



THE ALAMO SIERRAN

THE ALAMO GROUP OF THE SIERRA CLUB NEWSLETTER - VOL. 42 No. 4 APRIL 2008

Makhijani Press Conference, CPS Public Hearing

Arjun Makhijani, President of the Maryland-based Institute for Energy and Environmental Research, held a press conference in San Antonio on March 24 to reveal the results of a cost analysis he did on the two nuclear units proposed by CPS Energy and its partner, NRG Energy, Inc. Dr. Makhijani found that the two units would cost between \$12 and \$18 billion. This is in marked contrast to the \$6 to \$7 billion figure NRG claimed last fall. Makhijani based his estimate on projections for two similar reactors by Florida Power and Light, a study done

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Vote on Nuke

San Antonio City Council is expected to vote in late April or early May on a rate increase requested by CPS Energy. The date of the vote is not at this time known. Please consult the Alamo Group website (www.alamosierraclub.org) for the date and time.

CPS is asking for a 5% increase for clean up of the Deeley coal plant, efficiency measures, and financing of design work on the new nuclear units CPS wants built at the STP site. We are asking that members call their Council representatives (see back page of newsletter) and urge reps to vote against the portion of the rate increase targeted for the nuke. Please call Loretta at 492-4620 for more information.

A Word from the Chair by Loyd Cortez

I am happy to report that I and the Alamo Group have survived my first two months as your new Chair. I have Jerry Morrissey and Hector Gonzalez to thank for their help on the many issues that I have had to address. There are many challenges ahead, but with your support, I will strive to do what's in the best interest of our club and our community.

Every week an important issue is brought to our attention that we must take some sort of action on. Sometimes all it takes is for a member of the ExCom to attend a meeting and deliver comments on the pros and cons of the presentation. But often we need to mobilize as many people as we can to call or email and state our position on an issue. Here is where I need your support. Sign up for our Action Alerts by sending an email to loydcortez@earthlink.net.

Don't forget to visit our website for more information. As an example, we will be having a monthly social, so mark your calendar and join us. We are also planning to have a Sierra Club Singles Social. I am hopeful that these events will be popular so that we can continue to offer them on a regular basis. We are open to suggestions on places where singles can meet and mingle. Send your ideas to me at loydcortez@earthlink.net.

Please remember that the National Sierra Club organization is holding its board of directors election. If you have not already received it, you should be getting your ballot by mail or email depending on which method you specified previously. Here is the link to the National website for more information on the election: <http://www.sierraclub.org/bod/2008election/>

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.

April 15, 2008: 70 Days on the Rio Grande

Praised by Texas Monthly, Texas Parks & Wildlife Magazine, San Antonio Express-News, Dallas Morning News and other publications, The Tecate Journals: Seventy Days on the Rio Grande is the chronicle of Laredoan Keith Bowden's trip down the Rio Grande from El Paso to the Gulf of Mexico. Pulitzer Prize finalist and American Book Award winner Luis Alberto Urrea called The Tecate Journals "a book I wish I had written." The author will share his photos, experiences and border insights.

May 20, 2008: Photographic Journey through Southeast Asia

Fellow Sierran David Klar will take you on a photographic excursion through seven Southeast Asian countries. Highlights include climbing Mt. Fuji in Japan, the awe-inspiring ruins of Angkor Wat in Cambodia, Borneo's biodiversity, and the beauty and ethnic diversity of Thailand, Vietnam, Malaysia and Laos. Come celebrate Southeast Asia as seen through the eyes of an independent traveler.

Why Vote for Candidates Sierra Club Political Committee Endorses?

Although each one of us must make our own individual, considered decisions when it comes time to vote, we make our greatest impact on the political scene as an organization when we support our endorsed candidates. The endorsement process starts with sending questionnaires to the candidates in the races that the political committee feels are crucial to our agenda, and upon which we feel we can have an impact. We do not endorse in all races. We

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Texas Cool Cities

The Cool Cities campaign is alive and well in Texas. As the U.S. Conference of Mayors (<http://www.usmayors.org/>) Climate Protection Agreement (CPA) enters its 4th year (it began Feb 2005) there are now over 780 mayors listed as having signed, and the number goes up almost daily. This represents over 77 million U.S. citizens.

The two newest Texas cities are still too new to be shown yet on the U.S. Conference of Mayors web site with the 20 others from Texas. The mayors of the City of College Station and the City of Hutto both officially signed the CPA in January 2008.

