



THE ALAMO SIERRAN

THE ALAMO GROUP OF THE SIERRA CLUB NEWSLETTER - VOL. 44 No. 2 FEB 2010

EPA Proposes New Ozone Standards

On January 6, the Lonestar Chapter coordinated statewide media events to welcome the Environmental Protection Agency's proposed new clean air standards for ozone. The Alamo Group's Margaret Day was joined by Southwest Workers' Union, Consumers' Energy Coalition, and ReEnergizeTexas representatives to unveil the ruling's details and significance for Texas and our region.

The new rule proposes to limit ozone pollution to 70 parts per billion (ppb) in any eight hour period. The former ruling of 75 ppb, down from 85 ppb, was adopted at the end of the Bush administration. Since it did not meet recommendations of the EPA's own

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The Electric Car is Coming to San Antonio

In a recent vote that attracted little attention, San Antonio's City Council approved acceptance of a State Energy Conservation Office grant allowing five city-owned Priuses to be converted to plug-in hybrids. The grant will also allow for five vehicle charging stations.

Last June Travis Park United Methodist Church installed the first charging station in the city, as a green gesture. A second outlet has since been installed at the church's parking lot on Travis Street near Navarro.

These events are the more visible signs of activity to prepare the way for electric vehicles (EVs) in San Antonio. There could be as many as 3,500 plug-in vehicles in Bexar County by 2015.

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Word from the Chair

by Loyd Cortez

We have started a new year and are fortunate to have some new faces on our Executive Committee (ExCom). On behalf of our club, I want to thank the following members who were either re-elected or newly elected to our ExCom. They include myself, Hector Gonzalez and Dave Wells. We also appointed a new member, Karen Kimbell, to replace a board member who had previously resigned. I want to thank all the individuals who submitted their names for consideration for the ExCom. My thanks go out to all our members who sent their ballots and also to those who sent in a donation to our club.

We also have the following new leaders: Wendell Fuqua, who is on the ExCom, will also be our new newsletter editor. Barbara McMillin who took over for Eloise Stoker is officially the new Programs Director. Thank you Eloise for all the many years that you devoted to bringing entertainment and knowledge to our monthly General Meetings. We shall also have vacancies for the following positions: Volunteer Coordinator and Fundraising.

We still have a handful of 2010 Sierra Club calendars, and we have discounted the price to \$10. If you cannot personally pick one up, then send me a letter with a check for \$13 (includes postage) payable to Alamo Sierra Club to me at this address: Loyd Cortez, PO box 40274, San Antonio, TX 78229. Be sure to indicate whether you want the wall or desk calendar and the address to which you want the calendar mailed.

I am open to suggestions on different places we may want to meet for our Sierra Socials. The only conditions to consider are that the place is not too noisy, has plenty of tables, and is willing to write separate checks for our orders.

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.

February Program, Tuesday, Feb. 16

VIA's Vision for New Transportation. Keith Parker, head of VIA, will give a presentation entitled "A CEO's Vision of an Innovative Transportation System for San Antonio." Keith Parker was former chief executive officer and director of public transit for the Charlotte Area Transit System. Prior to his implementing a light rail system in Charlotte, he was CEO/executive director for Clark County Transit Authority in Vancouver, Washington.

March Program, Tuesday, Mar. 16

Big Bend Ranch State Park Update. Rod Trevizo and other BBRSP staff will present the many changes, including land additions, occurring at Texas's largest state park.

Native Plant Day

The first annual Native Plant Day will be held at the pavilion at Eisenhower Park from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. The event is being organized by the Native Plant Society of Texas to celebrate and promote the connection of San Antonians with the local natural areas. It will also educate the public about the value of native plants and animals and about how to incorporate native plants into residential and commercial landscapes.

Native San Antonio will be a family-oriented event with walks in Eisenhower Park and booths in the pavilion oriented to the participation of children. There

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January Meeting Focuses on Geothermal Energy

About 130 people attended the Alamo Group's January 19 meeting on geothermal (GT), a green energy source that is emissions- and fuel-free and especially appropriate for South Texas.

Alamo Group conservation vice-chair Randy Carroll-Bradd spoke about central GT to produce electricity, pointing out that a binary system has a capacity factor of 96% and that, using existing gas and oil wells, it can have a payback time of as little as 3-5 years.

