

## ALAMO GROUP MEETINGS

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

### Tues., Nov 20:

Presentation by Dr. Tangum on Urban Form: Transit, Complete Streets, and Pedestrian Systems

### Tues., Dec 18:

There is no Witte meeting, instead the Alamo Sierra Club will be holding its Holiday Party at Lion's Field clubhouse on Mulberry and Broadway

### Tues., Jan 15:

"A Land Ethic" is about Aldo Leopold and the beginning of the environmental movement

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## SIERRA SOCIALS

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

**Nov** -- No Social because of Thanksgiving Holidays.

**Dec** -- No Social because of Christmas Holidays.

# The Alamo Sierran

## The Alamo Group of the Sierra Club Newsletter

VOLUME 46, NUMBER 10 NOVEMBER 2012



### Word from Chair

#### By Margaret (Peggy) Day

It is Thanksgiving time. On behalf of the Sierra Club I'd like to take this opportunity to express our thanks to the many people that have helped Alamo Sierrans protect and enjoy our natural heritage, especially the prior energy campaign work that earned us the 2012 Special Achievement Award.

We have a small cadre of dependable, long time, leaders that merit our special gratitude again this year: Hector Gonzalez, Richard Alles, Dave Wells, Jerry Morrissey, Loyd Cortez, Russell and Karen Dalglish Seal, Barbara McMillin, George Rice, and Loretta Van Coppenolle.

A newcomer and our Group's best new all-around volunteer this year is Gay Wright. For tabling, fundraising, publicity, events, communication, planning, and eagerness to learn about the club and local conservation issues, Gay is a dream volunteer and always there when we need her. Another special new volunteer is Anne Pearson, who has revived our Inner City Outings with special help from Chris Anderson and Erin Kenisky

We are fortunate to have another couple of dozen volunteers who do not have as much time to dedicate to the Club but help keep us afloat with their service on committees, at events, and as liaisons to other organizations. They include Mobi Warren, Dave Klar, Stan and Wendy Drezek, Paula Stone, Ellen Clegg, Nancy Anderson, Linda Higby, Michele Petty, Terry Jermolajevs, Terry Platt, Stacy and Ellen Berfein, Albert Motz, Christel Villarreal, Bronson Herring, Erica Zeitz, Bob Tagle, Mary Ann Legan, Marsha Meredith, and Ken Clifton.

Please give thanks to our volunteers and celebrate our achievements. Come join us on December 18<sup>th</sup> at Lions Field Club House for our annual holiday party. There will be entertainment, auction bargains, and good food and fellowship. For those members who do not have time to volunteer with us, we hope that you will consider contributing to our silent auction or with a cash contribution.

### Alamo Sierra Club Holiday Party Silent Auction

We are going to hold another silent auction at our Dec. 18th Holiday Party. Please consider offering professional services, a vacation place, a trip, products or gift certificates from your business, etc. We hope to list auction gifts on our website in December. If you can donate or help raise contributions, contact Peggy Day (829-5632).

### Alamo Sierra Club Seeks Candidates

Each January we elect members to serve three-year terms on the Executive Committee (ExCom). You must be willing to attend one monthly meeting to conduct the club's administrative business for our two thousand plus membership. Now is your chance to become more active and involved in your local club. So pick up the phone or send that email that you or someone you know would like to serve on the Ex-Com. Please submit a recommendation ASAP. Nominations with a 100 word statement of why you would like to serve on the ExCom must be submitted before Nov. 29th. Send all inquires and nominations to Gay Wright by calling 210-343-0222 or email her at [alamo.sierra@yahoo.com](mailto:alamo.sierra@yahoo.com).

**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.

**Our Facebook site** is up and running again. Check it out and "like" us at: [www.facebook.com/pages/Sierra-Club-Alamo-Group/](http://www.facebook.com/pages/Sierra-Club-Alamo-Group/)

**Outings: Hikes That Lead Us Into Winter**

**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>**

And Also At

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

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

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 7:45 am for an

8:00 am departure with finish by noon; subject to cancellation. Difficulty: Moderate (some steep/rocky sections).

