



THE ALAMO SIERRAN

THE ALAMO GROUP OF THE SIERRA CLUB NEWSLETTER - VOL. 40 No. 7 AUGUST 2006

Volunteer Appreciation A Huge Success food + friends = fun

Our July general meeting and annual potluck at the Witte Museum found almost 60 Sierra Club members gathered for dinner with a twist: a slew of volunteer appreciation awards. There were festive tablecloths and fresh flowers in (appropriately) recycled containers, and lively music wafted through the room.

Everyone brought a dish to share: a fabulous variety of salads, vegetables, cakes, and drinks. The ExCom honored volunteers for their

contributions to the Sierra Club's activities over the past year and awarded a number of prizes to the lucky, including energy efficient light bulbs, Sierra Club attire, and a Hummer, (although it looked suspiciously like a kazoo to us). The evening was fun, and we'll be doing it again. Tom Dukes threatens us with the possibility of games next time, perhaps pin the tail on the politician.

A list of the honorees appears elsewhere in this newsletter.

Word from the Chair by Tom Dukes

The recent Tour de France got me thinking about the similarities between bicycle racing and the Alamo Group. In the Tour, a team of dashing cyclists works together for a common goal. Success is helping one of your teammates fly across the finish line first. The riders draft each other to cut wind resistance, saving their strength during the race. Winning demands the efforts of the entire team. A rider going it alone is soon exhausted, lags behind, and never wears the victor's yellow jersey.

The Sierra Club likewise depends on teamwork to achieve victory. For us, success means convincing government officials to do the right thing, whether it's water quality, tree preservation, or global warming.

Without your flood of calls and letters to set the stage, there is little incentive for officials to do as asked when we meet with them. So please make a habit of contacting elected officials. Do it regularly, and do it often.

Volunteer your time, even if you can only offer a little bit. Every local conservation issue in this Club needs more helpers right now. Call me at 828-3721 and I guarantee we can find a way for you to become meaningfully involved in the Alamo Group.

If this sounds like a thinly veiled plea for help, well, it is. We face a flurry of local issues this summer that is stretching us thin. We need you to draft us, to pitch in a little. Together we can achieve victories that will benefit south Texas for years to come. For us, an environmentally sound future is the best yellow jersey of all.

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 6:45, program at 7 P.M. This is the JUNE/JULY Alamo Sierran, so save this issue for important information.

August 15, 2006: Proposition One Aquifer Protection Plus Preserving Western Hill Country Rivers

Paul Barwick presents an update on the Nature Conservancy's work on these two important projects

September 19, 2006: Winter in Yellowstone

Don't miss Tom Rust's beautiful photographs

An Inconvenient Truth

The Alamo Group's first Sierra Club Night at the Movies was great fun - at least the part where we all got together, met Club members we hadn't known previously, and had an opportunity to socialize.

The movie itself was sobering, of course; Al Gore's message about the profound and negative environmental changes wrought by global warming was a grim reminder that we all need to act before it really is too late.

Thirty Sierra Club members bought discounted tickets to see "An Inconvenient Truth" Saturday, June 24, at the Bijou Theater. Afterwards, some of the group gathered to discuss the film and partake of cold beverages at a nearby cantina. It was a fun evening; let's do it again!

Special thanks to Meredith Sterling and Marsha Meredith for organizing the event.

Act Now to Protect Water Quality

As early as August 24, the San Antonio City Council will vote on changes to the Water Quality Ordinance that will forever impact our future. Development over the Edwards Aquifer recharge zone is endangering our water supply.

If you live in the city of San Antonio, please complete and mail the postcards inserted in this newsletter. If you live elsewhere, pass them on to a concerned San Antonian to send. We need to flood the offices of city council with postcards and phone calls.

The Alamo Group supports the AGUA revisions to San Antonio's Water Quality Ordinance, especially a uniform 15% limit to impervious cover over the recharge and contributing zones of the Edwards Aquifer. Scientific data show that 15% is the "magic number" above

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Water Quality continued

which aquifer degradation increases rapidly, so such a limit is the single greatest way to protect our water.

To learn more about the A.G.U.A. revisions, visit our website at www.sierraclub.org/chapters/tx/alamo.

For more postcards to distribute to friends and neighbors, call Tom Dukes at 828-3721. But hurry, the vote is coming soon. After that, it will be too late.

The Ten Tree Challenge

San Antonio needs more trees to provide beauty and shade, regulate air temperature, and absorb some of the carbon dioxide that drives global warming. In fact, San Antonio needs all the trees it can get.

