



THE ALAMO SIERRAN

THE ALAMO GROUP OF THE SIERRA CLUB NEWSLETTER - VOL. 41 No. 3 MAR 2007

*CPS Contemplates
More Power Plants
Energy conservation and
clean renewable power
make more sense*

*Ethanol Production
good for environment, bad
for food supply*

A Word from the Chair

by Jerry Morrisey

Early spring has brought a time of renewal in the natural world with the leaves of trees, shrubs and annuals showing their many hues of green. A relatively wet winter will bless us with colorful spring blossoms of yellows, blues and reds. You can enjoy and share the renewed warmth of nature with other Sierra Club members on one of our outings.

The Alamo Group is also undergoing a renewal process. We are reaching out to ask you to join us in social events, spring festivals, tabling events, conservation activities and political action. They are opportunities to make new friends, have fun and fulfill your need to contribute to a healthier world for ourselves, our children and our grandchildren.

Each of you has different knowledge, skills and life experiences that would be valuable to share in volunteer activities with the Alamo Group. With consideration for the amount of time you have available, use the newsletter, website, general meeting announcements, and discussions with Group leaders to identify activities in which you would like to participate. Contact the appropriate leaders and let them know about your interests and how much time you have to share. Share your ideas but realize that since everyone is a volunteer, the advancement of your ideas will require giving of your own time.

I hope that spring brings new joy to your life.

CPS Energy and Austin Energy recently announced that they are considering jointly constructing power plants on the coastal plains of Matagorda County within the next decade. The 3000 megawatt plants would generate enough energy from coal or natural gas to supply a million homes. CPS is also exploring the possibility of doubling the size of the South Texas Nuclear Project, also in Matagorda County.

The Sierra Club cautions that both coal and nuclear pose serious threats to the environment and to our public

There are no easy choices. Turns out that the effort to make the air cleaner by putting ethanol in our gas tanks has a down side. It reduces the amount of corn available for food and makes that commodity more expensive. And, of course, the ones most affected are the poor.

Last year, our nation added 5.5 billion gallons of corn-based ethanol to its gas tanks. This year, that number is expected to increase to 7.5 billion gallons. The demand for corn as a fuel additive has pushed the price up, making it harder for relief agencies to buy corn as food. Agencies supplying corn to Africa have seen the price double in the last year. As a result,

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General Meeting: 7:00 P.M., 3rd Tuesday each month at the Witte Museum located at 3801 Broadway just south of Hildebrand Ave. Socializing begins at 6:40, program at 7 P.M.

March 20, 2007: Rancho de la Chuparrosa, a food co-op

Robin Bowman of Rancho de la Chuparrosa in Sabinal, Texas will discuss the benefits of sustainable farming and community-supported agriculture. (Rescheduled from January)

April 17, 2007: Buying land to protect the aquifer

Paul Barwick of the Nature Conservancy talks about San Antonio's Proposition 1 and discusses the rivers of western Texas

*Sign Up for
Action Alerts
democracy in action*

When the legislature meets in Austin, quick citizen action often spells the difference between victory and defeat for the environment. Sign up now to receive our e-mail Conservation Action Alerts and let your voice be heard. Contact Tom Dukes at 828-3721, or tdukes@grandecom.net, and we'll add your name to our growing list of environmental activists.

Sierrans by Candlelight

Lamb or Lion? It's March, so you get to choose! Fortify yourself against the brisk breezes of springtime with the Sierra Club at the **Candlelight Coffeehouse**, 3011 N. St. Mary's, 210-738-0099. Once again, the fabulous Ned Allen will serve as our host from 5-7?? Friday, March 16. The Candlelight has a great patio as well as very nice stuffed chairs and couches and a full assortment of coffee, tea, wine, and food. Join us. Ned can be reached at 210-347-4768, no1rvrman@yahoo.com.

More Power Plants - Continued

health and well-being. Clean, renewable energy sources are a superior alternative.

CPS Energy should make conservation, energy efficiency and clean renewable energy sources a much larger part of its energy portfolio, which would negate the need for the proposed plants. Reducing energy consumption through conservation is always less expensive than building new capacity. Dedicating a larger share of the CPS budget to conservation and renewables will create new jobs and reduce the environmental and health impacts of coal, including mercury pollution, asthma, loss of air quality, and global warming.

As awful as coal is, nuclear's deadly radioactivity makes it even worse. Had the target on September 11 been a nuclear plant instead of a skyscraper, the loss of lives is simply too terrifying to contemplate.

