

ALAMO GROUP MEETINGS

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

Tues., Aug. 16: Vegetarianism & Rep. Doggett

This program will be a double bill. First, we will receive a short report on environmental legislation from U.S. Rep. Lloyd Doggett, Austin. Then we will hear local president of SA Vegetarian Society, Kaz Sephton, discuss what it means to be a vegetarian

Tues., Sep. 20: Mission Reach Transformation

Matthew Drifill, San Antonio River Authority education specialist, will discuss transformation of Mission Reach into a quality riparian woodland ecosystem. The program is approved for one hour of Advanced Training by Alamo Area Master Naturalists. See SARA website for tours of

SIERRA SOCIALS

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

Fri., Aug. 26: La Fogata, 2427 Vance-Jackson Rd, 6-8 p.m.

Fri., Sep. 23: Mad-Hatters Tea House & Café, 320 Beauregard, 6-8 p.m.

The Alamo Sierran

The Alamo Group of the Sierra Club Newsletter

VOLUME 45, NUMBER 7

AUGUST 2011



SIERRA CLUB
FOUNDED 1892

Kapner Promotes 100 GW of Solar Power

Within the next 10 years, Mark Kapner would like to see 100 gigawatts of solar electricity being generated in the southwestern United States.

Kapner is Manager of Conservation and Renewable Energy at Austin Energy, Austin's counterpart to San Antonio's CPS. He addressed the Alamo Group's monthly meeting in June, saying he would like to see solar and wind become main contributors to the nation's electric power grid, not fringe contributors as they have been in the past. Kapner said such a system could meet the nation's power needs, with some supplement from plants powered by natural gas

To build 100 gigawatts of solar capacity in the southwestern United States, Kapner said, would only require an area equal to

about 1,000 square miles. Such an area constitutes a tiny portion of the available land in the southwest.

Kapner added that many solar projects already are "in pipeline" in the southwest. Most are solar/thermal, not photovoltaic, he said.

Solar thermal is a process that uses mirrors to concentrate sunlight to create heat. The heat is then used to create electricity. A one gigawatt solar thermal plant is already being constructed near Blythe, California.

Until recently, solar thermal was 50 percent more efficient than photovoltaic generation, Kapner said, but now technology has made the efficiency of photovoltaic about equal to solar thermal. In addition, the cost of photovoltaic panels has fallen

dramatically in the last two years, making photovoltaic generation cheaper. For this reason, many plans for solar plants in California have switched from solar thermal to photovoltaic.

Help the Alamo Group Save Money and Trees

Every month our club's local budget keeps getting smaller due to the expense of printing and mailing The Alamo Sierran newsletter. You can help save a tree and keep our club's expenses down by switching from a paper copy of the newsletter to an e-mail electronic version. Want a test drive to make a decision? Go to our website at www.texas.sierraclub.org/alamo/Newsletter.htm.

Want to switch? Contact Loyd Cortez at loydcortez@earthlink.net or 210-674-9489. For those of you that would rather have a paper copy in your hands, please consider making a donation to your club. For the month of May, the newsletter expenses were \$162.84 for postage and \$279.19 for printing. In June the expenses were \$170.04 for postage and \$285.00 for printing. Send your donation to: Alamo Sierra Club, PO Box 6443, San Antonio, TX 78209.

A colony of Mexican Freetail bats lives in an abandoned railroad tunnel near Fredericksburg. In September, join members of the Alamo Group and the Garden Volunteers of South Texas for an interpretive tour that concludes with a viewing of the spectacular evening bat flight out of the tunnel. For more details, see our Outings list, Page Two.

Outings Now Listed on Meetup.Com

For instant access to the latest list of Outings sponsored by the Alamo Group, go to www.meetup.com/Alamo-Sierra-Club-Outings. You can even arrange to be notified of upcoming outings by e-mail.



Rep. Doggett Submits Environmental Update

By Rep. Lloyd Doggett

Earlier this year, the Republican majority in Washington successfully pushed legislation through the House that would prevent the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) from placing safe limits on carbon dioxide and the other greenhouse gases that lead to climate change.

They renewed their efforts in July with a barrage of anti-environment and anti-clean energy appropriations bills. The radical policy riders in these bills run the gamut from undoing pro-

tections around the Grand Canyon which limit hardrock mining, to attempting (again) to block EPA regulation of greenhouse gas pollutants.