Therefore, the Alamo Group of the Sierra Club has joined with more than 60 local organizations to accept the Ten Tree Challenge. This citywide effort means the Alamo Group has committed to planting and nurturing 10 trees this year. They can be located anywhere, on private or public land.

We will do our tree planting in the fall, so they can safely establish root systems and avoid heat stress. Sierra Club volunteers are needed to assist with planting, and we also need recommendations for good tree locations. Contact Jerry Morrisey at 497-5470 for details.

What's on Tap for South Central Texas?

Conference to explore our region's water future

Mark your calendar for Saturday, September 9, when Trinity University will host a conference on critical water issues. "What's on Tap for South Central Texas?" is sponsored by the Lone Star Chapter of the Sierra Club. The Alamo Group, Coastal Bend Group, and Greater Edwards Aquifer Alliance are among the co-hosts.

Our current water restrictions only heighten the need to understand this vital resource. Several contentious topics will be addressed, including desalination, drought management,

the Carrizo Aquifer, and how development practices affect the Edwards.

Attendees will learn the connection between faucets and whooping cranes and trace the impact of future water demands on Matagorda and San Antonio Bays.

If you want to understand water in South Central Texas, you should attend. For information and registration, visit: www.texas.sierraclub.org or contact the Lone Star Chapter at 512-477-1729 or jennifer.walker@sierraclub.org.

A second conference sponsored by the Sierra Club is planned at Trinity from September 29 to October 1. "Who Owns Texas Water?" will reveal the startling facts about private corporations quietly buying up publicly owned water systems and what this means to the consumer. Full details will appear in the next *Alamo Sierran*.

ExCom Goodbyes

Executive Committee member Derek Trobaugh, who has ably served since January 2005, has resigned with regrets. Derek and his wife Emily have relocated to Austin, where they will work and continue their educations. Good luck in the capital city, you two.

John Westerhoff and Mary Gallatin DiGiacomo have also stepped down from their leadership roles, citing pressing outside commitments. Both stay quite busy, but John assures us we'll still see him at monthly meetings. Our hearty thanks to all three for their services to the Alamo Group.

ExCom Opening

Are you looking for a way to make a positive difference? Would you like to help guide this Club in its important work? Well, have we got a deal for you: join the Executive Committee of the Alamo Group. The need is great, as are the rewards. Call Tom Dukes at 828-3721 if you wish to explore the possibility.

Lunch with the Chair

Want to get involved but not sure what job fits your schedule and interests? Let's have lunch and talk. The time commitment is one hour, and the date and place can be arranged. Contact Tom Dukes at 828-3721 or tdukes@ev1.net. Let's do lunch!

We Appreciate Our Volunteers

Volunteers ARE the Alamo Group. These special Sierrans were honored at the July meeting for their contributions to the cause. Our thanks to each and every one of you, and our sincere apologies to anyone we missed.

Recognized for conservation activism were Peter Allen, Richard Alles, Chris Brown, Margaret Carrasco, Olivia Eisenhauer, Charles English, Doris Johnston, Al Kaufman, Steve Kellman, Dave Klar, Barbara McMillin, George Rice, Beck Steiner, Paula Stone, Loretta Van Coppenolle, and George Woods.

Recognized for Outings Leadership were Geert Aerts, Ellen Clegg, Lee Dodge, Dave Klar, Marsha Meredith, Bonnie Mitchell, Terry Platt, Bill Rogers, Jim Stewart, and Fred Wills.

Assisting at King William Fair and Earth Day events were Ned Allen, Emily Arnold, Twyla Arthur, Rebecca Baker, Suzanne Benavides, Loni Carlson, Lee Dodge, Sharon Dukes, Al Kaufman, Dave Klar, Barbara McMillin, Michele Petty, Meredith Sterling, Paula Stone, Loretta Van Coppenolle, and Dave Wells.

Other Wonderful support to the Sierra Club were Stephanie Buckholdt, Lee Dodge, Dave Klar, Melody Krumdieck, Marsha Meredith, Bill Rogers, Dan Rosenburg, Sky Rosenberg, Brad Shaw, Kim Smith, Meredith Sterling, Jim Stewart, Ruthie Stewart, Marilyn Wade, Barbara Welch, and Fred Wills were recognized for helping with the newsletter.

Assisting at Basura Bash or the Lion's Park Cleanup were Peter Allen,
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Continued Appreciations!

Margaret Carrasco, Dian Degnan, Albert Del Rio, Lynn Denzer, Sharon Dukes, Jack Elder, Patti Gonzalez & daughter, Eden, Richard Hernandez, Dave Klar, Randa Reilley, Meredith Sterling, John Turner, Brenda Viera, Christel Villarreal, Gerry Waller, and Fred Wills.

