

## ALAMO GROUP MEETINGS

General membership meets at *(new time)* 6:30 p.m., third Tuesday each month, Witte Museum, 3801 Broadway.

### Tues., Sep. 21: All About Bats

Fran Hutchins, the San Antonio representative for Bat Conservation International and the Bracken Cave Coordinator, will dispel the myths and discuss the benefits of bats.

### Tues., Oct. 19: AACOG Info

Chris Ashcraft, Clean Cities Coordinator for AACOG, will speak about the Clean Cities program, including electric vehicles. Peter Bella, Natural Resources Director of AACOG will give an overview of air quality in our region. Electric vehicles will be parked at the Witte to view.

### Tues., Nov. 16: TCE Report

Waste reduction report from the Texas Campaign for the Environment.

## SIERRA SOCIALS

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

**Fri., Sep. 24:** Blue Star Brewing Co., 1414 S. Alamo, 6-8 p.m.

**Fri., Oct. 22:** Little Italy Restaurant, 824 Afterglow Street, 6-8 p.m.

# The Alamo Sierran

The Alamo Group of the Sierra Club Newsletter

VOLUME 44, NUMBER 8

SEPTEMBER 2010



SIERRA CLUB  
FOUNDED 1892

## Environmental Head Highlights Varied Projects Of Mission Verde at Alamo Group Monthly Meeting

Laurence Doxsey, Director of San Antonio's Office of Environmental Policy, gave an update on the city's Mission Verde program at the club's monthly meeting, Aug. 17. Mission Verde is the city's plan for a green future

Doxsey said Mission Verde initiatives are supported by a mix of federal stimulus funds, grants, city budget money, and "leveraging" with City Public Service, San Antonio Water System, and various community stakeholders. Among the many initiatives supported by Mission Verde are:

**Weatherization Assistance:** Over 600 low-income homeowners have had their houses weatherized, with a goal of completing 2,200 houses by September 2011.

**Green Shade Program:** Starting this fall, the city will offer rebates for tree planting, at the rate of \$50 per five gallon tree.

**Electric Vehicle Support:** The city will streamline the process for homeowners to obtain 220 volt outlets for recharging electric vehicles. In addition, in the fall of 2010, the city will install six electric vehicle charging stations in city owned garages.

**Leading By Example Program:** The city will support changes in its own energy use profile. Energy retrofits on city buildings totaling \$20.5 million will be undertaken, with a projected annual energy savings of \$2.3 million. San Antonio International Airport will tap into renewable energy in the form of installed solar panels. And, city vehicles will be made more energy efficient with the use of plug-

in hybrids, hybrid diesel trucks, and fuel efficient auxiliary power units for police cars.

For a more thorough look at the Mission Verde program, go to [www.sanantonio.gov/oeep](http://www.sanantonio.gov/oeep). You

might also want to visit the Mission Verde Center at 1700 Tampico. The Center is loaded with information and demonstration projects of interest to all of us who want to increase our energy conservation.

## Executive Committee Candidates Needed

This December, the Alamo Group will hold annual elections for three positions on the Executive Committee. We need volunteers willing to attend monthly ExCom meetings and help run the local club. You don't need experience. Just be willing to learn how the club addresses the issues that affect the San Antonio area:

clean water, clean air, tree cover, etc.

Interested candidates should submit a 100 word biography by Nov. 1 stating why you would like to serve. Send your bios to Loyd Cortez at [loydcortez@earthlink.net](mailto:loydcortez@earthlink.net) or call 210-674-9489.



When Hardberger Park, the city's newest, celebrated a formal opening in May, the Alamo Group of the Sierra Club was represented by Richard Alles, Dave Klar, Jerry Morrissey, and Chair Peggy Day. They are shown here with Mark Duff, a forester with the Texas Forest Service.

*Be sure to check our website to register for this event.*

*“A new study...has shown that, contrary to long-standing belief, increases in Edwards Plateau trees and shrubs over time resulted in more, not less, water in regional streams.”*

*“Plastic bags burden landfills and threaten the human food chain as they disintegrate, attract toxins, and are consumed by bottom feeders in oceans and streams.”*

## Sierra Celebration Offers Family Outdoor Fun

The Alamo Group is planning an outing to coincide with the Lone Star Chapter's Sierra Celebration at Canyon of the Eagles Nature Park. Plans are pending, so check our website to register with the Alamo Group's leader. Registration for this event must be done separately through the Lone Star Chapter.

