

The Alamo Sierran

Newsletter of the Alamo Group of the Sierra Club

December, 2016



Explore, enjoy and protect the planet

Comments from the Chair

Politics

The environment received almost NO mention in the media coverage of the national presidential campaigns, and climate change only as a “hoax” by Mr. Trump. Regardless of party preference, the environment was a major loser in these elections. Our concerns about climate change, clean air, renewable energy, endangered species, protection of federal lands and many other issues will be challenged at the national as well as state and local level now. We will need more people to stand up to protect this hard fought legacy of environmental protection. Much may be dismantled in four years if left unopposed.

Locally, we have Mayor Ivy Taylor’s announcement for reelection bid already. We also know that Ray Lopez cannot run again in District 6 due to term limits, and two people have announced for his position. Our Political Committee will be working hard to evaluate candidates, encourage environmentally conscious people to run, make endorsements and work for victory in the May 2017 local elections. We basically have a very “pro big development with a capital D” city government right now. We need to get back to having some representation for other community interests.

COSA Bond Issues

City Council will approve in December a May 2017 ballot initiative for over \$800 million in city bond debt. Over \$140 million (at the time of writing) represents stormwater and flood control projects. Virtually all of these projects carry on our long history of digging cement ditches and culverts to carry away “excess” rainwater as soon as possible. This is a completely outdated approach and we should no longer fund such antiquated projects. At the very least full review of sustainable alternatives should be done before each project is approved and funded. SA Tomorrow speaks of Sustainability and Low Impact Development, but these projects are the same old

bad stuff. As our impervious cover increases throughout the region our rainfall has fewer and fewer places to “spread out, slow down and sink in” to replenish our aquifers (and avoid roadway toxic contamination). Instead, after building lots of impermeable surfaces we have worse and worse flooding, and have to spend more to build still more concrete ditches to get rid of the water. Even worse, we are to spend \$3B to bring IN water from central Texas, water we don’t need if we would use this “excess” rainwater.

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Vote in the Executive Committee Election

The Executive Committee is the governing body of our local Group. We abide by National and State guidelines in our efforts to work on local environmental issues. There are typically nine volunteers who serve on the ExCom, each for a three year term. Three positions are filled by election by Group members each year. Historically ballots were sent out to all members in December, and a new ExCom convened in January. In recent years paper ballots have become too expensive for SC to send, and electronic voting is utilized.

Your votes must be received by December 31st. There are 3 ways to cast your votes:

1. email your selections to [Terry Burns](#), or
2. call Terry at (210) 375-4735, or
3. Print the ballot on page 4 and mail it in

Be sure to include your membership number, which is found on the address label of your monthly *Sierra* magazine. In addition you should soon be receiving voting information for the Lone Star Chapter State ExCom. PLEASE VOTE!

You may choose 3 of the following 4 candidates. Joint memberships allow both members to vote individually.

- Karen Weehler
- Wendell Fuqua

- Lili Gonzales
- Gay Wright

Candidates biographies are below in the order they were received:

Karen Weehler

I am a retired high school science teacher. My favorite subjects to teach were environmental and aquatic science. I have been a Sierra Club member since 1987. I sit on the Westside Creeks Over Sight Committee for the San Antonio River Authority and volunteer at the Center for Archaeological

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Holiday Party and Dinner

It’s that time of year again when we join together in fellowship for our annual holiday party and potluck dinner.

Tuesday, December 13th

6:30 p.m.

[William R. Sinkin Eco Centro](#), 1802 North Main Avenue

[Map](#)

This is a good time to meet Sierrans and others, share a meal, and engage in good conversation. Bring your friends and a special dish to share.



You can make it interesting too by tempting yourself with a look at some of those new cookbooks arriving on shelves when you imagine what your pot luck item will be. If something sounds good to you, it may be popular with others. Or bring your savory favorite. Remember to bring your plate and utensils. Beverages such as cranberry, pomegranate, and apple juice will be provided.

