



THE ALAMO SIERRAN

THE ALAMO GROUP OF THE SIERRA CLUB NEWSLETTER - VOL. 41 No. 2 FEB 2007

A Word from the Chair by Jerry Morrissey

The Alamo Group has been blessed to have Tom Dukes serve as Chair this past year. He applied the wisdom, energy and creativity that he devoted to his classrooms to promoting the active involvement of more members. With countless hours of effort, he helped reshape the Alamo Group website, implemented an electronic newsletter, recruited many new volunteers, started a social committee, launched the Cool Cities campaign, initiated successful fund raising efforts and helped conduct a volunteer appreciation potluck. I hope everyone finds an opportunity to thank Tom for his extraordinary efforts.

As Chair I intend to promote the continued strengthening of social contacts and volunteer activism within the Alamo Group that Tom has initiated. Alamo Group members share many common values that should allow us to make friends and enjoy time spent with other members. At the next general meeting, introduce yourself to someone you have never met. They may be a Sierra Club member or a visitor coming for the first time. In most instances they will be more than willing to have a conversation about some interesting topic. If you are a long time member make the effort at every meeting to talk with someone new to you. I have heard too often from visitors or new members that no one really made them feel welcome, and that is something we can easily change.

There are many great opportunities to meet new people and make new friends at Sierra Club events. The

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Stop the Coal Rush

*Sierra Club Files Legal Action to
Halt "Fast-Tracking" of
Texas Coal Plants*

The Sierra Club, represented by the Austin office of Environmental Integrity Project (EIP), took legal action on December 27 to stop the "unprecedented, unreasonable, and... illegal" plan by Governor Rick Perry to "fast track" administrative hearings for construction of up to 18 dirty coal-fired power plants in the state. Most of the plants in question are being proposed by the Dallas-based utility giant TXU.

This legal action by the Sierra Club stems from a recent state agency decision to consolidate six proposed TXU coal plant permits into one hearing, and to set those permits for a speedy decision. The lawsuit notes: "The executive order

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Sign Up for Action Alerts

Make your voice heard

The legislature is in session in Austin, and many crucial environmental issues will be addressed, including the unwise Coal Rush discussed in this newsletter. Sign up now for our Conservation Action Alerts and help make a difference. Quick citizen action often tips the scales, and we need all the leverage we can get. Contact Tom Dukes at 828-3721, or tdukes@grandecom.net, and we'll add your name to our growing list of environmental activists.

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.

February 20, 2007: Big Bend Ranch State Park

Explore the largest state park in Texas, presented by David Riskind, Director of Natural Resources for Texas Parks and Wildlife. Following the presentation Hall Hammond will lead a discussion of state park funding.

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

Robin Bowman will discuss the benefits of sustainable farming and community-supported agriculture. (Rescheduled from January.)

Environmental Excellence Awards

The Alamo Group has created the Environmental Excellence Award for San Antonio to recognize the support for good environmental policy by members of the San Antonio City Council. Mayor Phil Hardberger, District 5 Councilwoman Patti Radle, District 7 Councilwoman Elena Guajardo, and District 8 Councilman Art Hall are our awardees for 2007. The award plaque reads: "The Sierra Club recognizes (name) as an environmental hero for supporting

quality of life issues during the 2005-2007 City Council Term." These Council members have been most supportive on air quality, city development policy, parks, tree protection, water quality and other quality of life issues.

Elena Guarjardo received her award at our holiday party in December. The other awardees were to have received their plaques at the January general meeting, unfortunately cancelled due to ice. Patti Radle will claim her award at the February meeting, but scheduling conflicts have led to other arrangements to honor Phil Hardberger and Art Hall.

Word from Chair - Continued

dayhikes, car camping trips and social events offer opportunities for extended conversations and discovering shared interests with other participants. Help staff a booth with another member at one of the events this spring where the Alamo Group is participating. You can make a new friend and enjoy an earth friendly event when your shift is over. Let's make teamwork the word for '07.