Continued on Page 2

CPS Public Hearing - Continued

by the Tennessee Valley Authority, a report from Moody's Investor Service, and his own calculations using CPS data. Makhijani stated that his estimate did not include the potential for cost escalation due to construction delays or other unforeseen events. The original two reactors of the STNP, because of these factors, wound up costing nearly six times the original estimate and went online years after their planned start-up date. Says San Antonio Current reporter Greg Harman, "If the planned STP expansion follows the same inflationary trajectory, the price tag will wind up over \$30 billion."

Dr. Makhijani warned that the risks to CPS and to its ratepayers were great. He cautioned the utility not to rush into this arrangement "until an independent, detailed study with current cost estimates of the plants and possible alternatives are complete and have been publicly disclosed and discussed." Dr. Makhijani noted that the KEMA study prepared for CPS Energy concluded that CPS's load could be reduced by 1200 megawatts using efficiency measures. This amount is larger than the 1080 megawatts CPS would get from its 40% share of the proposed units. The Makhijani study was done for the Austin-based SEED Coalition. Karen Hadden, Director of SEED, was present at the press conference, as were Lanny Sinkin, consultant to the SEED Coalition, and Loretta Van Coppenolle, Alamo Group Conservation Chair.

The day following the press conference CPS held a public hearing on the proposed nuclear units and on the rate increase that will in part be necessitated by CPS's first expenditure of \$206 million on them. Alamo Group Chair Loyd Cortez spoke on behalf of the Sierra Club, stating the Sierra Club's position on nuclear energy. Cortez stated that the Sierra Club will continue to oppose nuclear power until deficiencies related to global warming, mining, waste disposal, vulnerability to terrorist attack, and other matters are eliminated. He urged the CPS Board to vote against the rate increase for nuclear.

In all, 35 citizens spoke before the CPS Board. Thirty-one of them spoke in opposition to the nuclear expansion. Those who spoke in favor represented business interests.

Why Vote - Continued

invite candidates for interviews to ascertain the candidates' true commitment to the environment. Not all candidates choose to participate in our interview process. However, many do and we are able to form lasting relationships with the individuals we meet whether they win or lose and whether we endorse them or not. The interview process is educational for both the committee and the candidate. We also do research on the candidates' voting records and campaign contributions.

In recent years, issues have arisen regarding a candidate after an endorsement has been made. This year, the political committee is asking all of our 2000-plus members to keep their eyes and ears open in their precincts and homeowners associations to provide us with any information members think is relevant regarding the issues or the candidates. Please contact any member of the political committee with your thoughts, information or concerns.

At our March meeting the political committee decided to focus on the sheriff's race, the county commissioner's race and the 23rd U.S. Congressional District race. Our next meeting will be April 10th.

Russell Seal

Texas Cool Cities Continued

The story of the College Station campaign followed the "classic" process of the Sierra Club Cool Cities campaign. The local group Brazos Environmental Action Network (BEAN) got in touch with the Lone Star Sierra Club to request help and information about Cool Cities in mid-2007. Ann Drumm, our Cool Cities "guru", set up her standard half-day training session which took place in October 2007, and the BEANers put together their City Team that same day, starting to plan their next steps.

In November, about 5 of the team attended a monthly "open mike" session at the city council where the team leader spoke - the first approach to the city. That same evening the Sierra Club was approached by Assistant City Manager Terry Childers who expressed his support, saying it aligned well with his recently proposed "Green College Station Initiative." The team crafted its messages together via email and a dialog with Mr. Childers ensued. The city set up a Green

Workshop for December to gather public input. The BEAN team presented to Mr. Childers and the city water expert in December.

Meanwhile, Dr. Andrew Dressler, Professor of Atmospheric Science at Texas A&M, together with other faculty signed a Statement on Climate Change <http://www.met.tamu.edu/climatechange.php>. We got in touch with Dr. Dressler and he joined our effort, offering to join the cities new Green Advisory Committee.

On January 24th the city council formally voted in favor of a resolution to support the U.S. Mayors CPA, and the mayor later signed. Just this week, after a presentation of a 15-minute video demo of ICLEI's software, Mr. Childers decided to join ICLEI-Local Government for Sustainability. <http://www.iclei.org/index.php?id=391>

On the other hand, the Sierra Club had nothing to do with the City of Hutto's decision. Some guy called Al Gore did it all. A planner employed by City of Hutto named Will Guerin saw Al Gore speak about the U.S. Conference of Mayors Climate Protection Agreement and thought to himself "I wonder if the City of Hutto would support that?" He went to his boss, Community Development Director Matthew Lewis, who readily agreed to take up the idea. Mr. Lewis arranged for a resolution to be considered by the city council, who in December 2007 voted unanimously in favor of supporting the mayor's signing the CPA and in January 2008 the mayor signed. After we heard about that in the press, we helped by showing Will and his colleagues the 15-minute video demo of ICLEI's software to help them get started with ICLEI membership.

