

ALAMO GROUP MEETINGS

General membership meets 6:30 p.m., third Tuesday each month, Witte Museum, 3801 Broadway.

Tues., Apr. 19: Risks of Fluoridated Water

Water Fluoridation: Its Risks Outweigh Its Benefits is the title of the presentation by our own Alamo Group activist Loretta Van Coppenolle. She has explored the issue of water fluoridation for more than a decade. Join us to learn why we would be better off without fluoride in our water than with it.

Tues., May 17: Combined Heat, Power Energy

Learn about efficient, clean and reliable energy generation called combined heat and power (CHP) from Rich Herweck, CEO of RobustEnergy. View a new report on CHP at this website: [athttp://www.aceee.org/sites/default/files/publications/researchreports/E112.pdf](http://www.aceee.org/sites/default/files/publications/researchreports/E112.pdf).

SIERRA SOCIALS

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

Fri., Apr 22: La Fogata, 2427 Vance Jackson Rd, 6-8 p.m.

Fri., May 27: La Tuna, 100 Probandt, 6-8 p.m.

The Alamo Sierran

The Alamo Group of the Sierra Club Newsletter

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APRIL 2011



SIERRA CLUB
FOUNDED 1892

Fracking Regs Needed to Prevent Pollution

If you want to see what's in store for south Texas, says the Lone Star Chapter's director of conservation, just look at the results of drilling for natural gas near Dallas and Fort Worth: reports of contaminated ground water, dying trees, sick children, and daily air emissions from oil and gas operations equal to the daily emissions from all the vehicles in the Dallas-Fort Worth metroplex.

If we don't get more regulatory protection, these same problems will occur in our area, because drilling in the Eagle Ford formation is moving into high gear, this according to Dr. Cyrus Reed, who addressed the Alamo Group's monthly meeting March 15. (The Eagle Ford is a gas rich shale formation that extends across an area south of San Antonio from the Mexican border east to Atascosa County.)

Reed's talk, entitled *Showing the Cracks in Oil and Gas Safeguards in Texas*, dealt with the process of hydraulic fracturing, commonly called "fracking." This process involves injecting water and chemicals into a natural gas well to break apart the rocks and release the gas. The water mixture is then sucked out of the well, and the natural gas follows it up the pipe. Fracking is now used in the extraction of most of the natural gas found in the United States. "Most traditional wells are fracked," Reed said.

Even though the Sierra Club does not oppose the use of natural gas as a transition fuel into the era of renewable energy, Reed cautioned that the environment needs more safeguards against the process of fracking. For instance, there are no national requirements for the disclosure of chemi-

cal solutions that companies use in their fracking solutions – chemicals which might end up polluting a community's ground water.

Reed said the Texas legislature is considering a bill that requires some limited disclosure of these chemicals. "(The bill) won't upset the natural gas industry," he said, "but it's a step in the right direction."

Of equal or greater concern to the Sierra Club is the problem of air pollution. "All parts of the gas extraction process have the potential to cause air pollution," Reed said. According to some measurements, drilling in the Barnett Shale formation near Fort Worth-Dallas has contributed air pollution equal to that area's vehicle air pollution. "Condensate tanks, well heads, valves – all are places that can have emissions," said Reed.

Presently, Texas has no regulations specific to fracking, said

Reed. Indeed, fracking is specifically exempt from the safe drinking water act. The Texas Commission on Environmental Quality can regulate emissions from gas drilling, said Reed, but so far the agency has done it by "permit by rule," which more or less lets the industry follow voluntary, unenforced standards.

The Sierra Club would like to see a number of number of protective measures implemented, said Reed. These include: (1) transferring authority over water pollution involving oil and gas activities from the Texas Railroad Commission (which regulates oil gas activities) to the TCEQ; (2) requiring disclosure of fracking solution contents; (3) reclaiming and reusing of fracking water; (4) testing of drinking water before drilling operations begin; (5) requiring the permitting of ground water withdrawals; (6) and the setting up of buffer zones to protect streams, wetlands, as well as wildlife habitat.

