



**SIERRA
CLUB**
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Alamo Group of the Sierra Club Newsletter

The Alamo Sierran **December 2015, Vol 49 #10**

Word From the Chair

SAWS

City of San Antonio (COSA) voted November 19, unanimously to approve the proposed changes in rate structure and the multi-year rate increase proposals.

We will now be looking for other avenues to bring

pressure on SAWS and COSA to protect our citizens, their pocketbooks, growth region-wide and our water resources region-wide. The Vista Ridge (VR) pipeline remains open to defeat and we will continue our efforts. At the very least, VR requires a permanent regional stakeholders review group, water fees and charges to be paid by the developers and future beneficiaries of any Carrizo/Simsboro waters, whether in SAWS' CCN or by users en route, not unfairly by present SAWS ratepayers. Temporary water deliveries and sales in the Hill Country or other sensitive regions, should be voted on and approved by residents in those regions to be affected.

We do hope for some good to come from the Water Policy Study, which makes many good points. It emphasizes issues important to our water security that we have raised for years: 1) the risk of contamination to the Edwards Aquifer from the continued sprawl occurring over the recharge zone; 2) the need for more protection of the whole contributing zone; 3) the need for consistency in COSA, extraterritorial jurisdiction (ETJ), and SAWS policies and rules on development; and 4) the need for more low impact development (LID). It also emphasizes the contamination risks of using coal tar sealants on our roads and parking lots, which have been banned in Austin, but seen no action by Council here.

Air Quality

COSA and AACOG appear ready to take some actions to improve our deteriorating air. The new ozone standard is lowered to 70 ppb, from the previous 75 ppb. San Antonio is looking at an anti-idling ordinance to limit emissions from vehicles, and also at electrifying its vehicle fleet. Vehicle smog inspections may also be initiated, as well as high occupancy vehicle lanes and ways to encourage more public transit. Our local cement and gravel industry is one of the largest in the country, and a major emitter of ozone forming pollutants (as well as particulates that are also a health risk). We are urging CPS to close its Deely coal plant early. CPS is choosing a new CEO to replace Mr. Beneby. We are urging them to select a similarly progressive minded leader who welcomes distributed and renewable energy sources.

There are proposed methane rules to reduce emissions from oil and gas operations, as in the Eagle Ford. These rules are a good step, but more is needed. Most

importantly, the rules as proposed only apply to new infrastructure, leaving much of the Eagle Ford effects on SA air unaddressed. We have submitted comments. Texas has chosen to sue the EPA again, on both the ozone and methane rules.

SA Tomorrow

The number one priority rating for the Transportation and Connectivity group was multi-modal transportation, which was reduced to 6 after political feedback was received. This is one more example of how public input is received in our city at this time. It appears SA Tomorrow will be nothing more than another feel good exercise, with no actual impact on our future. Until citizens get angry enough to vote, we will continue with a government largely uninterested in any input from concerned citizens, whether the issue is water policy, water rate increases, city planning and development, plastic bag bans, air quality etc.

Please see the news item below *About SA Tomorrow* which has links for additional information.

Alamo Group Executive Committee

Please vote for candidates; see the form on page 3. Sierra Club is democratically run and without votes we cannot operate. We need everyone to take an interest in our organization and keep it viable. We are the best and most effective grass roots environmental organization in San Antonio and Texas. Please help!

By Terry Burns, Executive Committee Co-chair

Special events (see the section below)

December 9th Wednesday

About CPS Energy's Solar Host program

December 15th Tuesday

Alamo Group's annual holiday potluck party

Alamo Group Events

For updates on all events check the Alamo Group website, sierraclub.org/texas/alamo, under *Get Involved*.

Regularly scheduled events in December

Due to the holidays the Lion's Field 4th Wednesdays presentation will not be held. The annual holiday potluck party is in lieu of our general membership meeting, same schedule (3rd Tuesdays) and venue.

December 9th Wednesday

A special meeting at EcoCentro, 6:30 pm, about CPS Energy's ambitious Solar Host program launched in September. The program is two-pronged: rooftop and

roofless and provides for individual solar installation and maintenance at no or low cost. Jason Pittman, vice-president of Power Fin Partners, will speak about the rooftop solar program and Shannon M. Wagner, Strategic Research and Innovation Manager for CPS Energy, will speak about the roofless (solar farm) program.