And there is even action on the horizon in Austin. The city has hired Jake Stewart to work on implementation of the Austin Climate Protection Plan and Jake has already started doing outreach work with Austin residents. Once he formally starts the new job in March, we can begin discussing ways Austin Cool Cities volunteers can participate with the implementation of Austin's plan.

So come join us as we help more of the smaller cities around central Texas jump on this ever-growing bandwagon! To join a City Team, phone Terry Moore at 214-608-0314 or email terrym@certifiedsoftwaredevelopment.com

The X Prize

On March 20, at the New York Auto Show, an entity called the X PRIZE Foundation announced it will give \$10 million to anyone-innovators as well as established automakers - who can come up with a car that gets 100 miles per gallon (or its equivalent). Teams must be able to design, build, and demonstrate production capability of their vehicles. Entries so far include a car designed in southern France that runs on compressed air. Winners will be announced, with a great deal of publicity promised, in a year or two. Many governmental and non-governmental bodies support the X PRIZE, including the Sierra Club. For more information, please go to www.progressiveautoxprize.org



SAT, APR 12: SPRING WILDFLOWER HIKE AT MCKINNEY ROUGHS

Enjoy the wildflowers on a 5-7 mile day hike at McKinney Roughs on the Colorado River north of Bastrop. This park has trails in diverse habitats on the bluffs and along the river. Hike starts at 10:30 AM at the park. 70+ mile trip each way. Participants can make carpool arrangements. Difficulty: MODERATE. Cost: donations accepted. Leader: Jerry Morrissey, jlmorrissey@aol.com or 382-2614.

SAT-SUN, APR 19-20: CHAPARRAL WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT AREA

Join us for spring flowers and fragrant blooming shrubs in this South Texas wildlife area. The brushy environment is home to a variety of birds, mammals, and reptiles, including roadrunner and Harris' hawk, javelina and whitetail deer, and Texas horned lizard and Texas tortoise. Trails include a 2.5-mile nature trail, an 8.5-mile road loop, and a wheelchair-accessible 0.5-mile nature trail. Difficulty: EASY. Cost: donations accepted. Camping is free. Leader: Fred Wills, fredwills@att.net or 673-9566 (check with leader regarding current status of this outing)

SUN, APR 20: MISSION TRAIL BIKE RIDE

This bike ride is on paved trails and roads that are along the San Antonio River and that lead from mission to mission in the SE part of San Antonio. Wildflowers should be out. We will stop to take quick walks through some

of the missions along the way. Distance may be up to 18 miles round-trip, depending on participants. Pace will be "no riders left behind." Minimum age is 12. Helmets are required. Be ready to ride by 9 AM in the grass parking lot SE of the paved parking lot in front of Mission Concepción on Mission Road. Difficulty: MODERATE. Cost: donations accepted. Leader: Lee Dodge, LSG999@earthlink.net or 647-0216.

JULY 20-27: BACKPACKING IN THE GILA WILDERNESS

The 560,000-acre Gila Wilderness in southwestern New Mexico is our oldest wilderness area. We'll hike through 27 miles of it on the Redstone-Baldy Loop near the Arizona border. There, we'll experience riparian to alpine environments while passing through the land of the ancient Mogollon people. We'll hike 4 days and spend one day camping to relax in the wilderness, fish and day-hike. After hiking out, we'll stay at the Palace Hotel in Silver City to clean up and visit this historic mining town. This is a strenuous trip for experienced backpackers. Fee: \$275 (includes transportation and one night at the Palace Hotel; food not included). Leader: Steve Funderburg 317-4186 or sfunderburg@rkci.com

We Need You!

Volunteers are needed to take part in the planning committee for the Alamo Group's 40th Anniversary Celebration. This occasion will take many volunteer hours to prepare and carry out. The Alamo Group is looking for people who are willing to join this volunteer committee. The 40th Anniversary will be a celebration of local environmental successes in our community, in addition to educating the public on the need for conservation. The Sierra Club will join with other like-minded organizations to bring this unique, fun event to San Antonio. If you are interested in helping to plan the 40th Anniversary Celebration, please contact Paula Stone at paula@PaulaStoneInteriors.com or 393-7351.