Alamo Group Endorses Candidates

The Alamo Group of the Sierra Club has endorsed 10 candidates in the upcoming San Antonio city council races. The candidates underwent both written and oral interviews by the Alamo Group's political committee, headed by Russell Seal.

The AG political committee recommended the endorsements, which were then approved by the organizations executive committee. Seal said the decisions, in some cases, were very difficult, especially decisions not to endorse. "This field of candidates was generally of high quality, making our decisions harder,"

Seal said.

The Alamo Group leadership urges all Sierra Club members in San Antonio to not only vote for this slate of candidates, but to actively support their campaigns with contributions and volunteer work. Environmental issues – from closing Deely power plant to supporting the Blue Wing Solar Project – are critical to the quality of San Antonio's future. "If the Sierra Club is to have an influence on these issues, our membership must become active in local politics," said Seal.

(Story Cont'd on Page Two)

“One in three U.S. children has been overexposed to fluoride, whose toxicity increases in the presence of a poor diet.”

“More than 20 years ago, a good solution was rejected. Maybe it is time to reconsider.”

(Candidate Endorsements — Continued from Page One)

The following are the Alamo Group's endorsed candidates: **Mayor: Julian Castro.** He has demonstrated great environmental leadership by carrying on the Mission Verde program of his predecessor, Mayor Phil Hardberger. He also has exercised commendable leadership on the City Public Service energy issue, the SA 2020 planning initiative, and his continued expansion of the office of environmental policy.

District 1: Carolyn Kelley. Her strong neighborhood organization credentials, sound knowledge of San Antonio's environmental issues, and excellent acquaintance with city policies and procedures earned her the Sierra Club's endorsement in a crowded field of highly qualified candidates.

District 2: Ivy Taylor. Her excellent educational credentials, coupled with her experience in city planning, and excellent environmental voting record merit a second term in office.

District 3: Jennifer Ramos. As a council member, she has sponsored town hall meetings in her southside district dealing with the environment, and has a “perfect” voting record on issues important to the Sierra Club. She strongly supports the city's Mission Verde plan

and the Blue Wing Solar Project, which is located in her district.

District 4: Leticia Cantu, Rey Saldana. This double endorsement reflects the fact that the Sierra Club finds both candidates highly acceptable. Cantu combines impressive experience dealing with city policies and procedures with a good record of supporting environmental issues. Saldana brings energy, educational credentials, and good positions on environmental issues to his campaign.

District 5: David Medina. This incumbent has made great progress on understanding how city policies affect the environment both locally and globally. He has identified obstacles in his district which make it difficult for his constituents to take advantage of weatherization programs and he is looking for solutions on how to revitalize inner city neighborhoods. He deserves another term in office to continue these efforts.

District 6: Ray Lopez. This incumbent has continued his environmental stewardship in District 6, including a strong emphasis on sewage issues and ending the illegal dumping in his district's creeks. He has been an avid supporter of bet-

ter air quality and is paying close attention to the issue of placing environmental controls on the Deely coal-fired power plants.

District 7: Gloria Rodriguez. Her credentials and background in education, including educating children about the importance of the environment, and her efforts toward creating a sustainable society make her the candidate of choice in this race.

District 8: Reed Williams. His detailed knowledge of energy issues and willingness to challenge conventional thinking within the city bureaucracy has made a solid contribution to improving San Antonio's environment. His commitment to learning about issues in depth – he spent a week at Texas A&M learning about trees – is impressive. Williams is a conservative in the true sense, both fiscally and environmentally.

District 9: The Sierra Club chooses to make no endorsement in this race.

District 10: Bud Little. A newcomer to running for office, but not to understanding city politics, this veteran newscaster walks the environmental walk: he collects rainwater for use in his garden, was president of Keep San Antonio Beautiful for seven years, and has worked toward graffiti abatement. As a reporter, he has treated all issues fairly.

(Word from the Chair -- Continued from Page Three)

Now, increased storm water from New Braunfels, Austin Highway and Broadway has led to a costly, city flood control project that proposes to dump floodwater into the San Antonio River at the Hildebrand crossing, upstream to the park and zoo, through two large concrete out takes, each big enough to drive a car through. This solution is opposed by many in the area, including the River Road property owners, the San Antonio River Improvement Project and the Headwaters Coalition at Incarnate

Word University.