San Antonio needs to approach energy consumption as it did water use during the 1990s. SAWS, our water agency, created a strong regional conservation ethic and implemented bold plans to reduce water use, today making San Antonio one of the most water efficient cities in the nation.

CPS still lacks a fully integrated conservation department to implement and coordinate energy reduction programs. CPS should create such a department immediately and take meaningful, results-based steps to decrease energy consumption by a much larger amount than the current 65 MW target over 10 years. Rebates and incentive programs can foster conservation and expand clean, renewable solar and wind power generation. With CPS guiding the way, our homes and businesses can quickly become more energy efficient. CPS and San Antonio can meet this challenge, reduce our energy consumption, and eliminate the need for the proposed new coal and nuclear power plants.

David Klar

**Ethanol Production - Continued**

Catholic Relief Services, which distributes food in Africa and Latin America, expects to deliver only 161,000 tons of corn this year, down from 200,000 tons last year.

This trend would only accelerate under President George Bush's plan to increase our ethanol use to 35 billion gallons per year within a decade. The resulting demand for corn will even affect the prices we pay for many foods here at home, especially beef, pork, chicken, cereal (because of corn-based sweeteners), and — oh dear — bourbon.

Other sources of ethanol exist, such as switch grass, sawdust, or any substance that contains cellulose. But, a variety of problems so far have blocked the commercial production of "cellulosic" ethanol. "The private sector continues to work furiously," said a Department of Energy official, "but there have been no major breakthroughs."

"In the long run," says Lisa Kuennen-Asfaw, director of public resources for Catholic Relief Services, "it means that we are fueling our cars with food that people might have eaten. There are important trade-offs."

Wendell Fuqua

Get Down and Dirty at the Basura Bash

Saturday, March 24, you can get down and dirty with other Sierra Club volunteers in the cleanup of our adopted segment of the San Antonio River. All volunteers will get a free t-shirt, lunch, and entertainment provided at Mission County Park.

The Alamo Group joined the Adopt-A-River program a few years ago and is responsible for cleaning the segment of the river just west of Mission San Juan Capistrano.

It will not take much of your time — just a few hours of the morning — and you will get free breakfast tacos and bottled water if you get there early. You should

plan on arriving no later than 8:15 a.m. to allow time for instructions, picking up trash supplies and munching on tacos. We will start work by 9:00 a.m. and quit about 11:00 a.m. Wear gloves, sturdy shoes or boots, and clothes that you don't mind getting dirty.

To join us on March 24, please contact Loyd Cortez at loydcortez@earthlink.net or 210-674-9489, so we can get a head count and you can get directions to the site. We look forward to seeing you there.

Stop the Coal Rush

On February 11, two thousand concerned citizens from all corners of Texas converged on the steps of the state capitol to express their opposition to plans to rush the permitting and construction of 19 coal-fired power plants across our state.

Physicians cautioned that burning coal is the greatest source of toxic mercury in our environment, and that asthma and other breathing problems increase when coal is used for power. Professors spoke of the vast untapped potential in Texas for clean, renewable solar and wind energy. Other speakers followed the "money trail" of campaign contributions from polluting industries, and reminded the crowd that Texas already releases more global warming CO2 than any other state in the U.S.; more coal plants would only make that bad situation worse. College students asked why their future is being compromised for short-term economic gain.

Seventeen members of the Alamo Group of the Sierra Club were there to participate and learn. Our thanks to Ned Allen, Mike Brannon, Randy Carroll-Bradd, Loyd Cortez, Sharon and Tom Dukes, Wendell Fuqua, Hector Gonzalez, Cheryl Hamilton, Al Kaufman, Dave Klar, Barbara McMillin, Alan Montemayor, Jerry Morrissey, Mariana Ornelas, Paula Stone, and Loretta Van Coppenolle,

To join in the future fun, sign up for our e-mail action alerts.

Tom Dukes

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

Meet the public and help our Sierra Club present a positive image. Volunteering is a great way to get to know your fellow club members. To find out more, contact the event leader.

Basura Bash (river cleanup): Saturday, March 24; Help tidy up a stretch of the San Antonio River south of downtown. Loyd Cortez [loydcortez@earthlink.net, or 674-9489]

CPS LiveGreenFest: Saturday, April 7, Eisenhower Park; Jerry Morrissey [jlmorrissey@aol.com, or 382-2614]

Earth Day: Thursday, April 12, NW Vista College; Carolyn Wells [cjacobswells@hotmail.com, or 271-0640]

Step It Up (a national day of climate action): Saturday, April 14, Tom Dukes [tdukes@grandecom.net or 828-3721]

Earth Day: Saturday, April 21, Woodlawn Lake; Loyd Cortez [loydcortez@earthlink.net, or 674-9489]

King William Parade: Saturday, April 28, Paula Stone [pstone001@satx.rr.com or 393-7351]

OUTINGS

NOTE: No dogs, radios, recreational drugs, or unescorted children are allowed on Sierra Club outings. Public consumption of alcohol is prohibited during scheduled activities. Outings are usually suitable for the whole family; check with the leaders about details and to verify dates. All fees will go fully to offset trip and administrative costs and to support the conservation efforts of the Alamo Group.

