

ALAMO GROUP MEETINGS

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

Tues., Feb. 21: VIA's Plans

Learn about VIA's clean, green streetcar plans, plus future multi-modal expansion plans from CEO Keith Parker.

Tues., Mar. 20: Aquifer Plan

Dr. Robert Gulley of the EAA will present the Edwards Aquifer Recovery Implementation Plan and the Habitat Conservation Plan for the Edwards. Approved by AAMN for Advanced Training(AT)

Tues., Apr. 17: Declining Oil and Coal

Dr. Tad Patzek, Chair, Dept. of Petroleum Engineering at UT-Austin will speak on declining oil and coal.

SIERRA SOCIALS

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

Fri., Feb 24: Little Italy, 824 Afterglow Street, 6-8 PM.

Fri., Mar 23: Hsiu Yu Chinese, 8338 Broadway, 6-8 PM.

Fri., Apr 27: La Tuna, 100 Probandt, 6-8 PM.

The Alamo Sierran

The Alamo Group of the Sierra Club Newsletter

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SIERRA
CLUB
FOUNDED 1892

Inner City Outings

Imagine never getting the chance to see the Milky Way against a dark sky, or crouch by a creek and discover all the critters that come alive if you sit still and watch. Imagine never finding a fossil under foot, or hearing a screech owl, or discovering deer feeding at dusk.

Plenty of kids in San Antonio have never seen these simple wonders that Sierra Club members cherish and take for granted. If you'd like to be a part of introducing local kids ages 8-18 to some of these outdoor wonders, Inner City Out-

ings, or ICO, needs you.

ICO is an affiliate of the Sierra Club, with 50 active programs in the U.S. ICO takes kids from all backgrounds, ethnicities, ages, economic circumstances and physical abilities on nature adventures to teach them how to enjoy the outdoors safely and responsibly. Their experiences also help the Club create a new generation of environmental leaders.

The Alamo Group is in the process of launching its own ICO program. **As a first step, we**

need to identify and train ICO leaders and recruit additional volunteers that can assist on occasion with specific events..

To learn more about ICO, visit this link: <http://www.sierraclub.org/ico/>. Or contact Outings Committee Co-chairmen Jerry Morrisey (jlmorrisey@aol.com) or Stan Drezek (stanwendre@gmail.com) if you would like to volunteer. New Alamo Group member Anne Pearson is spearheading formation of this new ICO program in San Antonio. Reach her at anne.pearson@att.net.

San Antonio's Streetcar

By Dave Dobbs

After years of subsidizing sprawl beyond its taxing jurisdiction, San Antonio has an opportunity with its streetcar proposal to receive a more equitable return on taxpayer investment, begin building a more sustainable walking/bicycling city, and eventually realize the first-class urban mobility choices that the world's great cities enjoy, while concurrently capturing additional tourist dollars. As the system grows,

this travel mode, and the resulting land-use transitions it causes, will lead to greater energy efficiency, cleaner air, and reduced non-point pollution as automobile travel diminishes. With real mobility choices, a denser city is a richer one in every way.

So how do Texans get there, tied to our horses and the powerful special business interests our steeds represent? Hire a businessman, of course. His name is Keith Parker, VIA's

President/CEO and guest speaker for the February 21st General Meeting. Mr. Parker holds Master's degrees in Business Administration and Urban and Regional Planning and he comes to us from Charlotte where, as an assistant city manager, COO and CEO of the Charlotte Area Transit System between 2000 and 2009, he played a major role bringing the successful 9.6 mile Lynx light rail system into existence under a Republican Mayor.

January 2012 Alamo Club Meeting

As South Texas continues to endure a historic drought, the issue of San Antonio's long-term water supply looms large. Thus, Alamo Group members listened intently at our club meeting Jan. 17 at the Witte Museum, as representatives of the San Antonio Water System (SAWS) up-

dated them on recent improvements in the city's water supply and quality control.

Esther Harrah, SAWS Manager of Water Resources, said the Aquifer Storage and Recovery project, which began in 2004, uses a storage "bubble"

in the Carrizo/Wilcox aquifers to store as much as 100,000 acre feet of water pumped from the Edwards Aquifer. The water is pumped into storage during times of surplus, she said, and can be used by San Antonio in

(Continued to Page 3)

Outings: Hikes That Lead Us Into Spring

Save A Tree....)

Please help our club offset our newsletter paper copy printing and postage cost by considering receiving the newsletter electronically by email.

Contact loydcortez@earthlink.net to make the switch.

Make Your Voice Be Heard!

City council decisions, regulatory actions, legislation in Austin; we need to be ready to act at a moment's notice to support the good and stop the bad.

Sometimes all it takes is a simple phone call or email message to sway the opinion of our local elected leaders and officials.

Contact loydcortez@earthlink.net to add you to our club's action alert list.

General Requirements: *Wear clothes and shoes appropriate for hiking. Bring water and a snack. Minors allowed only when accompanied by parent/guardian or with Consent Form and Medical Authorization. Dogs not allowed unless specified, and must be leashed and socialized. Donations to Sierra Club always welcomed.*

Full descriptions of these outings are found at <http://texas.sierraclub.org/alamo/Outings.htm>

OR

<http://www.meetup.com/Alamo-Sierra-Club-Outings/>

Participants are encouraged to read the full descriptions and contact the Outings Leader.