The Coalition has plans to extend the river corridor from the park up through its 53 acre preserve, which includes Blue Hole, once the 6th largest spring in Texas, and potentially link to the Olmos Basin, connecting them to this extensive linear park system.

Then, the proposed storm water drainage project violates the City's promise to the RRNA. Feeding all this storm water into the river here significantly increases the risk to

the neighborhood, Brackenridge Park and the golf course, not only of flooding, but of increased contamination from non-point pollution and garbage, and higher flood insurance premiums too.

More than 20 years ago a good solution was rejected. Maybe it is time to reconsider. A mix of regulations and incentives could produce many small interventions that foster self-reliance and responsibility and reduce the need for large disruptive projects.

A Word from the Alamo Group Chair

By Margaret "Peggy" Day

As we all hope for vital spring rains to arrive, I am reminded we live in an area beset by unpredictable cycles of drought and deluge that mark our landscape, the intersection of Tamaulipan Thorn Scrub, Balcones Canyonlands, and Blackland Prairie. How we manage water resources at all levels is a contentious issue.

You may remember talk in the 1980's of regulating on-site storm water detention controls, as the rapidly developing northern areas presented increased future downstream flooding. The city of San Antonio and Bexar County decided to manage storm water at the regional level instead of regulating site

specific interventions by property owners. The result is centrally controlled, large scale drainage projects and management, without incentives for property owners to do smaller scale, decentralized storm water management. Many question the wisdom of this approach.

Properties in many areas of the city were left with unwelcome impacts. One example is the River Road Neighborhood, just south of Brackenridge Park. In 1996, as River Road Neighborhood Association Chair, I met with then City Public Works Director John German and four city personnel from related divisions, in a special meeting about storm water flood threats to the neighborhood. We left the meeting

assured by all present that prevention of any further River Road flooding was and would continue to be the City's highest priority. I sent a follow-up letter to all in attendance outlining these concerns and promises, which was in the RRNA's official files when I left office, for insurance.

Since then I have moved up stream to Alamo Heights, next to Olmos Creek Basin, where McMansions are also in vogue, and typically bring greater levels of storm runoff. The basin is also befouled by ever more unsightly flotsam entering mostly from the northwest via a concrete flood channel and by sewage leaks from old infrastructure.

(Story Continued on Page Two)

"The city...and county decided to manage storm water at the regional level instead of regulating site specific interventions by property owners."

Alamo Group Outings: Nice Weather, Great Hikes

Saturday, Apr. 30: The Best of Eisenhower (Dog Friendly)

Meet at 8:00 AM in the far left of the natural area parking lot (19399 NW Military) at the trailhead entrance. We will walk a loop along the Hillview, Red Oak, Live Oak, and Yucca trails.

Minors must be accompanied by a parent or guardian unless Liability Waiver and Medical Treatment Authorization forms are provided. Dogs must be leashed and socialized. Difficulty: Moderate. This will only be a 3 mile trip but should take about 2 hours due to some short but very rocky, difficult, steep sections. Be sure to wear sturdy shoes, bring one liter of water and a snack.

Experience with us a beautiful slice of the Texas Hill Country right here in town. Donations accepted. Please contact Master Naturalist and Sierra Club leader: Stan Drezek (493-0939) to reserve a place on this popular trip. Assistant Leader will be Ellen Clegg.

Saturday, May 7: Brackenridge Park Walk: History, Art, and Nature

A 3-mile walk exploring beautiful Brackenridge Park, with information on the history of the park, and discussion of its art and vegetation. This will be an easy walk, but do

wear comfortable walking shoes, and prepare for the heat (sun screen and hat recommended.) Bring water to supplement the water fountains in the park.

Meet at 8:45 a.m. on the ground level of the new Brackenridge Park parking garage, which is on the south side of the Witte Museum. (Turn off Broadway onto Tuleta Rd, then immediate left on Avenue B. The garage is on the right.) We will finish at about 10:30 or 11:00 a.m. For those who are interested, we can have an early lunch afterwards in a nearby café.