This year's Celebration will be held over the school holiday weekend of Oct. 9-11 at Canyon of the Eagles park on Lake Buchanan near Burnet, a short drive from Austin. The Lone Star Chapter is scheduling a wide range of family friendly outdoor activities on Saturday and Sunday of this Columbus Day weekend.

The Chapter has reserved the group camp area with plenty of space for tents, pop-up campers and small trailers. Restrooms and showers are very close. The registration deadline for Sierra Celebration 2010 is Oct. 4. For additional information, contact Lone Star Executive Committee member [John Rath](#), 817-488-3489.

## Cedar and Water: Conventional Wisdom Wrong

**By Fred Wills  
Species Conservation  
Contact**

Numerous articles over many years have claimed that cedar (Ashe juniper) is a water-hogging plant that is depriving springs and streams of water and that its removal would provide large quantities of extra water. A new study appearing this spring has shown that, contrary to long-standing belief, increases in Edwards Plateau tree and shrubs over time have resulted in more—not less—water in regional streams. The analysis of decades of stream flow data by Bradford Wilcox and Yun Huang of Texas A&M University showed that base flows (spring flow from ground-

water) in the Nueces, Frio, Guadalupe, and Llano rivers have significantly increased since the 1950s. Prior to the 1950s, base flows were about half what they have been since 1960. Total flow, which also includes storm flow from rainfall events, has increased in 3 of the 4 basins.

High numbers of sheep, cattle, horses, and goats on the land prior to 1960 (leading to overgrazing and overbrowsing) resulted in degraded watershed conditions. The bare land did not facilitate water infiltration, and the reduced groundwater was reflected in lower amounts of base flow in the streams. Reductions in the numbers of livestock in recent decades

have allowed the vegetation of the watersheds to recover. At the same time, numbers of trees (particularly cedar) have greatly increased. Thus, the vegetation recovered while becoming dominated by cedar. This vegetation recovery is responsible for approximately doubling the amount of spring flow (base flow), because average rainfall has not increased during the period of study. Trees encourage water to infiltrate, and cedar is apparently beneficial in terms of increasing the amount of available water. The study appears in *Geophysical Research Letters*. A March 4 press release can be found at [www.agu.org/news/press/pr\\_archives/2010/2010-06.shtml](http://www.agu.org/news/press/pr_archives/2010/2010-06.shtml).

## Plastic Bags Target of Solid Waste Meetings

San Antonio's Solid Waste Department has been holding stakeholder meetings with representatives of local retailers for several months to formulate a voluntary program to reduce plastic bag use and to recycle used bags.

Representatives of the Texas Retailers Association, HEB, local dry cleaners, the San Antonio Restaurant Association, and other entities have been present at the meetings. No citizen or environmental representatives have participated.

The Solid Waste initiative would allow Keep San Antonio Beautiful to mount a one-year campaign to encourage consumers to take reusable bags to the store and to recycle plastic bags through HEB's recycling program. The program would last one year and be voluntary for retailers and consumers.

The Sierra Club believes that the voluntary program must be followed by a mandatory policy if reduction in plastic bag use is not sustained at a high level. A mandatory policy could be either an ordinance banning the

giving out of plastic (or paper) bags at the store or charging a small amount (e.g., 15 cents per bag) for bags given to customers.

Plastic bags burden landfills and threaten the human food chain as they disintegrate, attract toxins, and are consumed by bottom feeders in oceans and streams.

Sierra Club members are encouraged to call the Solid Waste Department and their Council representatives to share their thoughts on this issue.

# A Word from the Alamo Group Chair

**By Margaret "Peggy" Day  
Alamo Group Chair**

Like many of you, during South Texas heat spells I take refuge under a cooling fan—with a book if at all possible. My most recent summer read is Anna Lappe's *Diet for a Hot Planet*, a beautifully written and researched exploration on the unthinkable global warming caused by food, especially from the quintessentially American system of fossil fuel dependent, Texas sized, factory farming and overly processed products that is expanding around the world. Amazingly, livestock production contributes more green house gas impact than the whole transportation sector.

