

ALAMO GROUP MEETINGS

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

Tues., Sept 18:

Sustainable Urban and Regional Planning for Texas

Tues., Oct 16:

State Climatologist on present and future impacts of climate change on drought.

Tues., Nov 20:

Urban form: transit, complete streets, and pedestrian systems.

SIERRA SOCIALS

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

Fri., Sept 28: Mad Hatters Tea House, 320 Beauregard, 6-8 PM.

Fri., Oct 26: Candlelight Coffeehouse, 301 N St. Mary's, 6-8 PM.

Nov -- No Social because of Thanksgiving Holidays.

The Alamo Sierran

The Alamo Group of the Sierra Club Newsletter

VOLUME 46, NUMBER 8 SEPTEMBER 2012



Word from Chair

By Margaret (Peggy) Day

Being very sensitive to manmade noise, perhaps because I grew up in a small, isolated, quiet town and was often outdoors surrounded by natural sounds, battling noise pollution has been one of my pet causes, especially since living in the heart of San Juan, Puerto Rico for almost nine years, where the level of noise was off the charts.

From that noise campaign I learned that we lack a lot of science on the effects on humans and especially on nonhuman life. Also, the public often seemed deaf to and unmoved by what is known about noise and its effects. That is why I think of noise as a silent pollution.

Bernie Krause's recent *New York Times* article, "The Sound of a Damaged Habitat," got me thinking about the problem of noise again. The prominence of the issue before the *Times*' wide audience was heartening, but the news was saddening. This moving story, by a naturalist specializing in sound, dramatizes the pervasive effects from noise in the ecosphere and even from minor and visually unnoticeable environmental damage. Krause notes, "Soundscapes reveal many stories about the world's habitats, illuminating the vital signs of life at one end of the spectrum and the effects of human noise at the other. In fit habitats, the biophony [sound from non-human life] shows cohesion....calls essential to each "species" survival don't get masked or drowned out by competing sound." These sounds are so well integrated they are like precisely orchestrated scores that fall apart when human noise encroaches, he adds, bringing difficulties and species loss.

Unfortunately, human noise is no symphony, but is a dissonant cacophony that is escalating from increased global population, urbanization and technology. Most of the studies on noise focus on human impacts, especially from troublesome traffic. The World Health Organization (WHO) summarizes data from around the globe and does meta studies, some of which determine the social, psychological and economic costs, which are enormous. The noise burden is quantified in terms of disability-adjusted life-years that are established for all types of effects such as in disease, cognitive impairment, sleep disturbance, tinnitus, and diminished task ability, among many other impacts.

For example, consider the costs of multiple effects on mental health, according to the WHO. Not everyone can cope with noise. Children, elderly, and the diseased and depressed are more vulnerable. Noise is thought to speed and intensify the development of latent mental illness. Some effects are anxiety, emotional stress, nervous complaints, nausea, headache, instability, argumentativeness, sexual impotency, changes in mood, increase in social conflicts as well as neurosis, hysteria, and psychosis. People are subsequently also affected by the remedies they resort to such as cigarettes, alcohol, psychoactive drugs, and sleeping pills. Another impact is task impairment. Errors in work increase due to cognitive effects of noise. Strongly affected are reading attention, problem solving, memory and motivation.

Even though the Alamo Area has some noise ordinances, noise pollution continues. We have plenty of traditional sources of noise problems from traffic, airplanes, construction and farm equipment, car alarms, leaf blowers, weed whackers, lawn mowers, music and announcements from loud speakers, and large public gatherings, and many new ones, such as from the shale drilling and gas compressors.

We may be aware of our individual noise tolerance, but do we know how this noise is impacting the web of life that supports us? In honor of Dr. Krause's work, I'll leave off with his quote from the poet Robert Hass' cautionary poem "After Goethe": "The birds are silent in the wood./Just wait: Soon enough/You will be quiet too."

Recycling News

Interstate All Battery Center (in the Forum across from Home Depot) will accept batteries, both rechargeable and non rechargeable, for recycling free of charge. Bring your batteries (no car battery) to the monthly meeting at the Witte and member Gay Wright will take them to a battery disposal site.

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/

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). Contact Sierra Club co-leader Chris Anderson, (210) 838-1952 if you require additional information.

Sat., Sept. 22: The Oak Loop Seasonal Nature Walk

This walk is jointly sponsored by the

Phil Hardberger Park Conservancy, the Alamo Area Master Naturalists, and the Sierra Club. 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.

Saturday, October 13th: Hike the Canyon

Experience the beauty of this San Antonio area gem and its trail system. 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; 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 am** for an 8:30 am 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.

Saturday, November 10th: Hike the Canyon

Experience the beauty of this San Antonio area gem and its trail system. 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; 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 am** for an 8:30 am departure with finish by noon; subject to cancellation. **Difficulty:** Moderate (some steep/rocky sections).