Coal Rush - Continued

imposes an unreasonable schedule to thoroughly develop the required technical and legal issues for one major air permit of the type being considered, let alone six of them... The Governor's Executive Order RP 49 infringes on the rights of Texas citizens to participate meaningfully in the environmental permitting arena.

The Perry fast-tracking scheme has huge consequences. The Sierra Club petition notes: "To put the magnitude of the six TXU permits in context, it is worth noting the additional greenhouse gases associated with these new coal plants. While not addressed in the permits, the new units will emit an additional estimated 51 million tons of carbon dioxide per year into Texas skies. In 2005, all existing Texas power plants emitted 255.4 million tons of carbon dioxide."

"Coal-fired power plants are the single largest source of mercury air pollution, accounting for roughly 40 percent of all mercury emissions nationwide. The Centers for Disease Control has found that roughly 10 percent of American women carry mercury concentrations at levels considered to put a fetus at risk of neurological damage," notes the EIP/Sierra Club petition.

Another major pollutant - nitrogen oxide - is a major contributor to ozone smog-forming pollution. The concerns about the impact of smog have led mayors and city leaders in several Texas cities to join the effort to stop the fast-tracking of the permits for the proposed coal plants.

The intention of the Sierra Club's action is to see that all of these issues are reviewed by the courts, and to see that the rights of citizens to protect themselves in pollution permitting cases are upheld.

Meet Your New ExCom

The Group's members have voted, and Loyd Cortez and Hector Gonzalez have been reelected to the Executive Committee (ExCom). In addition, Fred Wills won election and Saul Wilen was chosen by unanimous vote of the ExCom to fill a vacant one year term on your Club's governing body. Jerry Morrissey will serve as Chair this year, and Loyd Cortez will again serve as Vice Chair. Members of the ExCom are listed on the back page of this newsletter, and they invite your questions or comments about the Alamo Group of the Sierra Club.

*ACT Lobby Day -
February 26, 2007*

The Alliance for a Clean Texas (ACT) has scheduled a Lobby Day at the State Capitol in Austin on Monday, February 26, 2007. On Sunday from 4 to 6 pm a workshop will teach participants how to talk with legislators and take on powerful special interests, and on Monday we will gather in small groups to meet with legislators and staff. Sign up on line at www.allianceforcleantexas.org, or phone Christian at (512) 479-0388.

*If You Can't Beat 'Em,
Buy 'Em*

The Australian toll road giant Macquire has purchased 40 small Texas newspapers, many of them critical of the Trans-Texas Corridor, (TTC), it was reported on January 24. Macquire leased the Indiana Toll Road in 2006, and received much unfavorable press as a result.

The Trans-Texas Corridor would be a quarter-mile-wide swath of truck-only toll lanes, automobile toll lanes, and railway lines stretching from Oklahoma to the Mexican border - by far the largest proposed toll project in the state.

Critics contend that media control by toll road operators is intended to silence opposition. While Macquire is not directly involved in plans for the TTC, they are partners on several U.S.

projects with Cintra, the Spanish toll road company behind TTC. This media purchase is Maquire's first in North America.

The Sierra Club opposes toll roads when they continue our addiction to asphalt and foreign oil by tying up funding that could be better spent on improved mass transit between cities.

Visit Us on the Web

*check out our sparkling
new website*

Have you seen the Alamo Group's website lately? You owe yourself a visit. Go to <http://texas.sierraclub.org/alamo>, or Google "Alamo Sierra Club" and follow the link. See what we have to offer, and bookmark us for future reference.

On the website you'll discover much more than is possible in our newsletter. You'll find the latest news and action items, updated outings listings, social gatherings, and color photos, a luxury we can only dream of in the print version of the *Alamo Sierran*.

We are making a concerted effort to reduce our paper use this year - always a good thing for an environmental organization - and our enhanced website is the first step in that process.

So visit us today and bookmark the site. You won't be disappointed.