Finally, special thanks to Gina Pellegrino for setting up this fabulous event.

Upcoming Evens at Government Canyon State Natural Area

August 26, 2006: Arachnids!

On Saturday, August 26, 2006 Dr. Cary Guffey of Our Lady of the Lake University will present a program from 7 PM-to-9 PM on the behavior and basic biology of arachnids; especially spiders, ticks, scorpions and daddy longlegs at Government Canyon State Natural Area. There will be a short hike (weather permitting) to find spiders building webs and to identify some of the species found at Government Canyon. Wear sturdy shoes; bring water, a snack, flashlight & mosquito repellent. Participation is limited. Reservations are required and will be accepted beginning at 7:30 AM on Monday August 14. To make your reservation, or to get more information, please email educmte@hotmail.com or call (210) 688-9055. Email reservations are recommended. Please include name, email address/telephone # for each reservation. Entrance fees to the Natural Arvernment Canyon will be gratefully accepted and help make these and other programs possible.

New Outings Leaders Trained

Abylly led by Lee Dodge, the Alamo Group's Outings Chair extraordinaire, the Club's current outings leaders renewed their certificates in early July and trained some brand new recruits in the process. Trainers and trainees alike showed plenty of enthusiasm for leading trips in the Texas outdoors.

Scan this newsletter for more outings as soon as summer's heat relents, and you'll see what we mean.

Presenters at the workshop shared their expertise and told tales, some quite humorous, of their outings experiences.

A special thanks to those who took time out from their busy Saturday schedules to attend: Peter Allen, Ellen Clegg, Loyd Cortez, Lee Dodge, Sharon Dukes, Tom Dukes, Hector Gonzalez, Dave Klar, and Melody Krumdieck. Also, Marsha Meredith, Bonnie Mitchell, Jerry Morrisey, Terry Platt, Stephanie Rhodes, Bill Rogers, Jim Stewart, Fred Wills, and George Windrow.

These leaders are dedicated to providing enjoyable outdoor experiences for your benefit, so do yourself a favor. Check out our outings, find one that looks like fun, and sign up today. If there's a particular type of trip that you want to see more of, give Lee Dodge a call at 647-0216.

Photography of Texas Flag Enthusiasm

Lone Star Love

by Kim Smith

September 8 - October 4, 2006

Louis J. Blume Library

St. Mary's University
One Camino Santa Maria
San Antonio, TX 78228

Opening Reception
5:30-7:00 pm, Friday, September 8, 2006

THUNDER HEART BISON



Natural Healthy and Delicious Low-fat, Grass-fed Texas Bison The Red Meat That's Healthy to Eat Available at Select San Antonio Stores For more information call 210-930-0841 www.thunderheartbison.com

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.

AUG 13, SUN: MISSION TRAIL BIKE RIDE (~18 MILES).

Contact leader for meeting time (morning) and place. Difficulty: MODERATE. Cost: \$2 for members, \$3 for non-members. Leader: Jim Stewart, goldstewart@earthlink.net, or at 692-0727.

AUG 27, SUN: BIKE RIDE (~18 MILES).

Contact leader for meeting time (morning) and place. Difficulty: MODERATE. Cost: Donations accepted. Leader: Lee Dodge, lsg999@earthlink.net, or at 647-0216.

SEP 16, SAT: BRACKENRIDGE PARK DAY HIKE.

Rediscover Brackenridge Park, the leafy green heart of San Antonio. Explore the newly completed improvements, everything from upgraded trails to fanciful artwork. We'll finish at a funky nearby eatery for brunch. Meet at 8:30 AM. Difficulty: EASY. Cost: Donations accepted. Leader: Sharon Dukes, tdukes@evl.net, or 828-3721.

SEP 22-23, FRI-SAT: ADOPT-A-BEACH CLEANUP.

What can be more fun than joining with other Sierrans in this international event? We'll camp at Padre Island National Seashore south of Corpus Christi Friday night. Saturday morning we'll spend 3 hours (9-noon) picking up and cataloging trash from a particular section of the beach. After that we'll swim, eat watermelon and share snacks. Those who want to camp a second night can do so. Difficulty: EASY. Cost: FREE. Contact Marsha Meredith for more information [675-4097; marshal205@sbcglobal.net].

GCSNA

Every Saturday beginning at 8:30 AM there is a guided hike at GCSNA. Not all hikes are appropriate for 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 Ext. 286 for more information.