Contact Sierra Club co-leader Terry Platt, (210) 695-9570, if you require additional information.

Inner City Outings

Inner City Outings meets the first Tuesday of the month (except September) at 7 p.m. at University Presbyterian Church, 300 Bushnell at Shook. New volunteers over 18 are welcome. Our next meetings are Sept. 11 and Oct. 2. First Aid/CPR training for ICO leaders scheduled for Oct. 14 and Oct. 21, 2-7 p.m. UPC. Cost is \$30. Contact ICO Chair Anne Pearson, 210-408-6321, ico-sanantonio@yahoo.com.

Lion's Field Film

Lion's Field program for Wednesday, September 26, will be announced at the Tuesday, September 18, general meeting of the Sierra Club. Also check website.

Sustainable Urban and Regional Planning for Texas

Dr. Richard Tangum, Professor of Architecture and Planning, and Director, Center for Urban & Regional Planning Research, UTSA College of Architecture, will address the importance of planning for cities and regions and the environmental implications for the future at the Tuesday, September 18 general meeting.

Dr. Tangum is a registered architect and urban and regional planner with more than 40 years extensive and varied experience in architecture, urban and regional planning, housing, urban design, and economic development. As a program and project director and researcher, he has been involved in the development of master plans for institutions, cities, districts, and neighborhoods in Europe, North and Central America, and Africa. He has directed studies within communities that address housing needs, commercial corridor and downtown district revitalization, pedestrian and traffic movement, and land utilization. As a Professor of Architecture and Planning, he has taught graduate and undergraduate courses in urban and regional planning, housing and neighborhood planning, urban and regional sustainability, and urban design. His research focuses on affordable housing, sustainable community design and planning, and regional development. Dr. Tangum holds two patents for an affordable housing building system.

Newsletter moving to Monthly Electronic and Quarterly Print in January

Our monthly *Alamo Sierran* newsletter will be shifting to an electronic-only monthly edition and quarterly print edition in January.

For a number of years now the Alamo Group's Executive Committee has deliberated changes to our news format. We know from the newspaper industry that print news is in decline and Internet based communications are on the rise. We have learned as other Lone Star Sierrans have made changes: The Dallas/Fort Worth group went all electronic recently and Austin will also, in January, after converting from a monthly to bimonthly in 2010.

The most compelling reason for our change is the print newsletter is a large, burdensome budget item. Shifting from ten or eleven to four editions will help us save resources. Currently each print edition costs about \$460. More than 90% of our hard earned funds go to their printing and postage. Since we receive no funding from the club and have few volunteers willing to lead fundraising, over the last years our income has not covered newsletter expenses. ExCom considered a newsletter fee but decided that would be too complicated to manage. Another death knell is that in January the United States Post Office will require a new Intelligent Bar Code for discounted mailing, which will require us to spend more on postage or add \$180 or so in cost per edition to print addresses with the new code.

Internet based systems have revolutionized communications. Our group needs to change with the times. A Web-based newsletter will help us deliver more news faster; allow readers to peruse our site and link to our Meetup and Facebook websites, as well as to sites of our conservation allies and to petitions; facilitate more member feedback; attract younger members; dramatically cut our costs, freeing up funds for other worthy causes; and model reductions in resource use—less energy, paper, and volunteer time.

Why, with such compelling reasons, have we not gone all electronic already? Our main concern was that we did not want to estrange many loyal members who do not have computers or use Internet based media. Other factors are that we are required do a mailer for elections, we traditionally mail fundraising appeals, and we do not have everyone's email address. Finally, our lower periodical postage rate depends on four mailings.

The planned change is a test to manage these competing needs and serve as a transitional phase to an electronic edition only. In the meantime, be prepared. Please send Loyd Cortez (loydcortez@earthlink.net) your email address to begin receiving our monthly E- newsletter. Savor our new print quarterly *Alamo Sierran* beginning in January 2013.

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., 7 p.m.	Jerry Morrissey	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

Chair	Jerry Morrissey	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

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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San Antonio, Texas 78209**

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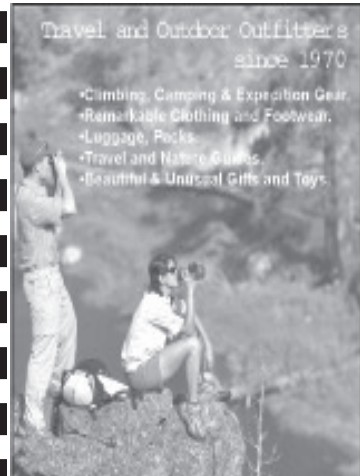
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Senior	<input type="checkbox"/> \$25	<input type="checkbox"/> \$35
Student/Limited Income	<input type="checkbox"/> \$25	<input type="checkbox"/> \$35

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

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