*SIERRA CLUB
SOCIAL EVENT*

Post-Valentine Tea at Madhatters

Don't get mad - have some tea instead! At Madhatters Tea, that is, for the Sierra Club's post-Valentine's Day social event. Join us at Madhatters in the King William District, 320 Beauregard, 210-212-4832, Friday, February 16, anytime from 5-8 p.m. Madhatters is a San Antonio tradition and offers wonderful desserts, sandwiches, coffee/wine/drinks, and more than 50 varieties of tea. A great place to relax and talk. Contact person is Ned Allen, 210-347-4768, NO1RVRMAN@yahoo.com.

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.

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.

FEB 23-24, SAT-SUN: LOST MAPLES STATE NATURAL AREA CAMPOUT - JOINT TRIP WITH AUSTIN GROUP

Winter camping at Lost Maples is great. The maple leaves have fallen, but there are eleven miles of hiking trails and stars galore at night in this Hill Country gem about 100 miles northwest of San Antonio. Organized activities will consist of a group hike on Saturday and a potluck dinner on Saturday night. Fees include the park entrance fee and \$15 per party for the campsites and contribution to the Sierra Club. Participants are limited to 14. This is a joint outing with the Austin Group. Please contact Leaders Steve Funderburg (210-317-4186) or steve.funderburg@lsijv.com; or Ellen Clegg (210-832-8115) or eclegg@els.edu for more information or to sign up.

FEB 25, SUN: COMANCHE LOOKOUT CITY PARK MORNING HIKE

Get out and enjoy a brisk morning hike at Comanche Lookout. There is a great view of the city from the top. Meet in the library parking lot at the corner of Judson and Nacogdoches Rd at 10 AM. Difficulty: MODERATE. Cost: suggested \$2 donation

to Alamo Sierra Club. Contact David Klar [dklar63162@aol.com or 495-2148].

MAR 9-11, FRI-SUN: GOOSE ISLAND STATE PARK CAR CAMPING AND WILDLIFE WATCHING

Spring is knocking on the door but the Whooping Cranes have not flown north yet. Come down and base camp in Goose Island State Park near Rockport, Texas. Experience a wide range of activities from taking a Whooping Crane tour to wildlife watching in Aransas Wildlife Refuge 45 minutes away. Space limited to 15. Difficulty: EASY. Cost: suggested donation of \$4 per person. Participants pay their own state park entrance fee and share the fee for the campsites. Car-pooling is encouraged. Leader: David Klar [dklar63162@aol.com or 495-2148]

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 5-9, THUR-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.

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

Every spring we have the opportunity to meet the public and present a positive image of our club. It's also a great way to get to know your fellow club members. If you would like to volunteer at one of the following events, or for more information, contact the person in charge.

Earth Wise Living Day: Saturday, February 24; A cozy community event in Leon Valley with speakers, food, plants and booths on earth friendly products and practices. Jerry Morrissey [jlmorrissey@aol.com, or 382-2614]

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]

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

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

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

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Alamo Group website address
www.alamosierraclub.org

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Alamo Group of the Sierra Club
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 San Antonio, Texas 78209

PERIODICAL

Membership

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

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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

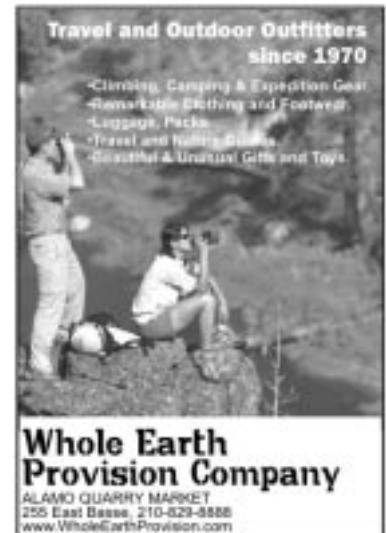
	INDIVIDUAL	JOINT
INTRODUCTORY	<input type="checkbox"/> \$25	
REGULAR	<input type="checkbox"/> \$39	<input type="checkbox"/> \$47
SUPPORTING	<input type="checkbox"/> \$75	<input type="checkbox"/> \$100
CONTRIBUTING	<input type="checkbox"/> \$150	<input type="checkbox"/> \$175
LIFE	<input type="checkbox"/> \$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

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