Both the social and the environmental aspects of food have been personal interests of mine for a long

time. In the seventies, two key sources fueled this awakening. *Diet for a Small Planet* by Francis Moore Lappe (Anna's mother), about hunger in a world of diminishing plenty, which teaches why and how to make a personal and social commitment to change. Peter Singer's *Animal Liberation* sparked the ethical movement for humane treatment of animals. Both led to my shift to vegetarianism.

In the eighties, Dr. Andrew Weil arose as a health guru. He merged time honored food and health practices of western and non western peoples, laying bare many fallacies of our failing nutritional and health system. From his first book, *Natural Health, Natural Medicine*, Weil's publications and programs have explored and popularized environment, mind, body, and spirit connec-

tions to food.

Journalist Michael Pollan came to prominence in the last decade with a slew of books and articles that extended these ideas. He examines the co-evolution of plants and people in a favorite, *The Botany of Desire*. He wrote *Second Nature* to educate gardeners and environmentalists. He ruminates on the ecology of eating in *The Omnivore's Dilemma* and on what to eat in *In Defense of Food*. Like the Lappes, Singer, and Weil, Pollan is a captivating writer with novel ideas.

Whether or not you believe in vegetarianism or the ecological production of the food supply or just want better health, pick up one of these classics for more hot days in the future. You will never think about food the same way.

**"Whether or not you believe in vegetarianism or the ecological production of the food supply...you will never think about food the same way."**

## Alamo Group Outings: New Outings Leaders Sought

Join us for a great fall outings season. We will have some new hikes and some old favorites as the weather turns cool. Many of our newly trained outings leaders will be assisting on these hikes. Our hikes have always been and will continue to be people friendly but we are creating more opportunity to bring along well behaved dogs. If you have access to our website, check the outings section. We sometimes add outings between newsletters.

Also, we would like to train some new outings leaders this fall. Contact Jerry Morrissey at [jlmorrissey@aol.com](mailto:jlmorrissey@aol.com) if you have an interest in this rewarding volunteer opportunity.

### Sat., Sep. 18: Eisenhower Park

Meet at 6:30 p.m. at the covered pavilion on the main trail for two hike options that will be completed in the moonlight by about 8:30. Come early at 6:00 to share a snack. Difficulty: Easy from paved Yucca Flats trail to observation tower; moderate on unpaved Hillview Trail to tower. Bring water and appropriate shoes. Donations accepted. Leader: Jerry Morrissey, 382-2614 or [jlmorrissey@aol.com](mailto:jlmorrissey@aol.com). Please RSVP.

### Sat., Sep. 25: Olmos Basin (Dog Friendly)

A hike in the heart of San Antonio through the wooded Olmos Basin and planned dog park. Dogs welcome, but on a leash. Meet at 8:30 a.m., finish by 11. Difficulty: Moderate. Cost: \$3 donation suggested. Bring one quart water and comfortable walking shoes. Meet at Judson Nature Center parking lot next to Alamo Heights Swimming Pool on Viesca Street. Reservations required. Call Margaret Day, 829-5632 or 413-6402.

### Fri.-Sat., Sep. 24-25: Adopt-a-Beach Clean-up, Padre Island

Join the Alamo group Friday for a campout on Padre Island National Seashore just south of Corpus Christi. We will work with other volunteers for the cleanup from 9 to noon on Saturday, then picnic and enjoy the water in the afternoon.

Picking up, cataloging, and bagging debris cleans the beaches and provides important research data used to identify the source of pollution reaching our coast.

Difficulty: Easy. Cost: Free. Contact [Marsha Meredith](mailto:Marsha.Meredith@alamosierra.com) (675-4097) or [Ellen Clegg](mailto:Ellen.Clegg@alamosierra.com) (283-5045 work).

### Sun., Oct. 3: Salado Creek (Dog Friendly)

Meet at 9:15 a.m. at the parking lot at Los Patios next to Salado Creek Greenbelt to walk a 4 to 5 mile round trip which should last about 2.5 hours. Difficulty: Easy. Donations accepted. Please contact leader [Jerry Morrissey](mailto:Jerry.Morrissey@alamosierra.com) (382-2614) to RSVP.