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Ozone Standards Continued

scientific panel based on 1700 scientific studies, it was challenged in court by health and environmental groups.

Texas urban areas in ozone rule non-attainment would increase from three to six or seven areas. Currently 20 Texas counties are in non-attainment and with the new, more protective rule, there may be 35-45. Our urban area has been struggling with attainment for more than a decade. The Alamo Area Council of Governments (AACOG) predicted we will fail the current standards by early 2010. Even lower nitrogen oxide emissions than planned would be necessary to meet the recommended ozone standard.

San Antonio's ozone is caused by nitrogen oxides emitted by coal plants, cement kilns, vehicles, heavy construction equipment, gasoline stations, and paint shops. City Public Service's Deely/Sommers/Spruce coal plant is our largest emissions source. A new study by CPS indicates that particulate matter pollution from the Deely complex may cause 21 deaths a year. These deaths are unacceptable and its NOx emissions must be reduced. CPS can do this by phasing out the old plants and adding significant new pollution controls. However, promised investments in emission control were recently derailed by nuclear power expansion costs. Uncontrolled suburban sprawl without smart development and transportation reforms remain another major contributor to emissions.

We are at an energy crossroads. AACOG and the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality need to clean up their act. If adopted the rule will provide a greater margin of safety to protect health and the environment by further challenging NOx sources. This helps the Sierra Club's goals of more responsible plans and progress that reduce pollution by addressing coal plants and providing more renewable energy, energy efficiency, green jobs, and smarter development generally.

For more information, and to take action, visit www.sierraclub.org/coal/tx.

Native Plant Day Continued

will be speakers, food, music, storytelling, native plant sales, live demonstrations and booths from a large number of non-profits and sponsors who believe in connecting people with nature.

The Alamo Group will be participating in the event. Contact Jerry Morrissey at 497-5470

or at jlmorrissey@aol.com if you would like to get involved.

Geothermal Energy Continued

Charlie Lonsberry, Service Manager for Bulverde-based Southwest Mechanical Services, spoke about GT for the home. He explained that high density polyethylene piping (which does not rust, rot, or corrode and is guaranteed for 55 years) is put about 250 feet down into holes drilled outside a home to enable a GT system with a 34-35 SEER rating. Residential GT provides heat, cooling and most hot water, eliminating up to 80% of a household's energy bill. Putting in a GT exchange system in a typical house reduces greenhouse gas emissions equal to planting an acre of trees. GT home installation costs \$6800/ton for a new home and \$5300/ton for a retrofit. A 30% federal tax credit is currently available on the total cost of a GT installation.

Howard Rogers of Rogers Utility Consultants described the GT installation at his Fredericksburg home, whose piping goes down only 125 feet due to a sandy substratum. He indicated that his average monthly bill for heating and air conditioning is only \$22, without sacrificing comfort. He indicated that installers are now estimating a 50-100 year life for the polyethylene piping used.

Frank Smith, president of San Antonio based Sologen Systems, was an unscheduled fourth speaker who announced the signing of a contract for 400 MW of geothermally produced electricity in South Texas and Mississippi. The project, which will begin construction in southeast Bexar county this month, could be the world's largest GT farm when completed. Smith declared that GT was the best technology to produce electricity. He briefly described his company's unique linear power engine that works on kinetic energy and not thermodynamically, using contained/sequestered carbon dioxide. Smith said the total cost for the 400 MW would be \$280 million.

Nuclear for the same number of megawatts would cost in excess of \$2.5 billion (roughly 8 times as much) for construction alone.

CPS Energy is expected to soon announce a rebate for residential and commercial GT installations.

For more information about GT for Texas, contact Maria Richards at the Southern Methodist University GT Lab at mrichard@smu.edu, 214/768-1975, www.smu.edu/geothermal, or the U.S. Dept. of Energy's Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy Information Center at eereic@ee.doe.gov, 1-877-EERE-INF, www.eere.energy.gov.

Electric Car Continued

The City's Office of Environmental Policy (OEP) is hard at work to smooth the way, and reports the following initiatives:

- An information and communication program is being developed by CPS Energy's Julia Jones. CPS will encourage EV owners to recharge vehicle batteries during off-peak times, especially during the night.