**Saturday, November 24th: Oak Loop Nature Walk (Ecosystems)**

It will be lead by Wendy Drezek of the Sierra Club and staffed by an accompanying Master Naturalist.

Contact Wendy Drezek (493-0939) if you require further information.

**Sunday, November 25: Friedrich Wilderness Park Hike**

Nancy Anderson will lead a moderate-paced hike starting at 8:45 AM on the wooded and occasionally steep trails of this quiet, beautiful park. Directions: Take I-10 N to Exit 552 (Dominion Dr.), go one mile north on access road, then u-turn onto the south access road and continue south to a right turn onto Milsa and follow Milsa to

the park entrance at a T in the road. Contact Nancy at 210-833-1291 for more information.

**Saturday, December 8th: Hike the Canyon**

Contact Sierra Club co-leader and Texas Master Naturalist Stan Drezek, (210) 493-0939, if you require additional information.

**Saturday, January 26th: Oak Loop Nature Walk (Birds)**

This Oak Loop walk led by Master Naturalists Patsy and Al Kuentz will focus on the birds of Phil Hardberger Park.

The purposes of the walk are to appreciating the beauty of the natural areas along the Oak Loop Trail, observing how nature changes through the seasons, and learning about birds.

Contact Wendy Drezek (493-0939) if you require further information.

**Inner City Outings**

Help our Inner City Outings (ICO) raise money for trip lunches, park entry fees, leader training, gear and other expenses. Use the Amazon.com portal in the upper right of the ICO page at our website ([alamosierraclub.org](http://alamosierraclub.org)) to make online purchases through Amazon. We earn 4-7% of each purchase. We will also have Sierra Club calendars available this month. They make great holiday gifts and the profits help inner city youth participate in ICOs.



Boys from the East Side Branch of the *Boys and Girls Clubs of San Antonio* enjoy kayaking at Boerne City Lake

## The Urban Form Featured on Tuesday, November 20

Richard Tangum, Ph.D, UTSA Professor of Architecture and Planning, and Director, Center for Urban & Regional Planning Research, will speak on The Urban Form: Transit, Complete Streets, and Pedestrian Systems at the Witte Museum auditorium, 3801 Broadway, at 6:30 pm. Parking is available at Ave B and Tuleta.

## City Planning and the Urban Forum

On Wednesday, November 28, at Lion's Field, 2809 Broadway at Mulberry, at 6:30 pm, the city's Director of Planning and Community Development John Dugan will provide an informal talk on aspects of urban form as a follow up to the November 20 Sierra Club program at the Witte Museum. He has more than 30 years experience leading planning and development functions at local, county, and state agencies, and has a Master's from Harvard University. Free and open to the public.

## Climate Change and Texas Drought: October General Meeting

State Climatologist John Nielsen-Gammon ended his presentation to the October general meeting with a tongue-in-cheek musing as to whether climate change was "bad". After all, he reasoned, the mass extinction of species 65 million years ago ultimately led to the ascendancy of mammals with their greater intelligence.

Dr. Nielsen-Gammon spoke to a sizable crowd on the topic of Climate Change and Texas Drought, noting that the year ending September 27, 2011 was the driest in Texas history. On that date, virtually the entire state was drought-stricken, with most of it in the "exceptional" category, the most severe classification. Only 11.5 inches of rain fell, eclipsing the record set in 1956 when  $\approx 14$  inches fell.

Wildfires decimated large areas of the state, and reservoir levels were severely lowered. Some have never recovered, with Lake Buchanan still at less than half of capacity. O. H. Ivie Lake near San Angelo was extremely low and, until recently, had less than 9 months of water supply. Lake Meredith hasn't had water since 2010 and the City of Amarillo has given up on it as a water resource. Although the drought is over in East Texas, large areas of the state are still in exceptional drought when measured over the past 24 months.

Twenty-eleven gave us the hottest Texas summer on record, and we barely lost out to Oklahoma for the hottest in US history. The combination of high temperatures and lack of rainfall constituted a huge deviation from norms. Although rainfall was similar to the record drought of the 1950s, temperatures were about 4° higher. As a result, our state suffered agricultural losses of \$7.6 billion, wildfire losses of \$1.5 billion and 301 million trees died.