MAR 16, FRI: GOVERNMENT CANYON STATE NATURAL AREA DAY HIKE

Spring is here and it is time to get out and enjoy nature. Come with us as we explore our own state natural area, Government Canyon. Yes, right here in Bexar County. We will hike around 5 miles looking for blooming mountain laurel and

blue bonnets. We will hear about the area's past and view some of the artifacts. Bring your binoculars as we search for wildlife. The trail will be rocky with some elevation gain; so sturdy hiking shoes are a must along with two quarts of water. Entrance fees are the responsibility of each hiker. Limit of 8 hikers. Children 12 and above are welcome with parent. For information and reservations, contact Terry Platt (taplatt@earthlink.net).

MAR 25, SUN - HISTORIC SAN ANTONIO BIKE RIDE

Join us for a leisurely 20-25 mile ride through downtown San Antonio and along the San Antonio River to view the missions and other historic places that helped make San Antonio the unique city it is. We'll meet at 8:00 a.m. to get a jump on the automobile traffic. Difficulty: EASY to MODERATE. Cost: suggested donation of \$2 per rider. Leaders: Steve Funderburg (210-317-4186) or steve.funderburg@lsijv.com and Lee Dodge, 647-0216 or lsg999@earthlink.net.

APR 6-9, FRI-MON: GUADALUPE MOUNTAIN NATIONAL PARK BACKPACK

Spring is around the corner. It's time to explore the beautiful Guadalupe Mountain National Park. We will start at the seldom-used Dog Canyon trailhead on our loop trail. This trip is intended for experienced backpackers able to travel six miles or more at altitudes up to 8000 feet with elevation gains of 1960 feet. Individuals provide their own food, water and equipment. No water is available on the trail. A mandatory meeting will be held approximately two weeks prior to discuss trip details. Due to national park rules, this trip is limited to eight. Open to adults and to minors 15 and above with a parent. Donation: \$12/members, \$16/non-members. National park entrance and camping fees are individual responsibility. Difficulty: STRENUOUS. Contact trip leaders Terry Platt (210-695-9570/taplatt@earthlink.net) or Bill Rogers (830-885-2523/rogers@uthscsa.edu) for more information and to register.

APR 15, SUN: MISSION TRAIL BIKE RIDE

Springtime ride and tax-day celebration! This will be a ride of about 18 miles or so, depending on the desires of the group. We'll start at Mission Concepcion and ride down to Mission Espada and back. We'll stop and take short tours at some of the missions along the way. This ride is all on paved paths and roads, and is suitable for street bikes. Children 10 years and over accompanied by at least one of their parents are welcome. Difficulty: moderate. Minimum requested donation: \$2 per adult. There will be an optional lunch stop for some Mexican food after the ride. We'll meet in the unpaved parking lot just southeast of the main parking lot at Mission Concepcion at 9 AM. Please contact Lee Dodge, lsg999@earthlink.net, or 647-0216, or Ned Allen, NO1RVRMAN@yahoo.com, or 830-393-1127 (home), 210-347-4768 (cell) to register.

MAY 5, SAT: LEON CREEK GREENBELT HIKE

Explore Leon Creek from Babcock Rd. to Schnabel Park. Meet at 8:30 AM. Two hiking options offered: 1) A slower hike of 2 miles or less to observe the native plants and birds of Leon Creek; 2) a faster paced hike of 4 miles for fitness. Difficulty: Easy to moderate. Hiking boots recommended for rough trails. Limited to 10 besides leaders. Must sign up by Wednesday, May 2. \$2 or \$3 donation requested. Contact leader Jerry Morrissey, jlmorrissey@aol.com, 382-2614 for further details. Additional leaders: Terry Platt, 210-695-9570, or taplatt@earthlink.net; and Scott Wolfe, papawolfe@sbcglobal.net, or 724-2707.

Government Canyon State Natural Area

Every Saturday, beginning at 8:30 AM, park staff and/or volunteers lead a guided hike at Government Canyon State Natural Area. Not all hikes are suitable for young children, so check the Texas Parks and Wildlife Website at <http://www.tpwd.state.tx.us/newsmedia/calendar/> for descriptions; or call (210) 688-9055 for more information.

