

ALAMO GROUP MEETINGS

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

Tues., Jan. 17: SAWS Plans

Come learn about plans, new technologies, and other information from a representative of the San Antonio Water System.

Tues., Feb. 15: VIA's Future

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

Tues., Mar. 20: Aquifer Plan

Robert Gulley of the Edwards Aquifer Authority will present the authority's Habitat Conservation Plan and Edwards Aquifer Recovery Implementation Plan.

SIERRA SOCIALS

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

Fri., Jan 27: Candlelight Coffeehouse, 301 N. St. Mary's, 6-8 p.m.

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

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

The Alamo Sierran

The Alamo Group of the Sierra Club Newsletter

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JANUARY 2012



SIERRA CLUB
FOUNDED 1892

Holiday Potluck Raises Funds and Spirits



About 75 Alamo Group Sierrans kicked off the holiday season Dec. 13 with a potluck dinner at the Lion's Field Adult Center. Music was provided by the Celtic group

Ravenmoor, shown at left. Club members bid on items at a silent auction, raising almost \$1,600 for our environmental education effort.

Our thanks to the following businesses that contributed items to the auction: Half Price Books, SA Office of Environmental Policy, The Twig, Azuca, Blue Star Brewery, Boardwalk Bistro, Cheezy Janes, Chlpotle, El Mirasol, EZs, Flemings, Green, Good Time Charlies, HearthStone Bakery, La Madeleine, Magic Time Machine, Mimi's, Panera, Picante Grill, Silo, Soluna, Sushi Zuchi, Vegearia, WD Deli, Whole Earth Provision, Sherwin Williams, Pet Supplies Plus, Armoirs & Accents, Kathleen Sommers, Cleaning Ideas, Milbergers, Rainbow Gardens, Shades of Green nurseries, Eloise Stoker, and Margaret Day.

Professional services for the

auction were donated by Alamo Heights Kennel and Salon animal care, architect John Hertz, health network Natural Awakenings, Michelle Petty riding lessons, River City Silver photographs, computer pro Mark Robinson, artist Kathleen Trenchard, lawyers Karen Dalglish Seal and Michelle Petty, Spectrum fitness club, Spa d Sante massage pros, K Charles Salon, and accountant Carolyn Wells.

Special thanks to Gay Wright and Peggy Day for their month-long effort to organize the auction; and to MaryEllen Garcia and John Hertz, for handling sale and distribution.

A few unsold auction items are still available. See our website alamosierranclub.org for information.

Political Action: Thoughts for a New Year

By Russell Seal
Former Chair, Political Committee

As I ponder 2011 and look ahead to 2012 on New Year's Eve, I realize that this election year we as a club are going to have to work harder and smarter to change the political climate. The far right wing attack on science and education is having an impact on the left. President Obama overruled the EPA in its stance on lowering the ozone standard from 75 ppb to 60 ppb as the American Lung Association recommended. As the far right preached that jobs would be impacted by cleaning up our air, Rep. Charlie Gonzalez (Dem) stood with five other representatives to draft a letter to Lisa Jackson at the EPA asking her to

permit the dirtiest of all the coal plants, Las Brisas in Corpus Christi. They stated it should be exempt from a required greenhouse gas permit because it would cost too many jobs. In 2009, Rep. Ciro Rodriguez (Dem) voted against the cap and trade proposals for fear his constituents would object. Our message has not gotten through to the politicians we helped put in office. It is time for a change.

I am not saying that everything has gone downhill. Mobi Warren, who arranged the 350.org event at the Pearl Stables, also got Mayor Julian Castro to proclaim September as Climate Change Awareness month. City Public Service has opened its

doors to quarterly meetings between environmentalists and Doyle Beneby, the new CEO. They have made great progress in showing the State of Texas that there is another way to have clean energy and job creation simultaneously. In the less recent past, SA city councilman Justin Rodriguez conceived the concept of Mission Verde that was embraced by two mayors, Hardberger and Castro. As much as I disagreed with the actions of Ciro Rodriguez and Charlie Gonzalez this last year, both have had at least a 75% record of voting for environmental issues. Lloyd Doggett out of Austin has a 100% pro-environment record. Meanwhile,

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“Our Alamo Group outings continue through the winter, taking advantage of the mild climate in our area of Texas.”