Support the Alamo Group

Every December we focus on fundraising. So once again we ask for your financial assistance. Please contribute—even small amounts are welcome. The funds are necessary for our conservation campaigns that include student outreach and education. Please mail your check to:

The Alamo Group of the Sierra Club
P.O. Box 6443
San Antonio, TX 78209

We urge you to consider gifting memberships to the Sierra Club. The club continues its low \$15 introductory memberships. It's easy to sign up on [our website](#), or write to the membership address on this newsletter.

The best gift is giving of your time as a volunteer. Please consider serving the important work of the Alamo Sierra Club. We have a need for outings, fundraising, events, and membership chairs. We could also use your help with the programs, upcoming tabling season, and conservation campaigns.

SA Tomorrow Plan

The San Antonio Tomorrow Plan has three prongs: the Comprehensive Plan, Sustainability, and Multimodal. All three prongs are available online, and can be found also at many of the branch libraries as reference material to be read in the library.

I recommend you start with the [Executive Summary of the SA Tomorrow Multimodal Transportation Plan](#), dated August 2016. Detailed information is available on the [Multimodal Transportation Plan webpage](#), which indexes seven sections: 1) Introduction, 2) Where Are We Now? 3) Forecasting Our Transportation Future, 4) What We Heard, 5) Where Do We Want to Be? 6) What Can We Do? and 7) Implementation Strategy.

Section 6 discusses roadways, pedestrian mobility, bicycle mobility, transit mobility, passenger rail, freight movement, airports, corridors such as Applewhite Road, Babcock, Culebra, Enrique Barrera, Fredericksburg Road, Houston Street, SW Military Drive, New Braunfels, Perrin Beitel, San Pedro, Wetmore, and Zarzamora.

Scroll down to the bottom of the information page of the [Multimodal Plan webpage](#), and you will find listed the Sustainability Plan and the City of San Antonio Comprehensive Plan. Click on each one of these to read the plans in detail.

by Barbara McMillin, Transportation Chair

Youth Outdoors Goes on Butterfly Expedition

Sierra Club Youth Outdoors set out in search of migrating Monarch butterflies on its October 22nd expedition to Guadalupe River State Park. Unfortunately, the Monarchs were playing hide-and-go-seek with us that day, but the park was still aflutter with hundreds of other beautiful winged cousins that delighted the kids from Sutton Place

and Divine Redeemer.

Craig Hensley, park interpreter and a good friend of SCYO, equipped our 14 youngsters with butterfly nets and taught them how to net, safely handle and identify these delicate wonders before gently returning them to a tasty milkweed branch.

by Anne Pearson, Sierra Club Youth Outdoors Chair



Alamo Group Trip to Big Bend National Park

Our annual trip to Big Bend was November 6th-12th. There were thirteen attendees; a number of people regrettably had to cancel due to work schedule changes or family concerns. We were lucky to have five trained and certified leaders; this really helped with the division of the attendees for the long/short hike options.

The longer hikes were Ore Terminal, Window/Oak Spring, Apache Canyon and a Dog Canyon/Devil's Den loop. Shorter hikes included Hot Spring and along the river, Grapevine Hills and a number of great little hikes along Ross Maxwell Scenic Drive. We didn't go to the South Rim as there was heavy rain the morning of the day intended for that hike, and we did that last year, so we did some new hikes instead.

The weather overall was great, with no significant rain on the hikes. Nobody got hurt, with the exception of a hiker falling on a cactus. The hiker, to remain unnamed, required a trailside poly-spine-ectomy of the backside, which was largely successful. The cactus, likely an *Opuntia phaeacantha*, a lovely cactus with lots of long brown spines, was probably fine though the spines could not be reattached. The hiker claims the cactus bears some fault as it was partly hidden behind an innocent leafy plant.



A small part of the lithic scatter found at a spring. The chips are mostly about 1" size.

On one hike we found a [lithic scatter](#) (see the picture above), which is an area with many visible stone chips resulting from manufacture of tools. The chips were mostly white, gray and red chert. This was at a spring, dry now but with dense tall grasses not seen elsewhere, so there must be water

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On the Ore Terminal trail, which is in the southeast corner of the park. The Dead Horse Mountains are in the foreground and background, with the Sierra del Carmen in Mexico largely hidden behind clouds.