Donations to the Sierra Club are welcome. For further information and to sign up for this enjoyable and informative walk, contact the leader Nancy Anderson, (210) 370-9459. The co-leader is Chris Anderson.

Saturday, May 14: Hike the Canyon

Join the Friends of Government Canyon and the Sierra Club for a jointly-led guided hike on one of the many trails at Government Canyon State Natural Area. Length of the hike will range from 4 to 7 miles depending on the group.

Open to ages 13 and over; minors must be accompanied by an adult; no pets please. Dress appropriately and wear sturdy shoes for hiking

over rough terrain; bring two liters of water and a snack.

GCSNA is located at 12861 Galm Rd (Take FM 1560 west from Helotes to Galm Rd). There is a \$6 entrance fee (\$3 seniors). Meet at the Visitors Center by the rainwater harvesting tower by 7:45 am for an 8:00 am departure with finish by noon; subject to cancellation. Difficulty: Moderate (some steep/rocky sections). Contact Sierra Club co-leader Nancy Anderson, (210) 370-9459, if you require additional information.

Saturday, June 4: Friedrich Wilderness Park in the Summer

Join us on the shady and scenic trails of this beautiful wilderness park, just outside of Loop 1604. Meet at 8:00 a.m. in the Park parking lot, near the trailhead.

We will hike about 3.5 miles, over varied terrain that is mostly level but with some steep rocky climbs/descents.

There will be no charge for the outing, but donations to the Alamo Sierra Club are welcome. For further information and to sign up for this beautiful hike, contact the outing leader [Nancy Anderson](#), (210) 370-9459, or assistant leader: Terry Platt.

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 Morrissey	497-5470
Conservation Committee Mtg.	1st Thursday, 7 p.m.	Randy Carroll-Bradd	216-6125

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

Margaret (Peggy) Day, Chair Person	829-5632
Loyd Cortez, Vice Chair Person	674-9489
Mary Ellen Garcia, Secretary	344-1581
Wendell Fuqua	373-0748
Hector Gonzalez	226-6069
Dave Wells	271-0640
Vacant	
Karen Dalglish Seal	289-9008
Sharon Dukes (non voting), Treasurer	828-3721

Administrative Contacts

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

Committee Contacts

Outings	Jerry Morrissey	382-2614
Co-Chair	Stan Drezek	493-0939
Political	Dave Wells	271-0640
Outreach & Education	Carolyn Wells	271-0640

Conservation Contacts

Conservation Chair	Randy Carroll-Bradd	216-6125
Assistant Chair	L. Van Coppenolle	492-4620
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 Coord.	Vacant	
Water Issues	Jerry Morrissey	382-2614

U.S. Congresspersons

Charlie Gonzalez	472-6195
Lamar Smith	821-5024
Henry Cuellar	271-2851
Francisco Canseco	561-8855

City Council (Continued)

Dist. 2: Ivy R. Taylor	207-7278
Dist. 3: Jennifer Ramos	207-7064
Dist. 4: Philip A. Cortez	207-7281
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

City Council

Mayor Julian Castro	207-7060
Dist. 1: M. A. Cisneros	207-7279

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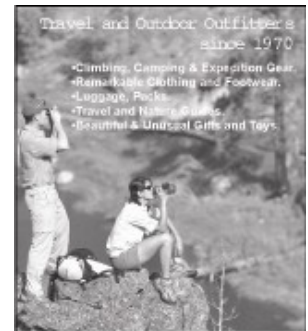
Membership Categories	Individual	Joint
Special Offer	<input type="checkbox"/> \$15	
Standard	<input type="checkbox"/> \$39	<input type="checkbox"/> \$49
Supporting	<input type="checkbox"/> \$75	<input type="checkbox"/> \$100
Contributing	<input type="checkbox"/> \$150	<input type="checkbox"/> \$175
Life	<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 **F94Q W** 1

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 Join online today and receive a **free Weekender Bag**
 Go to our website at <http://Alamosierraclub.org> and click Join the Sierra Club



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Thanks to Dave Hammeren of The Printed Word, 6502 Bandera Rd., Suite 205, San Antonio, Texas, Telephone 520-5700 for our nominal newsletter cost