

ALAMO GROUP MEETINGS

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

Tues., Sep. 20: Mission Reach Transformation

Matthew Driffill, San Antonio River Authority education specialist, will discuss transformation of Mission Reach into a quality riparian woodland ecosystem. The program is approved for one hour of Advanced Training by Alamo Area Master Naturalists. Log onto SARA's Community Events page for tour schedules.

Tues., Oct. 18: Creating Blue-Green Jobs

Learn about the effort to create "blue-green" jobs by Dave Cortez, coordinator of Apollo Alliance. Dave is working with Cyrus Reed of the Lone Star Chapter to build bridges between unions and environmental groups.

SIERRA SOCIALS

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

Fri., Sep. 23: Mad-Hatters Tea House & Café, 320 Beauregard, 6-8 p.m.

Fri., Oct. 28: Blue Star Brewing Co., 1414 S. Alamo St., Ste. 105, 6-8 p.m.

The Alamo Sierran

The Alamo Group of the Sierra Club Newsletter

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SEPTEMBER 2011



SIERRA CLUB
FOUNDED 1892

Congressman, Vegetarian at August Meeting

Alamo Group members were treated to a rare double feature at the club's August 15 meeting at the Witte Museum: first, an environmental "status report" from U.S. Rep. Lloyd Doggett of Austin, and second, a presentation by Kaz Sephton, president of the San Antonio Vegetarian Society (SAVS).

Speaking first, Doggett gave a gloomy assessment of the current state of environmental affairs in Congress. Environmental issues have more or less "dropped off the Congressional agenda entirely," he said. "Congress will not lead (on the environment)," Doggett added "so we need citizen engagement to lead on the environment."

Doggett pointed to the attempt to hamstring the "bulb act" -- sponsored by Michelle Bachman -- as emblematic of Congress's anti-regulatory mood. This amendment to an existing law, Doggett said, would roll back efficiency standards for light bulbs that even the manufacturers support. The effort is just one example of what Doggett cited as continuing efforts by Congressional Republicans to restrict every little thing the Environmental Protection Agency does.

In the current congressional atmosphere, Doggett said, environmentalists can't expect to make positive gains. "All we can hope for," he said, "is to do no harm" -- to protect the effectiveness of current environmental laws.

Following Doggett, Kaz Sephton promoted a vegetarian diet from an environmental and ethical perspective. She took particular aim at the raising of cattle, poultry, and fish using an industrial paradigm. "I can't imagine a more

destructive, disease promoting system than our animal factory farming industry," she said.

Animal agriculture contributes disproportionately to our use of petroleum, she said, leading to the polluting runoff of nitrogen rich fertilizers. In addition, the need to dispose of animal wastes has led to a massive sewage problem.

She added that meat consumption is inefficient from the standpoint of world hunger. The land required to feed one American in our current economy, Sephton said, could feed 50 people on an all-

grain diet. Furthermore, 80 percent of the grain grown in the United States goes to feed livestock, not people.

Sephton added that the world currently grows enough grain to feed 10 billion people -- far more than the current world population.

Industrial livestock production also contributes to water shortages, Sephton said. It takes 52,000 gallons of water to produce one pound of beef, she said, whereas only 300 gallons of water per day is needed to feed one person on a vegetable diet.

Plan Now for the Christmas Party!

Get out your calendars. Our annual Alamo Group Christmas Party will be held Tuesday, Dec. 13, at the Lions Field clubhouse, Mulberry and Broadway. It's a busy time of year, so reserve the date.

City Begins Plastic Bag Program: Alamo Group Seeks Evaluations

San Antonio began an 18 month plastic bag reduction project on July first. The City is dedicating a quarter of a million dollars for its advertising campaign.

The two-part goal is to motivate San Antonians to use reusable bags when they shop and to recycle plastic bags at participating retailers: all Walmart, Walgreens, Target, HEB, and J.C. Penny stores.

Our Conservation Committee requests your help to evaluate the efforts of these retail allies by informally surveying the above stores in your shopping area and remitting to us this information: (1) ask cashiers if they are aware of the program;

if not, talk to a store manager; 2) if so, what have cashiers been instructed to do? (3) is there relevant educational signage, such as reminder(s) to bring reusable bags, reusable bags for sale, and project information (describe)? (4) are reusable bags sold at the checkout?; and (5) is a bag recycling bin available and easy to find?

Survey store managers if you can, to find out the extent of store's plans for reusable bags and plastic bag reduction and recycling. Communicate results to Peggy Day, 829-5632, or peggyday@hotmail.com.

Thanks for your help.

“The proclamation was achieved at great effort on the part of Sierran Mobi Warren.”

“Experience a beautiful slice of the Texas Hill Country right here in town.”

