

ALAMO GROUP MEETINGS

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

Tues., Jan. 18: Peak Oil

Alan Montemayor, formerly active Sierra Club member and former Principal Engineer, Southwest Research Institute, will present program: "Peak Oil: What is it, what are the potential consequences and how can we prepare for it?"

Tues., Feb. 15: Net Zero Energy Home

Hear advanced green building science strategies from Austin architect Peter Pfeiffer, FAIA and a LEED Accredited and NAHB Certified Green Building Professional. In 2006, Pfeiffer was cited as one of most influential architects of the past decade by "Residential Architect."

SIERRA SOCIALS

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

Fri., Jan 28: Candlelight Coffeeshouse, 301 N. St. Mary's, 6-8 p.m.

Fri., Feb 25: Mad Hatters Tea House, 320 Beauregard, 6-8 p.m.

Fri., Mar 25: Blue Star Brewing Co., 1414 South Alamo, 6-8 p.m.

The Alamo Sierran

The Alamo Group of the Sierra Club Newsletter

VOLUME 45, NUMBER 1 JANUARY 2011



SIERRA
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County: \$4 Million Subsidy for Tree Massacre

A developer who destroyed an incredible stand of giant heritage trees is expecting a \$4 million thank you from Bexar County Commissioners this month. GFR Development's City Base West shows our improved tree ordinance is worthless, and our elected leaders use our tax dollars to fast track environmental destruction. We oppose both the weak ordinance and this poorly designed shopping center at S. New Braunfels and SE Military.

The unusual design calls for parking lots and buildings to be constructed over an existing creek and its heavily forested old growth riparian zone. The natural valley will be filled and beautiful Brooks Creek converted into an underground concrete culvert. Gone are 39 large heritage trees, one with a trunk 17 feet in circumference, and about 350 other sizable trees. This destruction was unnecessary, since there is enough non-forested land on the site to

accommodate all of the planned parking and buildings.

While the project was built under the old tree ordinance, which allowed 90 percent of the trees on a site to be destroyed, the developer could have done essentially

the same under the new ordinance passed in May, 2010, albeit at a higher cost.

GFR claims the project will not increase runoff. But, physical

(Story Continued on Page Two)

To Our Auction Donors: Thanks!

It has been said, "The manner of giving is worth more than the gift." Each of the following benefactors responded readily to our request for auction donations, which speaks volumes about their generous spirits and support for our mission. They include the professional services of *John Hertz, Karen Dalglish Seal, Michelle Petty, MaryEllen Garcia, Carolyn Wells, Margaret Day, Lincoln Heights Veterinary Hospital, Bally's Fitness, River City Silver, K Charles Aveda, and Spa D'Sante.*

We also received books or book certificates from *Half Price Books, The Twig, Margaret Day, Loretta Van Coppenolle, and Stan and Wendy Drezek.* Food gift cards came from *Thurmunz, Cheezy Jane's, Good Time Charlie's, W.D. Deli, Chipotle, Sushi Zushi, Picante Grill, The Cove, Paesano's, Green, Casbeers, and Amy's Ice Cream.* Fine art was contributed by *Kathleen Trenchard, Eloise Stoker, and Elizabeth Steinberg.* *Sherwin Williams, Whole Earth Provision, Paula Stone, Karen Seal, and Margaret Day* gave products.

On Dec. 7, Alamo Group members gathered for the annual **Christmas pot luck supper and silent auction** (see auction story on this page). The event was held this year at the Lions Field club house. Among the attendees were (left of tree) Executive Committee Member Denali Endicott, Conservation Chair Loretta Van Coppenolle, Chair Peggy Day, (right of tree) club members Paula Stone, and Karen Seal.



Multifamily Recycling Still Needs Work

“Today’s planning standards require ‘life cycle’ and ‘external’ cost valuations, too.”

On Dec. 9, the San Antonio City Council narrowly voted in the multifamily recycling plan recommended by staff. Congratulations to those who voted in its favor, and thanks also to Sierrans who worked to promote this issue over the years: We delivered about 2,000 signatures!

More than 20 years ago we helped deliver the city’s single family curbside recycling program. Our hope then was for universal recycling, and it was our expectation that commercial and multifamily recycling would follow soon. However, four council members supported opposition from landlords and the San Antonio Apartment Association, asking for a delay. A major concern was cost to landlords and tenants. This continues a myopic, obsolete

view. Today’s planning standards require “life cycle” and “external” cost valuations, too. The Association objects that it will have to raise rents to cover the cost of recycling. However, effective recycling is proven to cost much less than landfilling and to actually earn income on recyclable materials.