SATURDAY FEBRUARY 18TH: AFTERNOON HIKE AT MUD CREEK (DOG FRIENDLY)

1:45 PM, Parking Lot, Mud Creek Park, 16675 Jones Maltsberger Rd.

Enjoy the woods and the cliffs of a quiet North Central San Antonio Park 2.5 miles: EASY, Contact leader Jerry Morrisey (382-2614)

SATURDAY FEBRUARY 25TH: THE OAK LOOP SEASONAL NATURE WALK

10:10 AM, Sidewalk Children's Playground, Phil Hardberger Park
West Enjoy the coming of early spring during an interpretative walk along the Oak Loop 1.5 miles: EASY, Contact leader Wendy Drezek (493-0939)

SATURDAY MARCH 3RD: DO THE LYTLE LOOP (DOG FRIENDLY)

8:15 AM, Parking Lot C, Government Canyon State Natural Area
Experience the peace and beauty of front country of GCSNA 4.8 miles: EASY, Contact leader Stan Drezek (493-0939)

SATURDAY MARCH 10TH: HIKE THE CANYON

8:15 AM, Visitor Center, Govern-

ment Canyon State Natural Area
Experience the rugged back-country trails of GCSNA

4 to 7 miles: MODERATE, Contact leader Terry Platt (695-9570)

SATURDAY MARCH 24TH: HIKE AT ENCHANTED ROCK STATE NATURAL AREA

9:00 AM, Parking lot, Park Entrance at Enchanted Rock Experience the beauty and wildflowers of one of most popular state parks

4.1 miles: MODERATE/DIFFICULT, Contact leader Terry Jermolajevs (414-1125)

SUNDAY APRIL 1ST: LANDA PARK/COMAL SPRINGS HIKE

10:30 AM, Parking Lot near Founder's Oak, Landa Park in New Braunfels Experience an ecological jewel with the largest springs in Texas

2 miles: EASY, Contact leader Bill Rogers (830 885-2523)

Rain to Drain

Have you ever wondered where the water your drink comes from? Have you thought about how it is cleaned and treated before it comes out of our faucets? If you're interested in learning more about where your drinking water comes from and where it goes "after the flush", consider joining SAWS Education Team for the *Rain to Drain Experience*. Requirements for attending the trip:

The "Rain to Drain" field trip is FREE for San Antonio residents ages 18 and older. Anyone under the age of 18 cannot be accommodated. (*To find out more information about field trips for those under 18, please contact the SAWS Education Department at www.saws.org*). Each trip can accommodate a maximum of 50 guests. San Antonio Water System reserves the right to cancel a trip at any time due to attendance, weather or security reasons. San Antonio Water System will provide charter transportation to all locations. If special accommodations need to be made, advance notice of at least 72 hours is required. No personal transportation will be allowed. San Antonio Water System will provide a FREE lunch to all those in attendance. If special dietary needs are required, please notify us at the time of registration. SAWS will also provide water for your enjoyment throughout the day.

The field trips are **Fri Mar 9th; Sat. Apr 14th; Fri. May 18th; Sat. Sept 15th; Sat. Oct 20th; Sat. Nov 10th; & Fri. Dec 7th**. To get more details or to register for the event, call Greg Wukasch at (210) 233-3631 from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. weekdays or send an e-mail to gwukasch@saws.org. so the forms can be sent to you. Their fax number is (210) 233-5043.

Something New In February

Starting in February, we will have additional, more informal open meetings on the fourth Wednesday of every month at 6:30 pm at the Lion's Field Clubhouse on Broadway at Mulberry Avenue. We hope to offer movies, workshops, round tables, book discussions, and new member orientations.

On February 22, we will be showing the film *Monumental* about David Brower, a legend whose spirit and activism started the environmental movement. Discussion follows.

We hope you take advantage of and enjoy our new Lion's Field opportunities and the 2012 speaker programs at

the Witte Museum. Meet new folks. Get involved. Learn new things. If you have a suggestion or would like to lead a Lions Field activity, please contact Peggy Day at 829-5632 or peggyday@hotmail.com or Barbara McMillin at 734-4170.

A Word from the Alamo Group Chair

By Margaret "Peggy" Day

Mountain cedar has been the target of considerable study and fierce debate in Central Texas and the Hill Country for many decades. Also called ashe juniper, the cedar is high profile news again, due to another season of high pollen counts. It has been reported by asthma and allergy experts that one third of all people in this area suffer from debilitating cedar fever. I too have become sensitive to cedar in the last two years. But unlike People Against Cedars, who declare this cedar a "plague" and insist it has no redeeming value, I am not on the anti-cedar bandwagon. I see the cedar story as a cautionary tale.