Participants gather for a photo opportunity during a recent hike at Guadalupe River State Park. Our Alamo Group outings continue through the winter, taking advantage of the mild climate in our area of Texas. Join us for one of the outings listed below.

Outings: Hikes That Lead Us Into Spring

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.

Sat., Jan. 14: 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 will range from 4 to 7 miles depending on group.

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 rain-water harvesting tower by 8:15 a.m. for an 8:30 a.m. departure with finish by noon; subject to cancellation. Difficulty: Moderate (some steep/rocky sections). Contact Sierra Club co-leader Terry Jermolajevs (830) 980-4183 if you require additional information.

Sat., Feb. 11: Hike the Canyon

See Dec. 10 outing. But, contact Sierra Club co-leader Chris Anderson, 838-1952, if you require additional information.

Sun., Feb. 12: Heart Healthy Beginner's Valentine Walk, Salado Creek (Dog Friendly)

It's a twofer—get ready for your valentine with a beginner's walk on the beautiful Salado Creek

Greenway, 1021 Voelcker Lane. Meet 8:00 a.m. in the parking lot by the doggie bag dispenser. Join us on the shady, scenic trail of this beautiful park. We will walk about 4 miles on a flat, paved path. Take 1604, 410 or Wurzbach Parkway to Blanco and Longfield (one light north of Wurzbach Parkway). Turn onto Longfield, then left at the first stop sign and follow Voelcker Lane past Hardberger Park into the parking lot.

Call Leader Wendy Drezek, 493-0939 to reserve a place on this popular hike. Assistant Leader Stan Drezek.

Sat., Mar. 10: Hike the Canyon

See Dec. 10 outing. But, Contact Sierra Club co-leader Terry Platt, 695-9570, if you require additional information.

A Word from the Alamo Group Chair

By Margaret "Peggy" Day

This year oil and gas fracking looms as one of the most significant issues affecting our regional welfare and the work of the Alamo Group.

Sierra Club policy is that natural gas has a role as a bridge fuel from high-carbon sources of energy like coal and oil to a renewable energy future. However that position was set before the current hydrofracking boom, a very different process from conventional gas development. The greenhouse gas (GHG) impact is worse with fracking than in conventional gas development, as it may release 30% to 100% more methane, according to a Cornell University study. Worse, the same study found that fracking may have a GHG impact equal to or greater than coal. Compared to coal, the 20 year impact during development and peak extraction is 20% to 100% higher than coal. By 100 years, gas fracking GHG effects may equal coal's impact.

Also, fracking is more resource intensive than conventional gas. Drilling each Eagle Ford Shale well is reported to use 270 loads of gravel just to build a pad, plus 2000 tons of sand—or much higher by some accounts—and 4 million to 13.7 million gallons of water.

With an extreme drought predicted to endure, projected desertification, and double the population by 2050, fracking will intensify costs and water conflicts in Texas. The Water Development Board projected Eagle Ford Shale water use as high as 120 thousand acre-feet (14.6 billion gallons) at peak production, adding that water use, instead of decreasing after the peak, might persist or rise with additional wells.

Cumulative impacts of Eagle Ford fracking are unknown, yet exponential

permitting continues unabated. From 33 permits issued in 2008, 3,131 had been issued by late 2011. It is estimated Eagle Ford Shale will have tens of thousands of wells in a play producing 25 billion barrels of liquid oil and gas and 150 trillion feet of gas.

Governor Rick Perry recently called environmental concerns over fracking a "fear tactic that the left is using" and denies climate change science, yet even oil and gas insiders admit to troublesome issues. The Eagle Ford Shale blog stated, "The full implications of this massive oil and gas field have not yet been reported by the mainstream media in Texas." The blog cites problems "such as the amount of water used for frac jobs, poisonous H₂S gas produced by some Eagle Ford wells, traffic, price inflation, housing shortages, road wear and tear, and much more will have to be dealt with."

What that blog left out is the high GHG impact on climate; land fragmentation and destruction; farming loss; habitat destruction; threatened species; invasive species; other air, land, and water pollution from development, venting and waste; boom-bust risks; and congestion and disruptions, among others.

