.net
Political Committee Meeting:	2nd Thursday, 7 p.m.	Russell Seal	289-9008
Newsletter Mail Party:	2nd Tuesday, 7 p.m.	Jim Stewart	692-0727
Outings Committee Meeting:	1st Wednesday every 2 months, 7 p.m.	Jerry Morrissey	497-5470
Conservation Committee Meeting:	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
MaryEllen Garcia	344-1581
Karen Kimbell	365-3174
Dave Wells	271-0640
Scott Wolfe	724-2707
Teresa Ronquillo	844-8720
Sharon Dukes (non voting) Treasurer	828-3721

ADMINISTRATIVE CONTACTS

Programs	Barbara McMillin	734-4170
Fundraising	Vacant	
Publicity	Teresa Ronquillo	844-8720
Mailings	Jim Stewart	692-0727
Membership	Vacant	
Newsletter	Wendell Fuqua	373-0748
Website	Richard Alles	494-2088

COMMITTEE CONTACTS

Outings Chair	Jerry Morrissey	497-5470
Political Committee	Russell Seal	289-9008
Outreach & 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
Fluoridation	L. Van Coppenolle	492-4620
Organic Gardening	Dave Klar	495-2148
Recycling	Carolyn Wells	271-0640
Tree Conservation	Richard Alles	494-2088
Volunteer Coordinator ...	Vacant	
Water Issues	Jerry Morrissey	497-5470

U.S. CONGRESSPERSONS

Charlie Gonzalez (210) 472-6195
 Lamar Smith (210) 821-5024
 Henry Cuellar (210) 271-2851
 Ciro Rodriguez (210) 922-1874

CITY COUNCIL

Mayor: Julian Castro; 207-7060;	mayor@sanantonio.gov
Dist. 1: Mary Alice P. Cisneros; 207-7279;	district1@sanantonio.gov
Dist. 2: Ivy R. Taylor; 207-7278;	district2@sanantonio.gov
Dist. 3: Jennifer V. Ramos; 207-7064;	district3@sanantonio.gov
Dist. 4: Philip A. Cortez; 207-7281;	district4@sanantonio.gov
Dist. 5: David Medina, Jr.; 207-7043;	district5@sanantonio.gov
Dist. 6: Ray Lopez; 207-7065;	district6@sanantonio.gov
Dist. 7: Justin Rodriguez; 207-7044;	district7@sanantonio.gov
Dist. 8: W. Reed Williams; 207-7086;	district8@sanantonio.gov
Dist. 9: Elisa Chan; 207-7325;	district9@sanantonio.gov
Dist. 10: John G. Clamp; 207-7276;	district10@sanantonio.gov

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MEMBERSHIP CATEGORIES

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