



THE ALAMO SIERRAN

THE ALAMO GROUP OF THE SIERRA CLUB NEWSLETTER - VOL. 40 No. 9 OCT 2006

A Word From the Chair by Tom Dukes

The Sierra Club has helped change local attitudes about water use, and we are committed to doing the same thing about energy. Our future depends on it.

A decade ago San Antonio had a drinking problem, but refused to acknowledge it. We were in the midst of a multiyear drought and the aquifer was perilously low, yet few lawns were brown, and water waste was rampant. The Sierra Club filed suit to protect endangered species dependent on the uninterrupted flow of Comal and San Marcos springs, and by the outcry one would assume we had declared war on San Antonio.

Well, the suit was successful, policies were changed, and water conservation has entered the public consciousness. Compared to 1996, this summer's drought caused barely a flicker on the local anxiety meter. San Antonio's per capita water use, once among the highest in the state, is now the lowest. "Essential" is the word used by Trinity professor Char Miller to describe the Sierra Club's role in that transformation.

Today we have an energy problem. Texas holds 8% of the U.S. population, but accounts for 12% of its energy use. We use more electricity than any other state, and also consume more petroleum, coal, and natural gas. "We're # 1," but that isn't something to cheer about.

Burning all those fossil fuels generates plenty of CO₂, so it's no surprise that we rank #1 in the greenhouse emissions that cause global warming - the worst offending state in the worst offending nation, I'm embarrassed to say.

We have nowhere to go but up, and it's long past time for a change. Be a part of the Cool Cities movement. Reduce your energy use, convince your friends and neighbors to do likewise, and help us get the city government on track. Together we can make a difference.

We have a Strategy! Report on the Cool Cities Workshop

The strategy-planning workshop on Sept. 16th was a big success. Twenty-two activists met to hear Phyllis Dunham, of The Lone Star Chapter of the Sierra Club, teach us how to run an effective campaign. During the five-hour session she stressed the importance of the three key phases: Creating Demand, Establishing Accountability and Taking Delivery.

1. Creating Demand in this case is letting the citizenry of San Antonio know that there are actions which are being taken on a city-by-city basis, all over the nation, to help fight global warming and our city can take those same actions. We must educate San Antonians about the very real threat global warming is to our climate and

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DOWNSIZE YOUR CO₂ FOOTPRINT Put yourself on an energy diet!

Reduce *your* personal CO₂ footprint – the amount of CO₂ pollution you're responsible for – by changing the way you use energy. It's the very best way you can fight global warming.

We all need to become "climate cool neutral." That's the phrase to describe having a net-zero impact on Earth's climate (for more info, go to www.climateneutralnetwork.org).

We can reach climate cool neutral by changing the way we use energy. Texas ranks 1st in the country in per capita consumption of electricity and 6th in per capita energy consumption. We have nowhere to go but up.

What can we do to reduce our energy consumption and downsize our CO₂ footprint? In our homes, we Texans typically use 45% of our energy for heating

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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 6:45, program at 7 P.M.

October 17, 2006: Cool and Green Building. Randy Carroll-Bradd presents the "Grid-Wall" Building System and Johnathan Boyd discusses "Solar Deflection."

November 21, 2006: The Audubon Society presents birdlife updates of San Antonio and the Mitchell Lake Center.

Cool Cities Fund Appeal Update

As we announced last month, an anonymous donor has graciously offered a \$2000 **matching** grant if 200 local Sierrans will each donate \$10 or more to our Cool Cities campaign. We are well on our way, but still need to hear from many more of you to realize this generous and much needed gift. Thank you to everyone who has contributed so far; we appreciate your involvement and will be printing a list of donors next month.

If you have not sent in a contribution, please consider doing so. The matching

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Federal and State Election Endorsements Election Day November 7 Remember to Vote

The redistricted Congressional races will be at the top of the November 7 ballot. **John Courage** is the Sierra Club endorsed candidate in District 21. He was heralded by the national Sierra Club for his uncompromising support for the environment and his strong stance on election reform. To volunteer for the Courage campaign call Club member Loretta Van Coppenolle at 210-492-4620 or Courage headquarters at 210-826-3911.

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Make SA Cool City continued

then provide them with effective responses. The mayor must then be advised of the concerns of the citizens. We will be joining with other local environmental groups to increase the impact of our position.

2. Establishing Accountability is the second part. We must hold Mayor Hardberger responsible for signing the U.S. Mayor's Climate Protection Agreement to reduce the production of global greenhouse gases in San Antonio. We will be ready to thank him publicly when he does sign. If he hesitates, we will need to keep grassroots political pressure on him until he changes his mind.

3. Taking Delivery is actually getting Mayor Hardberger's signature on the U.S. Mayors Climate Protection Agreement. Our target date for this is before the end of the year. This is a short period of time and we could use additional help in reaching our goal.