Craig Segall, of the Sierra Club's Environmental Law Program, delivered other concerns to the EPA Science Advisory Board Meeting on Hydraulic Fracturing. Primary worries are that regulators are overstretched, enforcement is lax, variation in operator performance is wide, regional differences in geology are significant, and treatment capacity is limited. Another problem is Texas regulatory boards are filled with *quid pro quo* partisan political appointees.

Governor Perry stacked 6,662 state decision making positions with 3,995 political appointees between 2001 and early 2010, and they gave him around 17 million dollars.

Then there is the problem of entrenched oil and gas industry power over federal and state regulation and public opinion. Two examples are the Bush/Cheney legislation that exempted oil and gas from clean air rules and the Resources Conservation and Recovery Act drilling exemption.

Texas is making progress. Last year, thanks to the leadership of Cyrus Reed, Director of Conservation for the Lone Star Chapter, House Bill 3328 was adopted, which requires disclosing toxic fracking chemicals.

A UTSA study found fracking could spur 68 thousand full-time jobs and 21.5 billion in economic impact by 2020. Many view this as a boon. However Eagle Ford Shale is only a 20 to 30 year play with downsides and indirect ramifications that should be evaluated and mitigated. Sustainability depends on reducing energy demand and optimizing burnt fuel use. Oil and gas fracking is capital and energy-intensive and should be judiciously employed as an instrument of regional sustainability, using best available science, independent sources of information, and best practices.

Fortunately many regional leaders and citizens agree. "We must guard against irrational exuberance. When you have a windfall, it's not wise to blow it," cautioned Henry Cisneros, chair of the SA Economic Development Foundation, at the Clean Tech Forum last November, adding, "We could do real damage if we don't do this in a balanced, serious way." His seven co-panelists agreed.

(Continued from Page 1)

Reps. Lamar Smith and Quico Canseco have an anti-environmental voting record of 100%. Canseco, has proven to be a rubber stamp for the Republican anti-environmental stance. However, before we dismiss Republicans as having ALWAYS been anti-environment, let's remember that the EPA and the Clean Air Act came about under President Nixon.

In 2012, it is time for us to get our country back. We need to remind Republicans of their former belief in the value of clean air and water. We need to help the left reinvigorate its backbone. How do we do it? We attend fundraisers. We meet with our candidates. We ask questions. We write editorials and letters. We say the right words and eliminate the anti-science, anti-environmental rhetoric of the right. We vote. The EPA,

Clean Air and Clean Water Act that are under attack by corporations such as Luminant (See Express-News article, p. 8A Dec. 31), need our loud and enthusiastic backing. The candidates need to see us. They need to hear our voices. Not one of us who believes in protecting our environment can afford to sit on the back seat this season. It is time to get to work.

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.	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.	Randy Carroll-Bradd	216-6125

**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
Wendell Fuqua	734-8281
Hector Gonzalez	226-6069
Dave Wells	271-0640
Vacant	
Karen Dalglish Seal	226-8101
Sharon Dukes (non voting), Treasurer	828-3721

Administrative Contacts

Programs	Barbara McMillin	734-4170
Fundraising	Vacant	
Publicity	Vacant	
Mailings	Vacant	
Membership	Vacant	
Newsletter	Vacant	
Website	Richard Alles	494-2088

Committee Contacts

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

Conservation Contacts

Conservation Chair	Randy Carroll-Bradd	216-6125
Assistant Chair	L. Van Coppenolle	492-4620
Endangered Species	Fred Wills	673-9566
Flouridation	L. Van Coppenolle	492-4620
Organic Gardening	Dave Klar	485-6880
Recycling	Carolyn Wells	271-0640
Tree Conservation	Richard Alles	494-2088
Volunteer Coord.	Vacant	
Water Issues	Jerry Morrissey	382-2614
Climate Change	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: Jennifer Ramos	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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Contributions, gifts and dues to Sierra Club are not tax deductible; they support our effective, citizen-based advocacy and lobbying efforts. Your dues include \$7.50 for a subscription to *Sierra* magazine and \$1 for your Chapter newsletters.

Enclose a check and mail to Sierra Club, P.O. Box 421041, Palm Coast, FL 32142-1041

or visit our website www.sierraclub.org **F94Q W** 1

**Alamo Group website address
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Thanks to Dave Hammeren of The Printed Word, 6502 Bandera Rd., Suite 205, San Antonio, Texas, Telephone 520-5700 for our nominal newsletter cost

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