The meeting is open to all interested in solar for their homes or businesses. Please spread the word about this opportunity to learn more and ask questions. For more information, call/email Loretta Van Coppenolle at 210/492-4620, livewithnature@msn.com.

EcoCentro is at San Antonio College, 1802 N. Main, at the northeast corner with Locust St. Free and open to the public. [Here's our web page](#) with map showing EcoCentro.

December 15th Tuesday

The Sierra Club's annual holiday/end of the year party will be held on Tuesday, December 15, 6:30 pm, at Eco Centro (see the event above) and all interested are invited to attend. The party is not limited to members of the Sierra Club. Please bring a potluck dish (preferably not a refined sugar-sweetened dessert). Beverages will be provided. The Sierra Club has non-disposable plates, cups, etc for use but if you choose to bring your own, please feel free to do so. We will also have a small bin available for collection of food waste for composting. We hope this event will be practically toss-free. Music will be recorded Celtic and classical. The food is up to you!

For more information, call/email Loretta Van Coppenolle at 210/492-4620, livewithnature@msn.com.

News and our ExCom election

About SA Tomorrow

SA Tomorrow consists of three segments: Comprehensive Plan, Sustainability, and Transportation. It is geared to planning 25 years ahead to 2040, with incremental changes occurring every five years or so with progress assessed and plan updated, or new questions asked. Visit SATomorrow.com or [facebook.com/SATomorrow2040](https://www.facebook.com/SATomorrow2040) to learn more about the three segments. Think about your neighborhood association or civic organization and ask for a presentation of the SA Tomorrow plan. Get involved. Think climate change, clean air, getting around in the future, Smart Growth, a sense of community, and cost effective and practical solutions.

Alamo Group Executive Committee (ExCom) election: candidate bios and voting

Please send in your vote for our annual election (ballot on page 3). We have three positions open on our Executive Committee for full, three year terms and one two year position to replace Margaret Day, who will be stepping down. Four candidates for these positions have submitted the following biographies (in first name alphabetical order).

Darby Riley

I would be honored to serve with the local leadership

of the Sierra Club, which is doing great work at this critical time for our city. Vista Ridge is an abomination which we should continue to oppose. CPS Energy is a national leader in renewables, which we should continue to encourage. I have been an active environmentalist in San Antonio for many years and have worked with the Sierra Club and others on water, sprawl, energy, and climate change issues. Presently my wife, Chris (mayor of Leon Valley), and I are making dialogue presentations to civic, educational, and church groups on climate change.



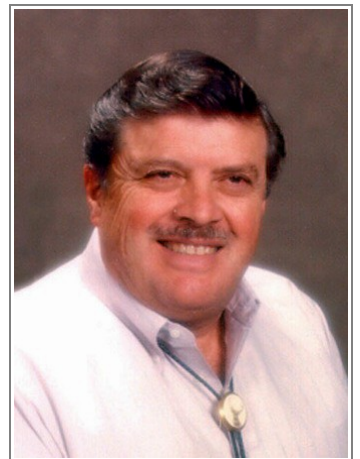
Enrique Valdivia

I strongly support Sierra Club's mission to protect our environment and have dedicated my life to the cause. I practice environmental law with Texas Rio Grande Legal Aid, Inc. in San Antonio. Currently I am serving my third term as District 7 director on the Edwards Aquifer Authority. I serve on several nonprofit boards including SEED Coalition, Fair Shake Environmental Legal Services, Greater Edwards Aquifer Alliance and AGUA.



Mike Mecke

I am a native of San Antonio, now retired to Kerrville. I have been a nature lover and naturalist since a child. I majored in Biology and Agricultural Education at Texas A&M and graduated from U. of Wyoming with an MS in Rangeland Ecology and Watershed Management. I have an unfinished PhD program at A&M in rangeland toxic plants.



I spent 9 years with the Natural Resources Conservation Service, USDA serving ranchers and farmers in several Texas locations and 6

years with the Bureau of Indian Affairs in AZ, NM and WY where I was a natural resources planner and then department manager. During that period I was active in the Society for Range Management, Native Plant Society, Wyoming Riparian Association and the Wildlife Society.

