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Notes from the Chair

2009: A Very Good Year

While the 2009 News headlines have been filled with economic and political woes, this Nation's environmental community has been pressing ahead on all fronts. With unprecedented speed and boldness, our new leaders have been undoing many of the past sins and forging into the "positive" work of cleaning up old pollution while also trying to save more and more of our wilderness heritage.

These smaller battles have not made the big headlines, but their impact is significant. From protecting wolves and polar bears to forcing Texas coal plants to follow the clean air laws, every Sierra Club member can be proud of their leading role.

So get ready for an even greater 2010 and have a Happy Sierra Club New Year!

Your Dallas Chair,
Wendel Withrow

January General Meeting Program - January 12, 7:00 pm

Ride The Rockies

When you think of Colorado, you think of snow skiing, but what

about the summer months? Well, our January meeting will show what Colorado looks like from a bicycle traveling up and down mountain passes and camping each night on the Ride The Rockies Bicycle Tour loop of 380 miles of fantastic scenery! Four Dallas Sierra Club members tackled the Ride The Rockies event this past summer. Starting in Glenwood Springs, they road to Hotchkiss then to Gunnison, Salida, Leadville, Aspen and finally back to the start at Glenwood Springs. Along the way they rode some of Colorado's most scenic highways and over the most incredible mountain passes. Each night a campsite at the town made for a memorable experience. Along the way the riders met some of the 2,400 other riders and many local town members for food and entertainment. It just so happened that the Aspen Jazz Festival happened at the same time. Two of the members enjoyed some local fishing and some other members of the Sierra Club Team rode with Lance Armstrong on a training ride before Lance headed off to ride in the Tour de France. Come and see this slide show of Colorado from a two wheel perspective as Josh, Dan, George and Terry share their experiences with you.

Don't miss this fantastic slide show. There is no better way to start a new decade than with your own virtual Rocky Mountain bike ride.

See the Fryer Flyer

Come early to the General Meeting. Out in the parking lot you can check out Dallas County Schools (DCS) new "Fryer Flyer," a school bus with twin fuel systems, one carrying biodiesel and one carrying WVO (waste vegetable oil). Built with factory stock items by DCS technicians, it includes a computerized switch to maximize fuel efficiency based on engine temperature.

DCS President Larry Duncan and the DCS Board of Trustees set alternative fuels as a priority for the county-wide school bus provider. The future looks great for more buses to be converted to 'grease machines'.

[Visit our website](#) for complete information about our General Meeting, including a map.

Outings Highlights

Taos Bus Trip, February 18-22

IT'S TIME TO PLAY IN THE SNOW!. Want to enjoy a variety of winter activities but can't get away over the holidays? Reservations are now open for our annual bus trip to Taos, New Mexico leaving after work Thursday, February 18 and returning early morning, Monday, February 22. The trip offers hotel or yurt lodging and several activity options including alpine snowshoeing, downhill skiing, snowboarding and snow tubing. We also offer a walking tour for those interested in learning more about outdoor photography and local culture, including a visit to the famous Taos Pueblo. Of course, you're also welcome to just stroll Taos to enjoy the many galleries, museums and restaurants. Reservations will fill fast and are needed by January 27, so act now. For complete trip details, price and reservation information, ski on over to www.dallassierraclub.org.

For a complete list of our outings, [visit our outings page](#).

Come Join The PACE Campaign!

Would you like to add solar panels or energy saving features to your home or business but it just seems too cost prohibitive? Legislation has recently been passed allowing cities to create Energy

Districts to loan homeowners and businesses money for renewable power and energy efficiency (HB 1937). This new law allows municipal governments to sell bonds and use the proceeds to make loans to home owners and businesses that can cover the up-front cost of energy efficiency improvements. Property owners then pay back the loan through a voluntary line item on their property tax bills at a low fixed interest rate over a 20-year period. The loan is tied to the property, so if you move away the balance stays with the building. This process is called PACE, which stands for "Property Assessed Clean Energy".

Why join the PACE campaign? Because your local city government needs to know about this new law! If you would like to get involved and urge your city to adopt this program, please join us on JANUARY 16th, SATURDAY, from 1:00 to 4:00 PM at Brookhaven College's Administration building (S building, Room 220) to learn more. (When you enter the building, go up the steps and the meeting room is right there.) For more information contact Rita Beving at 214-557-2271 or any of the Conservation Committee Co-Chairs.

The Outings Corner

How to Pick the Right Tent

by Thai Le

When I thought of different aspect of tents to write about for this article, I didn't want it to be another rehash of what type of tents available for purchase on the market or a litany of pros and cons. Those types of information are readily available with a simple Google search. I then realized what I want to share are my experiences I've learn from my use of several tents I have owned, and knowledge acquired during my research for the ever elusive better, lighter tents. These were the nuggets of insights I often asked more seasoned backpackers and are not as easily found in print or in the ether.

As with all gear, each type of tent has their purpose and place. For this article we will mainly look at criterions that will help us select a suitable tent for those multiday backpacking trips, but these same criterions are also valid when applied to more specialized tents. Some of the factors I weight when I decide on which tent to take are: capacity, weight, ease of use, and moisture management. Capacity ratings are often generous. Don't take the manufacturer's capacity ratings at face value. I, on the other hand, look at the area - starting at 16 sq. ft. per person for when I feel Spartan; to 20+ sq. ft. per person for when I want my decadent luxury.