Efforts to prevent EPA regulation of greenhouse gases would overturn a U.S. Supreme Court decision and weaken the bipartisan Clean Air Act that has served us well for decades. Two decades after it was signed into law, the Act had successfully avoided 843,000 asthma attacks, 21,000 cases of heart disease, and 18 million child respiratory

illnesses.

Thankfully many of these anti-environment measures in the House have been, and hopefully will continue to be, stopped in the Senate. While we must make the tough choices and scrutinize every penny of federal spending, cutting all spending for any issue remotely related to our environment or a clean energy future is no answer – it is a tragedy. This summer's horrific drought in Texas should be

(Story Continued on Page 3)

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Sierra Club Outings: View Bats, Hike Canyons

Sat., Aug. 13: 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 a.m. for an 8 a.m. departure with finish by noon; subject to cancellation. Difficulty: Moderate (some steep/rocky sections). Contact Sierra Club co-leader and Texas Master Naturalist Stan Drezek (493-0939) if you require additional information.

Sat., Sep. 10: Hike the Canyon

See Aug. 13 outing listed above.

Wed., Sep. 21: Old Tunnel Wildlife Management Area

Co-sponsored by the Alamo Sierra Club and Garden Volunteers of South Texas. Join us as we learn about bats. We will watch millions emerge from the Old Tunnel and commence their nightly feeding frenzy!

Our group will gather promptly at 6:30 p.m. at the WMA upper entrance gate. An interpretive guide will make an informative presentation a half-hour prior to the bats emergence. (Emergence times vary slightly.)

Info on WMA: handicapped accessible (upper area only). A self-composting toilet facility is available, though running water is not. No pets. Adults only on this private outing. Smoking and fires prohibited. Carry-in, carry-out. Please stay on designated trails and do not disturb the bat colony in any way.

Bring: water, comfortable walking shoes (ankle-supporting), sweater, binoculars, camera, flashlight, picnic supper/snacks (optional).

Old Tunnel WMA is located between Comfort and Fredricksburg, one hour from San Antonio. Directions given when you RSVP. To learn more about bats visit the website for Bat Conservation International.

Other fun things to do on your own before our program begins: enjoy a scenic drive to Old Tunnel, set deep in the heart of rural Texas Hill Country. Have a burger at the Alamo Springs Cafe (next door to the WMA...allow time). Or, arrive early at the WMA and enjoy a self-guided, 1/2 mile primitive nature walk. The trail closes about 5:00 p.m.

RSVP required: Linda Higby (Sierra Outings Leader/GVST Member), (585) 330-1890. Admission: \$5.00 per person, payable to the Clubs at the WMA gate. The State Park Pass is not accepted at this site.

Saturday, Oct. 8: Hike the Canyon

For details, see Aug. 13 outing listed in this section. Contact Sierra Club leader Jerry Morrissey (382-2614) if you require additional information.

A Word from the Alamo Group Chair

By Margaret "Peggy" Day

It's back to school time, so let's review a key problem: our schools produce ecologically illiterate graduates. We prepare citizens who are ignorant of the things we need to know to live well and sustainably.

Recognition of the ecological crisis in education emerged in the student uprisings of the sixties. By 1990 a consensus was in—education was in need of a total overhaul and was deemed the linchpin to sustainability.

In his 1991 *What is education for? Six myths about the foundations of modern education and six new principles to replace them*, David Orr revealed the set of dysfunctional myths our educational practice was built on. His new principles reflect foundational ideas of Education for Sustainability (EfS).

We are now well into the United Nations' *Decade of Education for Sustainable Development, 2005-2014*, but it appears few know of EfS or this global effort. This is unfortunate since the holistic system it promotes can resolve multiple problems in education and society. So what does EfS entail?

Around the time Orr published his

call for a new kind of education, University Leaders for Sustainable Development began to develop a holistic reform package that includes changes in seven areas: curriculum; research and scholarship; operations; faculty and staff hiring, development and rewards; outreach and service; student opportunities; and the institutional mission, structure and planning. EfS affects every aspect educational institutions, from Pre K through higher education, including lifelong learning.