Devil's Den, just southeast of the north park entrance. The hikers went up Devil's Den and down to Dagger Flat to the east, then hiked north to Dog Canyon for a great though strenuous loop.



On the Oak Spring Trail west of the Window, which is to the right. The Chisos Basin is up the canyon to the right.

Comments from the Chair

(cont.)

SAWS

On November 1, the SAWS Board of Trustees voted to allow Mr. Puente to sign an agreement for “financial close” of the Vista Ridge pipeline deal, without fulfillment of original contract terms. We continue to seek ways to raise public awareness of and opposition to this boondoggle, but SAWS expects construction to begin early 2017, and so they are successfully staying ahead of us so far. We welcome more ideas and support on this still NOT “a done deal”.
by Terry Burns, M.D., Alamo Group Chair

Executive Committee Election (cont.)

Research at UTSA.

I worked on the Applewhite campaigns and now am working to stop the Vista Ridge Pipeline. I am also against the two oil pipelines Trans Pecos and Dakota Access at Standing Rock. I guess you could say I don't like pipelines of any kind.

My hope for the future is that we build small, local, distributive utilities that make all of these old technologies obsolete. Also, we should curtail the old practice of paving new development. All new development should use low impact design to capture rainwater for all irrigation, cleaning, and waste needs. The City of San Antonio should use new bond money to capture, treat, and reuse storm water for municipal use.

My hope for the future of the Alamo Chapter of the Sierra Club is that we build our membership, particularly with more young people. I would like for us to get our positions out more effectively and clearly as our they involve not only serious but complicated issues.

Wendell Fuqua

Wendell Fuqua has been a member of the Sierra Club since 2006. He currently serves as the co-chair of the Alamo Group's Conservation Committee, and has been a previous member of the Alamo Group's Executive Committee.

Wendell graduated from the University of Texas at Austin in 1967 and spent most of his professional career in video production. He worked in Virginia as a freelance writer-director-producer, and worked in that same capacity for Texas A&M University

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

Please vote for three (3) candidates. If you have a joint membership, both you and your spouse may vote.

Membership number (required) _____

Candidate	Individual	2nd (Joint) Member
Cindy Weehler		
Wendell Fuqua		
Lili Gonzales		
Gay Wright		

Mail ballot to:

Alamo Group of the Sierra Club, P.O. Box 6443, San Antonio, TX 78209

and the Institute of Texan Cultures, University of Texas at San Antonio.

Since retiring from video production, Wendell has become an artist. He's pursuing a passion for creating wood block prints. Much of his artistic subject matter comes from the interests that brought him into the Sierra Club, hiking and backpacking. The images in his work were collected on his excursions into scenic Texas and other beautiful places.

Wendell lives in the Monte Vista historic neighborhood in San Antonio, with his wife, Diane, and Smudge the Cat. He and Diane have two grown sons, Nicholas and Christopher. Both work in creative fields.

Lili Gonzales

My interest in conservation has grown throughout the years, and I feel serving on the Executive Committee of the Alamo Group will help me help others stay informed and take action especially in the Hispanic community. I have a B.A. in Journalism and an M.A. in Environmental Studies from Texas Tech University. Initially I was interested in making an impact globally, but later realized that it is easier and more realistic to make change in a smaller scale, locally, in hopes of a domino effect.

Gay Wright

I would like to continue to serve on the ExCom. I am currently serving as the Tabling chairperson. I do fundraising with the holiday party silent auction. I recycle

batteries for the Club. I serve on the conservation committee, with emphasis on the plastic bag ordinance to be. I also volunteer with the City's Parks Dept, watering and weeding. I work with Green Spaces Alliance at their community gardens. I am a member of South Texas Farm and Ranch Club and the NE Neighborhood Alliance.