MEETING DATES AND CONTACT INFO

General Meeting: 3rd Tuesday 7 p.m. Jerry Morrissey 497-5470
 Executive Committee: 4th Monday, 7 p.m. Tom Dukes 828-3721
 Newsletter Mail Party: 2nd Tuesday, 7 p.m. Jim Stewart 692-0727
 Outings Committee Meeting: 4th Wednesday every 2 months, 7 p.m. Lee Dodge 647-0216
 Conservation Committee Meeting: 1st Monday, 7 p.m. Paula Stone 393-7351

ALAMO GROUP OF THE SIERRA CLUB

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OFFICERS & MEMBERS

Jerry Morrissey Chair Person 497-5470
 Loyd Cortez Vice Chair 674-9489
 Carolyn Wells Secretary 271-0640
 Tom Dukes 828-3721
 Hector Gonzalez 226-6069
 Eloise Stoker 828-0919
 Paula Stone 393-7351
 Saul Wilen 692-1268
 Fred Wills 673-9566
 Sharon Dukes (non voting) Treasurer 828-3721

ADMINISTRATIVE CONTACTS

Programs Eloise Stoker 828-0919
 Membership Loyd Cortez 674-9489
 Publicity George Windrow 408-1988
 Mailings Jim Stewart 692-0727
 Newsletter Marsha Meredith 675-4097
 Website Tom Dukes 828-3721

COMMITTEE CONTACTS

Outings Chair Lee Dodge 647-0216
 Political Committee Beck Steiner 342-6694
 Outreach & Education .. Carolyn Wells & 271-0640
 Saul Wilen 692-1268

CONSERVATION CONTACTS

Conservation Chair Paula Stone 393-7351
 Co-Chair Dave Klar 495-2148
 Endangered Species Fred Wills 673-9566
 Fluoridation L. Van Coppenolle 492-4620
 Genetically Modified Organisms Michele Petty 490-4133
 Organic Gardening Dave Klar 495-2148
 Recycling L. Van Coppenolle 492-4620
 Tree Conservation Richard Alles 494-2088
 Water Issues Jerry Morrissey 497-5470

U.S. CONGRESSPERSONS

Charlie Gonzalez (210) 472-6195
 Lamar Smith (210) 821-5024
 Henry Cuellar (210) 271-2851
 Ciro Rodriguez (210) 922-1874

CITY COUNCIL

Mayor: Phil Hardberger; 207-7060; mayor@sanantonio.gov
 District 1: Roger Flores Jr.; 207-7279; district1@sanantonio.gov
 District 2: Sheila McNeil; 207-7278; district2@sanantonio.gov
 District 3: Roland Gutierrez; 207-7064; district3@sanantonio.gov
 District 4: Richard Perez; 207-7281; district4@sanantonio.gov
 District 5: Patti Radle; 207-7043; district5@sanantonio.gov
 District 6: Delicia Herrera; 207-7065; district6@sanantonio.gov
 District 7: Elena Guajardo; 207-7044; district7@sanantonio.gov
 District 8: Art Hall; 207-7086; district8@sanantonio.gov
 District 9: Kevin Wolff; 207-7325; district9@sanantonio.gov
 District 10: Chip Haass; 207-7276; district10@sanantonio.gov

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 \$10.00/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 email 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, Tel 520-5700 for our nominal newsletter cost.

Alamo Group of the Sierra Club
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MEMBERSHIP CATEGORIES

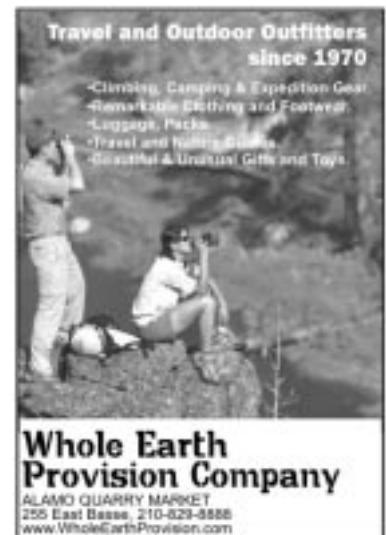
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SUPPORTING	<input type="checkbox"/> \$75	<input type="checkbox"/> \$100
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SENIOR	<input type="checkbox"/> \$24	<input type="checkbox"/> \$32
STUDENT	<input type="checkbox"/> \$24	<input type="checkbox"/> \$32
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