Mayor Proclaims Climate Change Month

Mayor Julian Castro proclaimed September “Climate Change Awareness” month in a press conference held in front of City Hall Aug. 31. A sizeable crowd came to support the event, including representatives from numerous environmental organizations.

The proclamation was achieved at great effort on the part of Sierran Mobi Warren, San Antonio representative of 350.org. That group is organizing events around the globe in September to highlight the need for climate

change solutions.

Mayor Castro and Doyle Beneby, head of CPS, received over 2000 “thank you” messages from the environmental community supporting the path San Antonio is taking: bringing in 400 megawatts of solar, embracing demand side management, and planning to close the coal fired Deely power plant by 2018.

This congratulatory outpouring no doubt had an influence on the mayor making his procla-

mation at such a politically sensitive time.

Two events associated with Climate Change Awareness Month will take place on Sep. 24. The first event is the “Moving Planet” fair that will occur from 9 a.m. until 1 p.m. at the Pearl Brewery, 201 East Grayson, overlapping the second, the Health Collaborative Fun Family Event that will occur from 11 a.m. until 1 p.m. at 1002 N. Flores. Everyone is welcome and encouraged to attend both events.

Sierra Club Outings: View Bats, Hike Canyons

Sun., Sep. 18: Tobin Park Salado Creek Greenway (Dog Friendly)

Enjoy a peaceful walk on this lovely Salado Creek Greenway section. Meet at 8:20 a.m. for an 8:30 start, at the Tobin Park trailhead parking lot (take the Harry Wurzbach exit off Loop 410; drive east on the frontage road on the south side of Loop 410; cross over Salado Creek on the frontage road then look for the Tobin Trailhead parking lot immediately on the right). http://www.sanantonio.gov/parksandrecgreenway_trails_salado_410.aspx

We will walk on a paved level path towards Austin Hwy and back to the starting trailhead, a total of about 4-5 miles. It is tree-lined, but prepare for the sun (sun screen and hat recommended.) Bring water.

Minors must be accompanied by adult parent or guardian or with Medical Authorization and Consent Form. No charge, but donations of a suggested \$2-3 to the Alamo Sierra Club are welcome.

Wed., Sep. 21: Old Tunnel Wildlife Management Area

Co-sponsored by the Alamo Sierra Club and Garden Volunteers of South Texas.

We will watch millions of bats emerge from the Old Tunnel and commence their nightly feeding frenzy!

Our group will gather promptly at 6:30 p.m. at the WMA upper entrance gate. An interpretive guide will make an informative presentation a half-hour prior to the bats emergence. (Emergence times vary slightly.)

Bring: water, comfortable walking shoes (ankle-supporting), sweater, binoculars, camera, flashlight, picnic supper/snacks (optional).

Old Tunnel WMA is located between Comfort and Fredricksburg, one hour from San Antonio. Directions given when you RSVP.

RSVP required: Linda Higby (Sierra Outings Leader/GVST Member), (585) 330-1890. Admission: \$5.00 per person, payable to the Clubs at the WMA gate. The State Park Pass is not accepted at this site.

Sat., Oct. 1: Friedrich in the Fall

Experience a beautiful slice of the Texas Hill Country right here in town. Meet 8:15 a.m. in the natural

area parking lot (21395 Milsa). Join us on the shady scenic trails of this beautiful wilderness park. We will hike only 3.3 miles, yet cover nearly all the trails: the Main, Fern Del, Vista Loop, Juniper Barrens, and Water trails. While mostly level, this hike does have several steep rocky climbs/descents.

Minors only when accompanied by an adult parent/guardian or with Medical Authorization and Consent Form. No dogs allowed this park.

While generally easy, the hike has several steep difficult sections. Be sure to wear sturdy shoes, bring one liter of water and an optional snack. Donations accepted.

Take IH10 West heading N to exit 552, Dominion Drive. Proceed N along access road until the turnaround. Take it under IH10 W and go south on the opposite access road to Milsa. Turn left onto Milsa and proceed to entrance.

You must call Master Naturalist and Sierra Club leader Stan Drezek (493 -0939) to reserve a place on this popular hike. Assistant Leader TBA.

(Story Continued on Page Three)

A Word from the Alamo Group Chair

By Margaret "Peggy" Day

Our current drought and last month's talk on vegetarianism got me re-researching the connection between animal protein consumption and desertification and the implications.

Having doubled in 45 years, the earth's human population of 6.8 billion now grows by 211,000 souls a day. Farmed animal numbers worldwide have increased much faster than the human population and about 30 percent of the earth's ice-free land is now used for livestock production. The International Food Policy Research Institute says 70 percent of all usable lands on the planet are degraded, primarily rangelands. This reduces the capacity of the land to support human life. It is estimated that today livelihoods of 250 million people are directly affected and another billion are threatened by increasing desertification due to human activities.