In "Cedar Tall Tales," land restoration consultant Elizabeth McGreevy examines the many beliefs used to build the case for cedar eradication perpetuated by those with grievances against the cedar. These people are primarily the many cedar fever sufferers and rural landowners frustrated with the relent-

less encroachment of cedar onto pastures and prairies. The litany of complaints includes, among others: everybody hates cedar, cedars are all bad, they are not native, Indians set fires that controlled cedar, cedar is highly flammable, cedars are water hogs and suck aquifer water, cedars are of minimal use for wildlife, cedars cause erosion, nothing grows under cedars, cutting cedars will end cedar fever, and cedars are worthless. McGreevy found, "I soon realized that although every argument against the mountain cedar seemed valid, none could hold up to close inspection." She provides thoughtful evidence with links to sources that challenge these weak or exaggerated beliefs (see http://www.landsteward.net/mountain_cedar.html)

Cedar problems are our reminders of the threats of an unhealthy ecosystem we bring upon ourselves and our children through shortsighted mismanagement. Many studies show we inherited and degraded

one of the richest confluence of biodiversity in a vast region with a wealth and distinctiveness that requires enlightened stewardship. As the old growth cedar forest balance went, the less desirable multi-trunked subspecies have proliferated due to habitat change. It seems primary causal disturbances are the loss of topsoil and biodiversity and now, climate change. Many of the simplistic cedar problem "panaceas" such as grubbing, chaining, dozing, poisoning, and burning cedar actually aggravate environmental degradation. The protected Yellow Cheeked Warbler, found only in our Hill Country old-growth mountain cedar brakes, like the canary in a coal mine, stands as a warning about the inadvertent effects of our actions. Let us proceed with caution.

(Continued from Page 1)

times when water from the Edwards cannot meet the city's demands.

By 2013, Harrah said, an additional 17,500 acre feet of water per year will be obtained from a well being drilled into the Carrizo Aquifer near Gonzales. It will be piped to San Antonio using a pipeline "rented" from the Schertz-Seguin Local Government Corporation, thus saving the city the \$90 million cost of building a new pipeline. This will be the largest source of non-Edwards Aquifer water ever obtained by the city, Harrah added.

Harrah also reported that SAWS' desalination plant is scheduled to start operation in 2016. In its first phase of operation, the plant will convert 10 million gallons per day of brackish water from the Wilcox Aquifer in south Bexar County into useable water for San Antonio. The plant will operate at about the same cost as other desalination plants in Texas, Harrah said.

Scott Halty, SAWS Director of Resource Protection and Compliance, then reported on the Edwards Aquifer Sensitive Area Protection project, which aims to quickly identify and remedy potential contamination threats from blocked or damaged sewer lines. The project has three components: (1)

identifying sensitive areas, where geological or man-made features pose the threat of aquifer contamination, (2) installing "smart" manhole covers and electronic flow meters, which can signal possible problems to an emergency operations center, and (3) an Enhanced Inspection and Cleaning program, which will conduct annual inspections and required maintenance at these sensitive sites.

The SAWS report was followed by a lively and lengthy question and answer session with Alamo Group members.

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 last day of month	Loyd Cortez	674-9489
Political Committee Mtg.	2d Thursday, 7 p.m.	Dave Wells	271-0640
Newsletter Mail Party	2d Tuesday, 6-8:30 p.m.	Whole Foods	
Outings Committee Mtg.	1st Wed., every odd month., 7 p.m.	Jerry Morrissey	382-2614
Conservation Committee Mtg.	1st Thursday, 7 p.m.	Russell Seal	289-9088

Alamo Group of the Sierra Club
Executive Committee Officers & Members

Margaret (Peggy) Day, Chair Person	829-5632
Loyd Cortez, Vice Chair Person	674-9489
MaryEllen Garcia, Secretary	344-1581
Karen Dalglish Seal	226-8101
Hector Gonzalez	226-6069
Dave Wells, Treasurer	271-0640
George Rice	737-6180
Alyssa Burgin	381-4021
Mobi Warren	496-4942

Administrative Contacts

Programs	Barbara McMillin	734-4170
Fundraising	Vacant	
Publicity	Gay Wright	343-0222
Editor	Loyd Cortez	674-9489
Membership	Vacant	
Mailings	Vacant	
Website	Richard Alles	494-2088

Committee Contacts

Outings Co-Chairs	Jerry Morrissey	382-2614
	Stan Drezek	493-0939
Political	Dave Wells	271-0640

Conservation Contacts

Conservation Chair	Russell Seal	289-9088
Assistant Chair	L. Van Coppenolle	492-4620
Green Buildings	John Hertz	413-4100
Education	Ken Clifton	646-6833
Fluoride Issues	L. Van Coppenolle	492-4620
Organic Gardening	Dave Klar	485-6880
Recycling	Carolyn Wells	271-0640
Tree Conservation	Richard Alles	494-2088
Transportation	Barbara McMillin	734-4170
Water Issues	George Rice	737-6180
Climate Change	Mobi Warren	496-4942
Drought	Alyssa Burgin	381-4021
Endangered Species	Mobi Warren	496-4942

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: Leticia Ozuna	207-7064
Dist. 4: Rey Saldana	207-7281
Dist. 5: David Medina, Jr.	207-7043
Dist. 6: Ray Lopez	207-7065
Dist. 7: Cris Medina	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: Diego Bernal	207-7279

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