Pledging the city to reduce our CO₂ emissions to 7% below 1990 levels by the year 2012 is only worthwhile if the city makes good on the pledge. We will need to help guide the choice of pollution reduction methods that are considered and also watch to see that they are actually implemented. But accomplishing this will make our city cleaner, healthier, more beautiful and cooler.

An additional benefit to the Alamo Group is that by strengthening our organization for this particular campaign, we will be better prepared for the next campaign. As the oldest and largest grassroots environmental organization in the country, such campaigns are our mission. We invite each of our members to join us as active participants in this great American tradition. Don't just bemoan the current state of the environment; help us improve it. To join in this important effort, call Dave Klar 495-2148.

Paula D. Stone

Energy Footprint continued

and cooling, 24% for hot water and 31% for the refrigerator, lights and so on. Call CPS Energy (210-353-2302) and sign up for a free energy audit. At the end of the audit you will get a report and a \$15 Home Depot coupon. CPS also has a Peak Saver program. With this program you get a free Honeywell programmable thermostat installed at no charge. By programming different day and night temperatures, you can save up to 10% on your energy bill.

Next, drive smart (San Antonio's gasoline consumption is 19% higher than the average large city). For each gallon of gasoline you burn, you are releasing 20 pounds of pollutants into the atmosphere. Buy the most fuel-efficient vehicle you can afford, maintain it properly, and make sure your tires are aired up.

For more ways you can help, visit <http://www.sierraclub.org/coolhome/>. Here are some suggestions to start you thinking about how you can do *your* part to be climate cool neutral in south central Texas:

- Use R-30 insulation in your walls and attic
- Have your A/C unit serviced annually. If you buy one, get a rating of 14 SEER (seasonal Energy Efficiency Ratio) and "Energy Star"
- Change your A/C filters every two weeks
- Install solar screen or solar film on your windows
- Set the thermostat on your water heater at 120 degrees
- Use fluorescent bulbs wherever possible

Beck Steiner

Mailing Party Heroes

A huge thank you goes out to our September mailing party participants. These cheerful volunteers were unfazed by the daunting task of stuffing bulky envelopes into last month's 2100 newsletters, in addition to "dotting" them closed and applying labels. Everyone tackled the job with gusto, perhaps because after we finished, we reconvened at a nearby eatery to celebrate Marsha Meredith's retirement. Our grateful appreciation to Whole Foods for the use of their meeting room, and to all those who pitched in to help. Mailers included Stephanie Buckholdt, Loyd Cortez, Lee Dodge, Sharon and Tom Dukes, Hector

Gonzalez, Dave Klar, Melody Krumdieck, and Valeria Lopez. Also helping were Marsha Meredith, Kathy Newman, Stephanie Rhodes, Skye Rosenberg, Kim Smith, Meredith Sterling, Paula Stone, and Fred Wills. If you would like to join in on next month's fun, contact Jim Stewart at 692-0727.

Election Endorsements continued

Other Sierra Club endorsements are U.S. Senate – **Barbara Radnofsky**; Governor – Chris Bell; Lieutenant Governor – **David Dewhurst**; State Senate, District 19 – **Carlos Uresti**; State House: District 116 – **Trey Martinez Fischer**, District 117 – **David Leibowitz**, District 120 – **Ruth Jones McClendon**, District 123 – **Mike Villarreal**, District 124 – **Jose Menendez**, District 125 – **Joaquin Castro**. Information on campaigns of the endorsed candidates is found on the Internet at sierravote.com.

Early voting is from October 23 through November 3.

Cool Cities Fund update continued

grant means your money will go farther, and what you give will help us reduce San Antonio's contribution to global warming, one of the greatest environmental threats imaginable.

If you have misplaced the pre-addressed envelope that appeared in last month's newsletter, you can mail your gift to The Alamo Group of the Sierra Club, P.O. Box 6443, San Antonio, TX 78209.

Tommy Adkisson

Endorsed for Bexar County Commissioner, Precinct 4

Commissioner Adkisson has earned the Sierra Club endorsement for his re-election due to his outstanding leadership on environmental issues such as air quality, alternative fuels, energy efficiency for County buildings and the use of solar energy for the County jail. Contact Beck Steiner at 342-6694 to assist with this campaign.

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.

2007 Sierra Club CALENDARS

Support your local Sierra Club group by purchasing your 2007 calendars from us. Loyd Cortez will again be handling the sale of these gorgeous calendars. You can contact Loyd at 674-9489; or just bring your money to the next General Meeting. Remember, you can't go wrong with a Sierra Club Calendar as a gift.

Engagement Calendar: \$14
Wall Calendar: \$13

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.