- Identification of existing vehicle recharging stations is being undertaken by the Alamo City Electric Auto Association and by AACOG's Chris Ashcraft. At this time, San Antonio leads the state in publicly accessible EV charging stations listed on a national website.

- A streamlined permitting process for EV charging equipment in homes and duplexes has been proposed by the City's Chief Electrical Inspector, Ray Martinez. By the time mass production EVs are available at local dealerships, homeowners should have little trouble installing charging stations in garages and carports.

- The OEP is investigating building code changes to create more "EV ready" homes as they are built. This includes incorporation of EV charging as part of the Build San Antonio Green program. It is also checking on liability issues related to public charging of EVs.

- The OEP is in discussion with VIA Metropolitan Transit regarding providing charging stations at park-and-ride lots.

More information on electric vehicle activity in San Antonio can be found at the OEP's website: <http://www.sanantonio.gov/oep/SAEV.asp>. All charging sites can be found on a local website (<http://www.txunplugged.com/>) and commercial/public stations are on the U.S. Dept. of Energy's website (http://www.afdc.energy.gov/afdc/progs/ind_state.php/TX/ELEC).

OUTINGS

**FEB. 15 THRU FEB. 19. BIG BEND,
MESA DE ANGUILA**

(At press time, this hike was fully booked, but you can add your name to a waiting list.)

This will be an extreme event for those who want to push themselves to the limit. The rewards promise to be spectacular. The Mesa de Anguila is the last frontier to conquer at Big Bend. Expect to spend two rugged nights with temperatures in the teens. Added bonus: Dinner in Marfa. For information: papawolfe@sbcglobal.net

**SAT, FEB 27. BARTON CREEK GREENBELT
DAY HIKE, AUSTIN, TEXAS**

Join us on what some describe as "the best urban hike in America." We'll hike 8-10 miles in the Barton Creek drainage. Be prepared for water crossings, some may be knee deep or higher. Dogs will be allowed. Donations to Sierra Club are greatly appreciated. Anyone interested in becoming an outings leader is encouraged to join us. Contact Scott Wolfe papawolfe@sbcglobal.net for information.

**SUN., FEB. 28. MUD CREEK DAY HIKE
(DOG FRIENDLY)**

Discover or renew your acquaintance with a quiet, north-central San Antonio park just inside Hwy 1604. This easy to moderate 3-mile hike begins at 10 a.m. Boots are recommended due to some rocky trail sections. Dogs on leashes are welcome. Donations to the Sierra Club accepted. For directions, contact leader Jerry Morrissey 382-2614 or jlmorrissey@aol.com.

**SAT., MAR. 6. GOVERNMENT CANYON STATE
NATURAL AREA, FRONT COUNTRY (DOG
FRIENDLY)**

Walk the beautiful Lytle Loop (4.7 miles). Government Canyon State Natural Area is located at 12861 Galm Rd (take FM 1560 west from Helotes to Galm Rd). There is a \$6 entrance fee for those without a Texas State Park Pass. Meet at 8 a.m. at the trailhead in Parking Lot C. Difficulty: Easy. Bring about a liter of water. Donations to Sierra Club accepted. Call leader Stan Drezek (493-0939).

SUN., MAR 7. MISSION TRAIL BIKE RIDE

This bike ride is along paved trails and roads that border the San Antonio River and lead from mission to mission in the southeast part of San Antonio. We may stop to take quick walks through some of

the missions along the way. Planned distance is 15 miles round-trip, depending on participants. Pace will be "no riders left behind." Minimum age is 12. Helmets are required. Be ready to ride by 8:30 a.m. in the grass parking lot southeast of the paved parking lot in front of Mission Concepcion, 807 Mission Road. Difficulty: Moderate. Fees: Donations to Sierra Club accepted. Sign up with leader: Lee Dodge, LSG999@earthlink.net, or 647-0216 as start times might change.