One key change that EfS calls for is "Learning Centered Space." This shifts the focus to school campuses and community as the subject and arena for applying principles and practices in all disciplines. This way learning becomes more relevant, reality based, and hands on, and responds more to issues near and dear to students.

Curriculum is revamped to incorporate behaviors, operations, physical setting and built environment. These elements model sustainable practice, whereas now they typically function as outmoded, unintentionally counterproductive "shadow pedagogy."

Students work in the evaluation, documentation, design, construction,

and operation of their schools and community. Students are no longer passive receivers, learning fragmented and often conflicting disciplines by rote, or dealing in abstractions. Their interest and satisfaction is higher.

Yes, this is a complex process, but it is like life today. It needs to be multidisciplinary, with many partnerships and networks. Business, government and non-governmental groups need to mesh in projects linked to courses.

To help pave the way for EfS, new regulation is needed. Two recent examples are (1) evolving changes in academic accreditation requirements that include EfS criteria and the adoption of directives to hire, recognize and reward administrators, and (2) teachers and staff that demonstrate sustainability knowledge and commitment. Some schools now require environmental sustainability literacy courses or tests to graduate.

It is not enough to educate the young: the whole community needs to learn. All citizens can be awakened to a wonder and reverence of Earth and to the damage we are causing.

It's my hope we seize upon our ecological crisis as an opportunity to further this new kind of education. So now we're all invited back to school.

"Our schools produce ecologically illiterate graduates....citizens who are ignorant of the things we need to know to live well and sustainably."

Help Us Fight for the Environment: Our Club Vacancies Need Volunteers

Like many non-profits, the Sierra Club needs your support. As a member of the Alamo Group, we appreciate all you do to keep our Club strong. Thanks to those of you who contribute countless hours to help the Sierra Club protect Texas' environment.

We currently have many unfilled positions, which seriously hampers our ability to defend our area's natural resources. Please consider offering your time as a volunteer. We hope that you will

also contribute to our fundraising efforts so that we can keep our organization strong. You can give a gift online. Visit www.alamosierraclub.org. Go to "Get Involved," then "Donate."

Thanks again for all you do. Please don't hesitate to contact me with any questions: peggy-day@hotmail.com

Peggy Day is Chair, Alamo Group Executive Committee.

(Doggett Report Cont'd)

a warning that we ignore the threat of climate change at our peril.

Everyone is entitled to their own opinions, but not their own facts. I hope that you will continue to join me in spreading the message that we will not rest in our work for a healthy planet and clean energy economy.

Doggett represents an Austin district. He is senior member of the House Ways and Means and Budget Committees. He has received the Sierra Club's John Muir Award and the Texas League of Conservation Voters inaugural Environmental Champion Award.

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.	Dave Wells	271-0640
Newsletter Mail Party	2d Tuesday, 7 p.m.		
Outings Committee Mtg.	1st Wed., every odd month., 7 p.m.	Jerry Morrisey	382-2614
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	734-8281
Hector Gonzalez	226-6069
Dave Wells	271-0640
Vacant	
Karen Dalglish Seal	226-8101
Sharon Dukes (non voting), Treasurer	828-3721

Administrative Contacts

Programs	Barbara McMillin	734-4170
Fundraising	Vacant	
Publicity	Vacant	
Mailings	Vacant	
Membership	Vacant	
Newsletter	Wendell Fuqua	734-8281
Website	Richard Alles	494-2088

Committee Contacts

Outings Co-Chairs	Jerry Morrisey	382-2614
	Stan Drezek	493-0939
Political	Russell Seal	289-9008
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
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	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: Rey Saldana	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: Carlton Soules	207-7276

City Council

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

The Alamo Sierran published monthly (except July) by the Alamo Group of the Sierra Club, 615 Willow, San Antonio, TX 78202. Members support the Sierran and receive the publication as part of membership. Nonmember subscriptions \$10 per year. Periodical postage paid at San Antonio, Texas. Publication No. 018475.
 POSTMASTER: Send address changes to Sierra Club Member Services, PO Box 52968, Boulder, CO 80322 or e-mail to address.changes@sierraclub.org

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San Antonio, Texas 78209**

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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

**Alamo Group website address
www.alamosierraclub.org**

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

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