Alamo Group Trip to Big Bend NP (cont.)

close to the surface, and likely there was running water in pre-historic times. We are not identifying this site due to it's sensitive nature. The park has a web page on [Archeology and Big Bend](#); two limited early surveys found 628 sites indicating usage as early as 11,000 years ago. More recent data resulted in an estimate of 26,000 sites in the national park. Other web pages mention usage as early as 13,000 years ago, which is known as the Paleoindian period.

In addition to the photos above, attendees have posted a bunch on the Alamo Group [Meetup page for this event](#), have a look! Also there, if you click on “See all” under the event title you can see the trip details with a bunch of photos from previous trips.

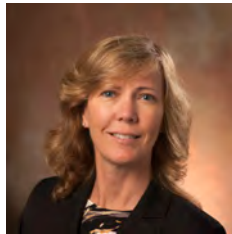
by Kevin Hartley, Outing Leader

CPS Energy to Present at January General Meeting

On January 17th, CPS Energy's Kim Stoker and Todd Horsman will be on hand for our General Meeting.

CPS Energy will be celebrating its 75th year as a municipal utility in 2017 and 157th year as a utility. Since the late 1970's, CPS Energy has had a diverse generation portfolio, but over the past few years has further diversified with solar energy. CPS Energy is a leader in solar energy in Texas with over 500 MW. Additionally, CPS Energy's Grid Optimization project will support the integration of renewables, energy storage, electric vehicles, and LED street lighting.

Kim R. Stoker, REM, P.G., Sr. Director, Environmental & Sustainability at CPS Energy directs and provides leadership for utility-wide environmental compliance programs, water supply planning, environmental policy, sustainability initiatives and for the development of corporate environmental metrics-designed to support the mission of CPS Energy. Ms. Stoker represents the interests of CPS Energy on several regional air, water and sustainability planning stakeholder committees. Ms. Stoker leads a team responsible for environmental strategy, permitting and reporting, in meeting compliance requirements and implementing sustainable business practices. She is a Registered Environmental Manager and a



Professional Geologist in Texas.

Mr. Horsman has many years of utility experience both domestically and internationally with leadership roles that span from product development to operations. He has recently joined CPS Energy as the Senior Director of Strategy and Product Development where he leads corporate strategy and new product development. Prior to CPS Energy he was Vice President of Regulatory Affairs at Landis+Gyr where he lead all regulatory development at the ISO, State and Federal level for solutions that optimize distribution grids and distributed resources. He served as Vice Chair for the Advance Energy Management Alliance which advocates for consumers and solutions that enhance demand side management.



hurricanes, tornadoes.

Meanwhile we drown immersed in human greed and waste. We wait in endless lines, ingest myriad ads, eat, drink, and breathe poisons, spend lives without purpose but to be entertained.

This cannot continue. Grandchild Betty, now one, begins to walk and talk. When she's my age the Earth must be harmonious. Full of loving spirits. Renewed for all creatures. *August, 2016, by Darby Riley, Executive Committee member*

Outings: Prime Hiking Weather Beckons



Visit the [Alamo Sierra Club Outings page](#) on Meetup for detailed information about all of our upcoming Sierra Club Outings.

The Alamo Sierran Newsletter

[Richard Alles](#), Editor

Published by The Alamo Group of the Sierra Club, P.O. Box 6443, San Antonio, TX 78209, alamosierraclub.org.

The Alamo Group is one of 13 regional groups within the [Lone Star \(Texas\) Chapter](#) of the Sierra Club.

Executive Committee	
Group Chair	Terry Burns
Vice Chair/Treasurer	Dave Wells
Secretary	Gay Wright
	Stephen Colley
	Lili Gonzales
	Alan Montemayor
	Darby Riley
	Russel Smith
	Enrique Valdivia

Keep Your Email Address Current!

Send updates to [Loyd Cortez](#), providing your name, address and membership number (if known).

Changed your mailing address?

Have you moved? Let us know by sending your old address, your new address and your member number (look on the upper left corner of your mailing label) to: address.changes@sierraclub.org.

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