SAT., MAR. 13. SAN ANTONIO RIVERWALK

Weather permitting, enjoy a moderate walk 2.5 miles around from the Pearl Brewery towards downtown and back on the new North Reach. Meet at 8:00 a.m. for signup & donations. Park at Pearl Brewery parking lot or along nearby streets. Potential for late breakfast and visit to nearby farmers' market after. River Taxi optional (\$5-10 for tickets). Pre-registration required. Call for details: Chris Anderson, Leader; 1-210-838-1952 or anchorpt11@yahoo.com.

**SAT., MAR. 27. LOST MAPLES STATE
NATURAL AREA DAY HIKE.**

This might be a good time to catch the Texas mountain laurel in bloom along the mesa on the East Trail at Lost Maples. To car pool, meet at 8:15 a.m. in the parking lot that includes a Blockbuster Video just outside Loop 1604 on Bandera Rd. (11820 Bandera Rd.) on the right hand side. You can also meet us at the ranger station at the entrance to the park at 9:50 a.m. This will be about a 5-mile hike taking about 4 1/2 hours (including lunch), with about 3 hours of driving (round trip) from the car pool spot. Bring water, lunch, and hiking boots. Difficulty: Moderate. Cost: Park fees plus contribution to Sierra Club. Register with leader: Lee Dodge, LSG999@earthlink.net, 210-275-3355.

**SAT., APR. 10. FRIEDRICH WILDERNESS PARK
IN THE SPRING**

Walk all the trails at this most beautiful time of year. Friedrich Wilderness Park is located at 21935 Milsa Rd (take Dominion Drive exit from IH 10 W, one mile north on access road and then turn around south on access road to Oak and west to Milsa). Meet at 8 a.m. in the Parking Lot. Difficulty: Moderate, with some steep, rocky sections. Length is about 3.5 miles. Bring water and wear sturdy ankle supporting shoes. Donations to Sierra Club accepted. Call leader Stan Drezek (493-0939).

SAT., APR. 24. EISENHOWER PARK

EVENING HIKE

Meet at 6:45 p.m. at the Eisenhower Park 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. Wear hiking shoes or boots that are appropriate for a rugged trail. A walking stick might be helpful. Difficulty: Moderate to strenuous. Leader: Jerry Morrissey, 382-2614 or jlmorrissey@aol.com.

**AUG. 23 THROUGH AUG. 30 , GRAND TETONS
AND YELLOWTONE (NORTHERN ROCKIES
SAMPLER)**

(At press time, this hike was fully booked, but you can add your name to a waiting list.)

This will be a five-day backpack in the Grand Tetons, called Teton Crest. For Information: papawolfe@sbcglobal.net

Sierra Socials

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

**FEB 26 on Friday. Wetmore
Smokehouse & Saloon, 13525
Wetmore Road, 6-8 p.m.**

*Barbecue, chicken fried steak, and best
onion rings.*

**MAR 26 on Friday. Mad Hatters
Tea House, 320 Beauregard, 6-8
p.m.**

*Join us for a good cup of soup and
salad or sandwich.*

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MEETING DATES AND CONTACT INFO

General Meeting:	3rd Tuesday 7 p.m.	Jerry Morrissey	497-5470
Executive Committee Meeting:	3rd Thursday, 7 p.m.	Loyd Cortez	674-9489
Newsletter Submissions:		Fred Wills	fredwills@att.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.	Scott Wolfe	724-2707
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	Loyd Cortez	674-9489
Newsletter	Wendell Fuqua	373-0748
Website	Richard Alles	494-2088

COMMITTEE CONTACTS

Outings Chair	Scott Wolfe	724-2707
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	Vacant	
Tree Conservation	Richard Alles	494-2088
Volunteer Coordinator ...	Vacant	
Water Issues	Jerry Morrisey	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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Alamo Group of the Sierra Club
 P.O. Box 6443
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MEMBERSHIP CATEGORIES

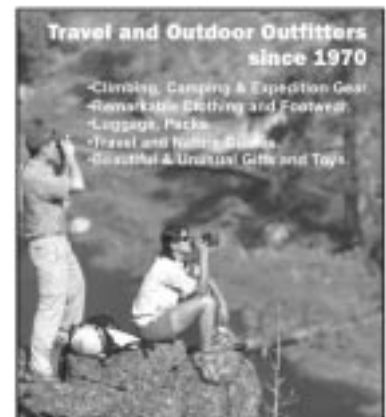
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