Counter intuitively, humid areas suffer greater and more extensive degradation. Brazil lost about 1,800 million acres of Amazon rainforest since 1970, 91 percent for ranching, and to grow animal feed. Nigeria quadrupled its population from 1951 to 2002, but the livestock population rose ten times. Now 88 percent of

Nigeria's land is moderately to severely degraded, and 867,000 acres are lost to desertification yearly. In China 1.533 million square kilometers is either desert or desertifying. India is losing 24 percent of its land area to desert. Nearly 90 percent of North American arid lands are moderately to severely desertified. 40 percent of US continental land is at risk for desertification, especially in 17 western states with extensive rangeland. Among the most threatened is Texas, cattle ranching capital of America.

Per capita meat consumption is also rising fast, especially in the developing world that has average increases of more than 5 percent a year. The number of meat animals produced globally is burgeoning. As of 2005, the US reared for slaughter more than 10 billion animals a year. Monoculture grain fed to livestock now uses one third of the global supply. Grain-fed animal protein requires up to 100 times more water and eight to eleven times as much fossil-fuel energy as the production of plant protein.

These inputs significantly contribute to greenhouse gasses (GHGs). In addition, a pound of manure releases about a cubic foot of methane, a heat trap 20 times more pow-

erful than CO₂. US food animals produced 660 billion pounds of manure per year in 2001, 86 percent from animals in confinement. Worldwide food animal industry produces about 20 percent of GHGs—more than all transportation combined.

Experts predict GHG induced climate changes to bring more frequent and more extreme precipitation and drought events and for arid areas to expand. Woods Hole research shows that just three years of drought in the Amazon forest would kill it. A sink for 90 billion tons of carbon, Amazon dieback would be expected to further warming by 50 percent.

If this is the foundation of our economy and population, where and how will we secure future food? Eating sustainably is more urgent than ever. We can expect serious consequences for nature, environment and food security if the consumption of animal proteins does not shift to a more plant-based diet. Alternatives exist. Eat less. Eat less protein. Eat hybrid meat products, organic meat, replace meat with non-animal proteins, eat sustainable farmed or captured fish, and even eat insects. What's eating me, more than the idea of eating bugs, is at what point will we perceive and act on these risks in areas where we exercise control—such as what we eat?

"Farmed animal numbers worldwide have increased much faster than the human population and about 30 percent of the earth's ice-free land is now used for livestock production."

(Outings Continued)

Sat., Oct. 8: 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. Hike will range from 4 to 7 miles.

GCSNA is located at 12861 Galm Rd (Take FM 1560 west from Helotes to Galm Rd). Entrance fee is \$6 (\$3 seniors). Meet at the Visitors Center by the rainwater harvesting tower by 7:45 a.m. for an 8:00 a.m. departure with finish by noon; subject to cancellation. Difficulty: Moderate. Contact Sierra Club leader Jerry Morrissey (382-2614) for more information.

Alamo Group Needs Volunteers To Represent Club at Fall Tablings

The Alamo Group of the Sierra Club will have a presence at a number of events in the fall. We need volunteers to staff the tables at these events and to help present information about the club and the environment. If you can serve in such a capacity at one of the following events, please call Peggy Day at 829-5632 to volunteer.

Sat., Sep. 24: Moving Planet: A Day to Move Beyond Fossil Fuels, Pearl Brewery complex, 200 E. Grayson at Broadway, 9 a.m. –

1 p.m. For more information, go to www.moving-planet.org/events/us/san-antonio/536.

Sat., Sep. 24: Health Collaborative Celebration, 1002 N. Flores, 11 a.m. – 1 p.m.

Sat., Oct 15: Live Green Fest, Olmos Basin Park, 651 Devine Rd., 10 a.m. – 4 p.m.

Sat., Oct. 22: Mitchell Lake Fall Fair, 10750 Pleasanton Rd., 9 a.m. – 4 p.m.

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, 7 p.m.		
Outings Committee Mtg.	1st Wed., every odd month., 7 p.m.	Jerry Morrisey	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
Mary Ellen 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	Wendell Fuqua	734-8281
Website	Richard Alles	494-2088

Committee Contacts

Outings Co-Chairs	Jerry Morrisey	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 Morrisey	382-2614

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: Justin Rodriguez	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: M. A. Cisneros	207-7279

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PERIODICAL

Name _____
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Membership Categories	Individual	Joint
Special Offer	<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 **F94Q W** 1

**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

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 Go to our website at <http://Alamosierraclub.org> and click **Join the Sierra Club**

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