### Sat., Oct. 9: 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. Hike is open to ages 13 and over; minors must be accompanied by an adult; group size limited to the first 12 people; no pets please. Wear sturdy shoes and bring two liters of water and a snack.

The canyon is located at 12861 Galm Rd (Take FM 1560 west from Helotes to Galm Rd). Entry fee is \$6 (\$3 seniors). Meet at the Visitors Center by 8:15 am for an 8:30 am sharp departure with finish by noon. Difficulty: Moderate (some steep/rocky sections). Call co-leader Ellen Clegg (210-488-7787) for more information.

# Meeting Dates and Contact Information

General Meeting	3rd Tuesday, 7 p.m.	Peggy Day	829-5632
Executive Committee Mtg.	3rd Thursday, 7 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.	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
Mary Ellen Garcia, Co-Secretary	344-1581
Karen Kimbell, Co-Secretary	365-3174
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	Denali Endicott	629-2434
Publicity	Vacant	
Mailings	Jim Stewart	692-0727
Membership	Karen Kimbell	365-3174
Newsletter	Wendell Fuqua	373-0748
Website	Richard Alles	494-2088

**Committee Contacts**

Outings	Jerry Morrissey	497-5470
Political	Russell Seal	289-9008
Outreach		
And 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
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	497-5470

---

<b>U.S. Congresspersons</b>		<b>City Council (Continued)</b>	
Charlie Gonzalez	472-6195	Dist. 2: Ivy R. Taylor	207-7278
Lamar Smith	821-5024	Dist. 3: Jennifer Ramos	207-7064
Henry Cuellar	271-2851	Dist. 4: Philip A. Cortez	207-7281
Ciro Rodriguez	922-1874	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

---

The Alamo Sierran published monthly (except July) by the Alamo Group of the Sierra Club, 615 Willow, San Antonio, TX 78202. Members support the Sierran and receive the publication as part of membership. Nonmember subscriptions \$10 per year. Periodical postage paid at San Antonio, Texas. Publication No. 018475.  
POSTMASTER: Send address changes to Sierra Club Member Services, PO Box 52968, Boulder, CO 80322 or e-mail to address.changes@sierraclub.org

**Alamo Group website address  
www.alamosierraclub.org**

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

**Alamo Group of the Sierra Club  
P.O. Box 6443  
San Antonio, Texas 78209**

**PERIODICAL**

**Membership**

**Yes**, I want to help safeguard our nation's precious natural heritage. My check is enclosed.

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Address \_\_\_\_\_  
City \_\_\_\_\_  
State \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP \_\_\_\_\_  
email \_\_\_\_\_


Check enclosed, made payable to Sierra Club  
 Mastercard  Visa Exp Date \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_

Cardholder Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Card Number \_\_\_\_\_

Contributions, gifts and dues to the 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 \$1.00 for your Chapter newsletter.

**MEMBERSHIP CATEGORIES**


	INDIVIDUAL	JOINT
<b>INTRODUCTORY</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> \$25	
REGULAR	<input type="checkbox"/> \$39	<input type="checkbox"/> \$47
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"/> \$24	<input type="checkbox"/> \$32
STUDENT	<input type="checkbox"/> \$24	<input type="checkbox"/> \$32
LIMITED INCOME	<input type="checkbox"/> \$24	<input type="checkbox"/> \$32

F94Q **W** \_\_\_\_\_ -1  **SIERRA CLUB**  
FOUNDED 1892  
**Sierra Club**  
P.O. Box 52968, Boulder, CO, 80322-2968

**Join Online!**  
Join online today and receive a free Expedition Pack! Just go to our website at [http:// Alamosierraclub.org](http://Alamosierraclub.org) and click Join the Sierra Club

Travel and Outdoor Outfitters  
since 1970

- Climbing, Camping & Expedition Gear
- Rain-Resistant Clothing and Footwear
- Luggage, Packs
- Travel and Nature Guides
- Beautiful & Unusual Gifts and Toys



**Whole Earth Provision Company**  
ALAMO QUARRY MARKET  
255 East Bascom, 210-829-8888  
[www.WholeEarthProvision.com](http://www.WholeEarthProvision.com)