Dr. Nielsen-Gammon explained that a combination of factors caused the record heat:

- sea surface temperatures,
- global warming to a lesser extent, and
- random weather.

Furthermore, he expects average or below average rainfall this winter and dry conditions into next year. Over the next 3-15 years, he expects an extended period of drought susceptibility because ocean surface temperature patterns are favorable for continued drought.

There are many factors, such as solar variability, volcanic eruptions, and other natural phenomena, that affect climate. While Texas rainfall has increased about 15% over the last century, natural variability will be the primary driver of rainfall for the next few decades.

However, anthropogenic greenhouse gases are becoming the dominant factor driving temperatures. Long-term predictions are for higher temperatures, such that the blistering temperatures of 2011 will become more frequent as time goes on.

Dr. Nielsen-Gammon anticipates the impacts of climate change will include:

- a shift of ecosystems to the east
- greater plant growth if sufficient water and nutrients are available
- more wildfires
- reduced streamflows
- slowly rising sea levels

He characterized reduced streamflows as a "double whammy", since increased populations will further stress riparian ecosystems along with bays and estuaries like Laguna Madre. He thinks societal impacts on Texas will include:

- shifts in agriculture
- increased susceptibility to tropical diseases
- potentially reduced fossil fuel use
- a possibility of fewer, but more powerful hurricanes
- other unknown impacts dependent on El Niño and La Niña

While prescribing no solutions for anthropogenic warming, Dr. Nielsen-Gammon thinks that for any remedy to be acceptable, it must be cost-effective and minimally disruptive to our economy. He thinks environmentalists need to explore ways to make the problem easily solvable.

For more information about Texas Climate, log onto the State Climatologist webpage at [climatexas.tamu.edu](http://climatexas.tamu.edu) and Dr. Nielsen-Gammon's blog *Climate Abyss* at [blog.chron.com/climateabyss](http://blog.chron.com/climateabyss).

# 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., 6:30 p.m.	Jerry Morrisey	382-2614
Conservation Committee Mtg.	1st Thursday, 7 p.m.	Russell Seal	289-9088
Inner City Outings Mtg.	1st Tuesday 7 p.m.	University Prebysterian Church	408-6321

**Alamo Group of the Sierra Club**  
**Executive Committee Officers & Members**

Margaret (Peggy) Day, Chair Person	829-5632
Loyd Cortez, Vice Chair Person	674-9489
Karen Dalglish Seal	226-8101
Hector Gonzalez	226-6069
Dave Wells, Treasurer	271-0640
George Rice	737-6180
Gay Wright	343-0222
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 Chair	Jerry Morrisey	382-2614
Inner City Outings (ICO)	Anne Pearson	408-6321
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

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**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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**Alamo Group website address**  
**[www.alamosierraclub.org](http://www.alamosierraclub.org)**

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Membership Categories	Individual	Joint
<b>Special Offer</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> \$15	
Standard	<input type="checkbox"/> \$39	<input type="checkbox"/> \$49
Supporting	<input type="checkbox"/> \$75	<input type="checkbox"/> \$100
Contributing	<input type="checkbox"/> \$150	<input type="checkbox"/> \$175
Life	<input type="checkbox"/> \$1000	<input type="checkbox"/> \$1250
Senior	<input type="checkbox"/> \$25	<input type="checkbox"/> \$35
Student/Limited Income	<input type="checkbox"/> \$25	<input type="checkbox"/> \$35

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](http://www.sierraclub.org) F94Q W19131

**Join Online!**  
**Join online today and receive a free Weekender Bag**  
**Go to our website at <http://Alamosierraclub.org>**

**Recycle your batteries.**

Don't throw away those small chargeable and non-chargeable batteries in the trash bin where they will end up in over-crowded land fills.



Bring them to the monthly Witte meeting where we will have a container for you to drop them off.

**Please no car batteries because they are too big and heavy.**