Recycling only costs more if the rate of recycling is low. The US Council of Mayor’s 1999, 40-city, multifamily recycling study showed that a 20 percent or greater recycle rate cut costs 36 percent and cut waste generation 30 percent. After 20 years, San Antonio has only reached an 11.4 percent curbside recycling rate, according to 2020 Plan data. The Plan aims for 60 percent by 2020. How can San Antonio reconcile its “green city” claims and zero waste and net zero energy

building goals with such a poor track record and meager plan?

The Alamo Sierra Club recommended that San Antonio demand more from its multifamily recycling plan: (1) Specify flexibility in the recycle vs. waste space ratio to assure buildings in the future will be able to accommodate greater than 50 percent and more diverse recycling; (2) set progressive goals for recycling over the next ten years, with interventions if interim goals are not met; (3) design in rewards and consequences so proactive, compliant citizens do not have to carry free riders, and so citizens contribute their dues.

The Sierra Club is committed to Zero Waste and a Cradle to Cradle Policy. For this reason we hope that city officials will revisit plan provisions.

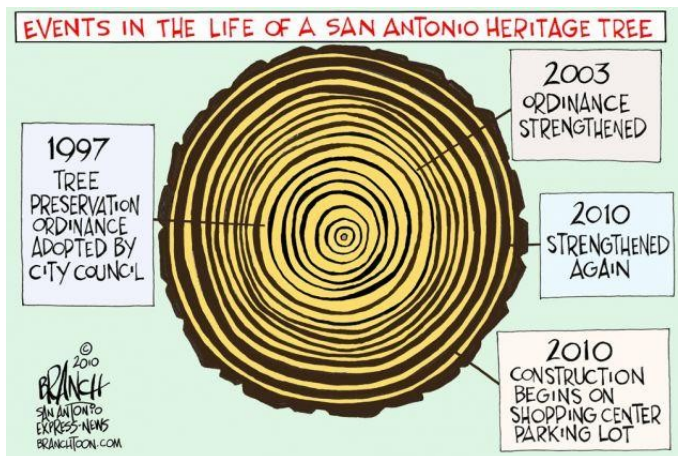
(Continued from Page 1: County Subsidizes Tree Massacre)

“Bexar County Commissioners remain set to grant a \$4 million tax abatement, thus rewarding a project that will... undermine sustainability goals.”

laws dictate that runoff increases when forests and naturally vegetated land are replaced by asphalt and concrete. A detention basin required by city storm water regulations will slow the rate of runoff, but do nothing to stop the inevitable increase in volume.

Bexar County Commissioners remain set to grant a \$4 million tax abatement, thus rewarding a project that will degrade air quality, has ruined Brooks Creek, and will increase contamination in the San Antonio River and runoff downstream; and that may impact the historic San Juan acequia, and undermine sustainability goals.

The grant rewards destruction of a rare natural amenity that could have become a destination location, economic driver, and offered valuable environmental and social services. The grant also undermines our investments in the San Antonio River and Mission Trails as



(Our thanks to John Branch and the San Antonio Express-News for the use of this drawing.)

cores of a recreation and tourism system to transform Southside. While the Alamo Group sent detailed documentation with our objections to the US Corp of Engineers, Councilwoman Jennifer Ramos, the County Judge and Commissioners, and the Brooks Development Authority, none responded. We realize the devel-

oper has been granted entitlements to destroy the creek and forest and for obsolete design, but there was no good reason for the County to aid and abet poor practices.

Please voice your concerns to the county commissioners. (See contact information on page 4).

A Word from the Alamo Group Chair

By Margaret "Peggy" Day

You give but little when you give of your possessions. It is when you give of yourself that you truly give.

- Kalil Gibran

In my experience, giving is so rewarding it has taken over my life. You meet new people, make new friends, and learn so much about many issues. You feel needed, appreciated and valued. Giving helps deal with one's own problems, build self-esteem and

confidence, understand people better, and learn to be a role model. Giving of one's time for a collective mission much greater than oneself imbues life with meaning and higher purpose.

Professional and business gains abound too. There are the contacts and experiences which may help one find and develop a career, learn leadership skills, and improve interpersonal and communication skills. Academic credit is available from high schools and colleges. Volunteer work looks good on a resume too

and shows qualities that are highly valued.

It's a New Year tradition to contemplate changes to improve our lives and our mark on the world. Have you considered lending a hand to our Alamo Group? We have many opportunities to meet your interests, talents and time available. Reap the rewards of knowing and working alongside like-minded Sierrans, while exploring, enjoying and protecting our corner of Earth. Our success depends upon our volunteers.. Please give us a call and enlist now.