OCT 14-15, SAT-SUN: PEDERNALES FALLS BACKPACKING FOR BEGINNERS

Have you ever had the desire to go backpacking but did not know if it really was for you? Our annual beginner's backpacking trip provides novices with instruction from veterans and a first backpacking trip at a park close to home. This will be a short backpacking trip designed primarily for the novice backpacker, but all are welcome. The leaders will have a required orientation

for all participants on Friday October 6th, 7:00 PM (location TBA) to help those new to backpacking prepare for the trip. Participants provide their own equipment and food. There will be a limit of 10. Minimum age: 13. Difficulty: MODERATE. Donation: \$6 members, \$8 non-members. Participants pay their own state park entrance fee and provide their own transportation with car-pooling encouraged. Co-leaders: Bill Rogers [830-885-2523 or rogers@uthscsa.edu]; Terry Platt [210-695-9570 or tplatt@earthlink.net]

OCT 22, SUN: FRIEDRICH WILDERNESS PARK DAY HIKE

Enjoy a modest hike around a city wilderness area on the northwest side of San Antonio. Enjoy some nice climbs and good views. Meet at 9 AM around the benches near the bathrooms south of the parking lot. Difficulty: EASY to MODERATE. Suggested minimum donation: \$2.00 per adult. Register with leader: Lee Dodge [lsg999@earthlink.net, 647-0216].

OCT 29, SUN: LEON CREEK GREENBELT HIKE

Meet at O. P. Schnabel Park on Bandera Rd. at 9 AM for a 3-mile hike along Leon Creek and in Schnabel Park. Difficulty: EASY to MODERATE. Leader: Jerry Morrissey, [497-5470, jlmorrissey@aol.com].

NOV 3-5, FRI-SUN: PALMETTO STATE PARK CAMPING AND BIG RIDING

Come out for some camping and bike rides varying in distance up to 30 miles. We'll camp out Friday and Saturday nights, and do the biking on Saturday. Contact leader for details: Jim Stewart, jimstewart1214@satx.rr.com, 692-0727; or assistant leader: Lee Dodge, LSG999@earthlink.net 647-0216.

NOV 17-19, FRI-SUN: LOST MAPLES CAR CAMPING AND HIKE

Fall is a great time of year to enjoy the outdoors in Texas, and Lost Maples with its beautiful trees and trails is certainly one of the best places for camping and hiking. We'll have a new moon, so the

skies will be dark with lots of stars. On Saturday we'll take 5 to 7 mile hike and have a potluck dinner that evening. Space is limited to 16. Difficulty: MODERATE to DIFFICULT. Suggested donation: \$4 per adult. Participants pay their own state park entrance fee and share the fee for the campsites. Car-pooling is encouraged. Leaders: Marsha Meredith [marsha1205@sbcglobal.net or 675-4097] and Bonnie Mitchell [drmitchell@quickca.net].

Statement of Ownership, Management, and Circulation

1. The Alamo Sierran, 2. Publication No. 0018-475, 3. Sep. 29, 2006, 4. Monthly (except July), 5. No. of issues published annually: 11, 6. Annual Subscription Price \$10.00, 7. 615 Willow, San Antonio, Bexar, TX 78202-1247, Contact Person: Hector J. Gonzalez, 210-226-6069, 8. Same as 7, 9. Publisher: Alamo Group of the Sierra Club, P.O. Box 6443, San Antonio, TX 78209-0443, Editor: Marsha Meredith, P.O. Box 6443, San Antonio, TX 78209-0443, Managing Editor: N/A, 10. Owner: Alamo Group of the Sierra Club, P.O. Box 6443, San Antonio, TX 78209-0443, 11. Known Bondholders, Mortgagees, and Other Security Holders: None, 12. Tax Status: The purpose, function, and non-profit status of this organization and the exempt status for federal income tax purposes has not changed during the preceding 12 months. 15. Extent and Nature of Circulation: A. Total No. of Copies (Net Press Run) : Average No. Copies Each Issue During the Preceding 12 Months (Avg.): 2123, No. Copies of Single Issue Nearest to Filing Date (Sept.): 2075; B. Paid and/or Requested Circulation: 1. Paid/Requested Outside-County Mail Subscriptions Stated on Form 3541: Avg. 468 Sept. 484; 2. Paid In-County Subscriptions: Avg. 1557 Sept. 1520; 3. Sales through Dealers and Carriers, Street Vendors, Counter Sales and Other Non-USPS Paid Distribution: Avg. 0 Sept. 0; 4. Other Classes Mailed Through USPS: Avg. 0 Sept. 0; C. Total Paid and/or Requested Circulation (15B 1, 2, 3, & 4): Avg. 2055 Sept. 2004; D. Free Distribution by Mail: Avg. 0 Sept. 0; E. Free Distribution Outside the Mail (Carriers or other means): Avg. 68 Sept. 71; F. Total Free Distribution (15D and 15E): Avg. 68 Sept. 71; G. Total Distribution (15C and 15F): Avg. 2123 Sept. 2075; H. Copies not Distributed: Avg. 0 Sept. 0; I. Total (15G and H): Avg. 2123 Sept. 2075; J. Percent Paid and/or Requested Circulation (15C divided by 15G times 100): Avg. 96.8 Sept. 96.6. 17. I certify that the statements made by me above are correct and complete. Hector J. Gonzalez, Treasurer.

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