I was hired by San Antonio Water System (SAWS) in 1992 as a Water Resources Planner and served as Agricultural Conservation Program Coordinator promoting water conservation. I managed the failed Applewhite

for all of us. I feel that the Sierra Club is the prime reason the Edwards Aquifer and its springs were saved.

Russel Smith

For 36 years I served as Executive Director of non-profit organizations beginning in 1978 with the Texas Solar Energy Society (TXSES), and for



the last 30 years with the Texas Renewable Energy Industries Association (TREIA). I retired from TREIA in January of this year and

moved to San Antonio in April. My current endeavor is Russel E. Smith Enterprises which includes renewable energy consulting, and my longtime and ongoing efforts in creative photography. I am particularly interested in supporting the Sierra Club's role in promoting progress at the intersection of energy and the environment. While much has been accomplished in moving society toward a cleaner, more efficient and sustainable energy regime, the work is far from over. Throughout my time in renewable energy I have had many occasions to work closely with the Lone Star Chapter on legislative issues at the Capitol

and for many years as founder and coordinator of the Renewable Energy Roundup & Green Living Fair in Fredericksburg. I see the Sierra Club as being in the forefront of restoring our natural world. I'd like to see the diversity of flora and fauna I remember growing up in rural Texas restored.

My Sierra Club contribution of:

\$10 \$25 \$50 \$100 Other \$_____



is enclosed.

Contributions, gifts and dues to the Sierra Club are not tax deductible. They support the Sierra Club's advocacy and lobbying efforts.

Executive Committee Ballot (for members only)

Please vote for three candidates below. If you have a joint membership you may mark the second column also.

	Individual	2nd (joint) member
Darby Riley	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Enrique Valdiva	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Mike Mecke	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Russel Smith	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

- Please mail by December 31st to: Alamo Group of the Sierra Club, PO Box 6443, San Antonio TX 78209 -

Reservoir lands and eventually was able to help save most of those beautiful, historic Spanish governor's lands for the Land Heritage Institute (LHI), where I serve on their board. I became concerned with the condition of many of Texas' creeks and rivers and organized the Texas Riparian Association (TRA) in 1999 to assist in promoting education and better management of those water resources. While at SAWS, I became active in Bexar Audubon and served as President prior to retiring from the utility in 2002.

I worked for Texas A&M's Water Resources Institute as Water Specialist working from Ft. Stockton. I covered from San Angelo to El Paso providing programs on water conservation, Xeriscaping, Rain Water Harvesting (RWH), Land Stewardship, and water resources. I had 17 RWH demo sites installed across the region.

I retired in 2008 but have continued to be active in water and natural resources issues. I have been on the board of the local NPSOT, the LHI, TRA, a member of Audubon, National Wildlife Federation, the Yellowstone Foundation, the Leopold Foundation and have served since 2009 as an area stakeholder on the Environmental Flows Committee for the Guadalupe River Basin (TCEQ). I write monthly articles for a Texas ranching magazine on water and resource management. I have been a member of Sierra Club for a year or so, and have long admired the great work they do - as well as their founder and his fantastic work in saving the beloved California resources

The Alamo Sierra Club Needs You!

Each December we ask you for a donation. Our budget is smaller now that we will only produce online newsletters. But due to overriding conservation campaign demands on our volunteers, this year we are not hosting a fundraising auction. Therefore our need for your generosity remains. We still need funds for our campaigns and administrative costs. This year we paid for studies, signs, meeting space, meetup dues, flyers, and other needs. We're asking for a contribution of \$10 or more if your budget allows. Your money will be well spent and deeply appreciated. Please send your donation along with your ballot to Alamo Group of the Sierra Club, PO Box 6443, San Antonio, TX 78209. You can use the fundraising/ballot box to enter your donation. Thanks for your continuing support and environmental activism.

Sierra Club Membership

Are you a member? Please [join or renew!](#)

This is the last paper issue!

...Of this newsletter due to costs. Thanks very much to SA Offset Printing for our nominal printing costs over the years. It will still be produced monthly and available by e-mail and on the website. If necessary update your e-mail address by a msg to Loyd Cortez, lcc227@earthlink.net, providing your name and address.

Statement of Ownership, Management, and Circulation

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Alamo Group of the Sierra Club

Website: alamosierraclub.org

The Alamo Group is one of 13 regional groups within the Lone Star (Texas) chapter of the Sierra Club. Our national website: sierraclub.org.

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