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Alamo Group Outings: Opportunities to Hike and Learn

Saturday, Jan. 29: Rebuilding of a River: San Antonio River Authority Mission Reach Ecosystem Restoration

Register at 8:30 a.m. for 9:00 a.m. program. Park at SARA headquarters, 100 E. Guenther, or at lot around back on Johnson Street. SARA staff will present a powerful example of ecosystem restoration. You will be amazed at the detailed planning and species considerations. Then we walk from SARA to the Eagleland area to actually see large areas of the restored river. Tour should end about 12:30 p.m.

The focus of this unique event will be to understand the concepts behind ecosystem restoration and see the results as applied along the river. Participants will need to sign both SARA and Sierra Club liability waivers.

Difficulty: Easy. Walk will be about three and a half miles with little change in elevation. Be sure to wear sturdy shoes and dress for the weather. Because only 15 slots are available to Sierra Club, minors not accepted. You MUST call Master Naturalist and Sierra Club leader Stan Drezek (493-0939) to reserve your place. This expected to be popular event.

Saturday, Feb. 12: 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; group size limited to the first 12 people; 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 8:15 a.m. for an 8:30 a.m. sharp departure with finish by noon.; subject to cancellation. Difficulty: Moderate (some steep/rocky sections). Contact Sierra Club co-leader Nancy Anderson, (210) 370-9459, if you require additional information.

Saturday, Mar. 5: Friedrich Wilderness Park in the Spring

Enjoy the beautiful natural trails in this wilderness park, just outside of Loop 1604, but far removed from urban life. Meet at 9:00 a.m. in the Park parking lot, near the trailhead. We will hike about 3.5 miles, at a moderate pace, over varied and scenic terrain that is mostly level, but with some steep rocky climbs/descents. We should finish the hike by 11:30 a.m.

Bring water and wear sturdy ankle-supporting shoes. Minors must be

accompanied by adult parent or guardian, or with Medical Authorization and Consent Form.

Donations to the Sierra Club are welcome. Those who are interested can gather after the hike for lunch at a cozy restaurant not far from the park. For information and to reserve a place on this beautiful springtime hike, contact the leader Nancy Anderson, (210) 370-9459, or assistant leader Stan Drezek, 493-0939.

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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.	Russell Seal	289-9088
Newsletter Mail Party	2d Tuesday, 7 p.m.	Jim Stewart	692-0727
Outings Committee Mtg.	1st Wed., every odd month., 7 p.m.	Jerry Morrissey	497-5470
Conservation Committee Mtg.	1st Thursday, 7 p.m.		

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
Mary Ellen Garcia		344-1581
Dave Wells		271-0640
Scott Wolfe		724-2707
Denali Endicott		629-2434
Sharon Dukes (non voting), Treasurer		828-3721
Administrative Contacts		
Programs	Barbara McMillin	734-4170
Fundraising	Vacant	
Publicity	Vacant	
Mailings	Jim Stewart	692-0727
Membership	Vacant	
Newsletter	Wendell Fuqua	373-0748
Website	Richard Alles	494-2088
Committee Contacts		
Outings	Jerry Morrissey	382-2614
Political	Russell Seal	289-9008
Outreach		
And Education	Carolyn Wells	271-0640
Conservation Contacts		
Conservation Chair	Vacant	
Assistant Chair	R. Carroll-Bradd	216-6125
Endangered Species	Fred Wells	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 Morrissey	382-2614
U.S. Congresspersons		
Charlie Gonzalez	472-6195	
Lamar Smith	821-5024	
Henry Cuellar	271-2851	
Francisco Conserco		
City Council (Continued)		
Dist. 2: Ivy R. Taylor		207-7278
Dist. 3: Jennifer Ramos		207-7064
Dist. 4: Philip A. Cortez		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: John G. Clamp		207-7276
City Council		
Mayor Julian Castro	207-7060	
Dist. 1: M. A. Cisneros	207-7279	

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CONTRIBUTING	<input type="checkbox"/> \$150	<input type="checkbox"/> \$175
LIFE	<input type="checkbox"/> \$1000	<input type="checkbox"/> \$1250
SENIOR	<input type="checkbox"/> \$24	<input type="checkbox"/> \$32
STUDENT	<input type="checkbox"/> \$24	<input type="checkbox"/> \$32
LIMITED INCOME	<input type="checkbox"/> \$24	<input type="checkbox"/> \$32

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