Spring Events Calendar

NW Vista Earth Day (interact with college students)—April 10, Thu, 9:00am to 2:00pm

CFL Community Walk (hand out CFL bulbs and other green living information; contact Ana Paredes: cell number 707-8558, office number 530-1114)—April 12, Sat, 10:00am to 2:00pm

Woodlawn Lake Earth Day (walk along the lake)—April 19, Sat, 10:00am to 4:00pm

UTSA Earth Day (interact with college students)—April 22, Tues, 11:00am to 2:00pm at the 1604 campus

King William Parade (walk in the parade)—April 26, Sat, starts at 7:30am

Solar Fest—May 3, Sat, Maverick Park at Broadway & 10th Street

In Memoriam

The Alamo Group wishes to acknowledge the death of long-time Sierra Club member Jim Koch, who succumbed to a fatal heart attack on February 13. Jim was always passionate concerning the things he cared about, and often spoke and wrote articulately about them. Our condolences are extended to his wife and family.

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MEETING DATES AND CONTACT INFO

General Meeting:	3rd Tuesday 7 p.m.	Jerry Morrissey	497-5470
Executive Committee Meeting:	3rd Friday, 7 p.m.	Loyd Cortez	674-9489
Newsletter Submissions:		Fred Wills	fredwills@att.net
Political Committee Meeting:	2nd Thursday, 7 p.m.	Russel Seal	289-9008
Newsletter Mail Party:	2nd Tuesday, 7 p.m.	Jim Stewart	692-0727
Outings Committee Meeting:	1st Wednesday every 2 months, 7 p.m.	Lee Dodge	647-0216
Conservation Committee Meeting:	1st Thursday, 7 p.m.	L. Van Coppenolle	492-4620

ALAMO GROUP OF THE SIERRA CLUB

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OFFICERS & MEMBERS

Loyd Cortez	Chair Person	674-9489
Ellen Clegg	Secretary	488-7787
Jerry Morrissey		497-5470
Sandy Redmond		872-5390
Jane Ward		829-5575
Hector Gonzalez		226-6069
Paula Stone		393-7351
Fred Wills		673-9566
Scott Wolfe		724-2707
Sharon Dukes (non voting) Treasurer		828-3721

ADMINISTRATIVE CONTACTS

Programs	Eloise Stoker	828-0919
Fundraising	Paula Stone	393-7351
Membership	Sandy Redmond	872-5390
Publicity	Linda Higby.....(585)	330-1890
Mailings	Jim Stewart	692-0727
Newsletter	Fred Wills	673-9566
Website	Richard Alles	494-2088

COMMITTEE CONTACTS

Outings Chair	Lee Dodge	647-0216
Political Committee	Russell Seal	289-9008
Outreach & Education ..	Carolyn Wells	271-0640

CONSERVATION CONTACTS

Conservation Chair	L. Van Coppenolle	492-4620
Assistant Chair	R. Carroll-Bradd	216-6125
Endangered Species	Fred Wills	673-9566
Fluoridation	L. Van Coppenolle	492-4620
Organic Gardening	Dave Klar	495-2148
Recycling	Patricia Martinez	454-5920
Tree Conservation	Richard Alles	494-2088
Volunteer Coordinator ..	Jerry Morrissey	497.5470
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
Dist. 1: Mary Alice P. Cisneros; 207-7279;	district1@sanantonio.gov
Dist. 2: Sheila McNeil; 207-7278;	district2@sanantonio.gov
Dist. 3: Jennifer V. Ramos; 207-7064;	district3@sanantonio.gov
Dist. 4: Phillip A. Cortez; 207-7281;	district4@sanantonio.gov
Dist. 5: Lourdes Galvan; 207-7043;	district5@sanantonio.gov
Dist. 6: Delicia Herrera; 207-7065;	district6@sanantonio.gov
Dist. 7: Justin Rodriguez; 207-7044;	district7@sanantonio.gov
Dist. 8: Diane G. Cibrian; 207-7086;	district8@sanantonio.gov
Dist. 9: Louis E. Rowe; 207-7325;	district9@sanantonio.gov
Dist. 10: John G. Clamp; 207-7276;	district10@sanantonio.gov

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www.alamosierraclub.org

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Alamo Group of the Sierra Club
 P.O. Box 6443
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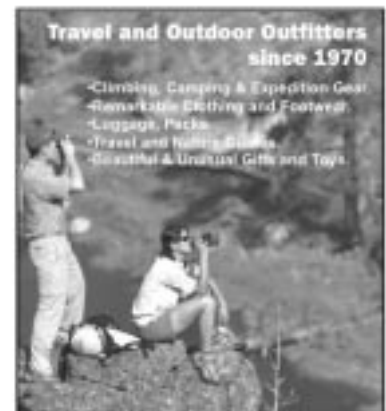
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CONTRIBUTING	<input type="checkbox"/> \$150	<input type="checkbox"/> \$175
LIFE	<input type="checkbox"/> \$1000	<input type="checkbox"/> \$1250
SENIOR	<input type="checkbox"/> \$24	<input type="checkbox"/> \$32
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