Another thing to remember is to factor capacity and weight together. The square footage is inversely proportional to the comfort of carrying. On trips with severe elevation changes, it's better to go spartan and lighter because those ounces do add up, but when you have a second, a third or a fourth to divvy up the shouldering duties, you can take a larger tent (sq. ft. per person) because the weight increase for a multi capacity tent is not proportional to the number of person increased.

When you look at a tent design, be very critical of the ease of use. How easy is it to setup? Try to imagine having to set it up in the dark, exhausted, hungry and wet during a driving rainstorm via a headlamp. Can the parts or orientation easily determined? Differentiating between a dark grey and black tip of a pole or its length by head lamp is not fun in the above condition. Can the tent be set up in another configuration or sequence? Being able to set up the tent without the rainfly, or the "fast and light" method of just the footprint and rainfly gives you flexibility. Also being able to quickly erect the "fast and light" method allows you to get your gear and yourself out of increment weather. You can then erect the tent body underneath the rainfly at your leisure. Practice erecting your tent. Also, learn how to erect it in high wind.

Another aspect of tent design I learned is how good will the tent be able to manage moisture – keep out the precipitation, but still allow the evaporative moisture to escape. All the hi tech fabrics will fail under the right conditions, so look at design features like adjustable vents high up on the rainfly and tent body, and 3-way zippers on the rainfly that allow you to open and close for ventilation. Also, can your tent design give you any leeway in height adjustment of the rainfly to the ground? This allows you to control airflow between the rainfly and tent. Thus cool air coming in the bottom to push the hotter, moisture laden air out the top vents. With the right design, you can ventilate your tent even during a heavy rainstorm.

Lastly, look at how you can modify your tent to make it better. Use colored tape to help you identify parts easily at night. Replace the cords with lighter Spectra glow in the dark cords. This sounds really esoteric but not face-planting and ripping the tent while answering nature's call at night is worth the money. Also, add extra rigidity to the tent by adding loops for extra tie-downs higher up in the rainfly. On the bottom side location of tie-downs, sew in Velcro loops to the seams to fasten them to the pole structure. Now the rainfly is locked to the pole structure and when you pull the rainfly taut via the tie-downs, you have a stronger structure capable of handling severe wind.

No tent is perfect. That is why, for the avid outdoor person, you eventually own several tents. Each will have their pros and cons. It is the experiences you acquire that allow you to choose and use the correct tent for adventure you have planned.

Recycling Round-Up

by Rita Raccoon

Recent Recycling News - January 2010

New EPA Administrator for Region 6

Finally someone at the EPA who believes in Protecting the Environment!

EPA Administrator Lisa P. Jackson announced the selection of Dr. Alfredo "Al" Armendariz as the Agency's Regional Administrator for EPA's Region 6. This region encompasses Louisiana, Arkansas, New Mexico, Texas, Oklahoma, and 66 Tribal Nations. Dr. Armendariz is best known locally for his active involvement in air quality and other environmental issues.

Regional Administrators are responsible for managing the Agency's regional activities under the direction of the EPA Administrator. They promote state and local environmental protection efforts and serve as a liaison to state and local government officials. Regional Administrators are tasked with ensuring EPA's efforts to address the environmental crises of today are rooted in three fundamental values: science-based policies and programs, adherence to the rule of law, and transparency.

Dr. Armendariz is leaving his position as an Associate Professor at Southern Methodist University in Dallas, Texas, where he taught environmental and civil engineering. After college, he worked as a research assistant at the MIT Center for Global Change Science at their Atmospheric Chemistry Laboratory in Massachusetts. He later joined Radian Corporation in North Carolina as a chemical engineer and in 2002 joined the faculty at Southern Methodist University, spending a summer on special assignment to EPA's Dallas office as an Environmental Scientist. At Southern Methodist University he received several outstanding faculty awards and was selected as a Royster Society Fellow at the University of North Carolina. Armendariz received his B.S. in chemical engineering from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), received his M.E. in Environmental Engineering from the University of Florida, and his Ph.D. in Environmental Engineering from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

Recycle Those Christmas Trees!

Don't throw that Christmas tree to the curb! Recycle it!

OPTION 1 - Take it on January 9th to Texas Discovery Gardens in Fair Park to be mulched for the garden. From 9 a.m. to 4 p.m., trees free of ornaments, tinsel, nails, lights, etc will be accepted for shredding. The mulch will be used to keep live trees and shrubs in the garden moist and healthy over the coming year. The gardens are at 3501 Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard. (214) 428-7476.

OPTION 2 - Dallas Residents can take their tree and get free mulch! More information at <http://www.dallascityhall.com/pdf/san/MakeYourTreeHappy.pdf>

Dallas Goes to Once-a-Week Trash/Recycling Pick-up

If you've passed the marshalling yard at the Highway 75 exit to I-30, you've noticed a tremendous increase in the number of 96-gallon rolling carts stored there. Dallas is going to once-a-week trash/recycling pick-up - on the same day - citywide. The additional carts will ensure the spread of recycling across the city.

Richland College Debuts 30 Green/Renewable Energy Programs

Richland College's Department of Continuing Education is proud to announce the offering of 30 new online renewable energy training classes beginning in the spring semester. Offered in partnership with Protrain Online, these programs will train individuals for a new career with a focus on green, clean-tech and sustainable business practices.

According to the Sustainable Energy Coalition, 4.2 million new jobs are expected in this emerging employment sector over the next 30 years. This training is expected to attract those who are changing careers, displaced workers, construction personnel, home inspectors, real estate professionals, architects and engineers.

Registration begins on Tuesday, Dec. 8 for spring 2010 classes. For additional information, please contact Heather Morrison, coordinator of Continuing Education, at 972-761-6716.

Calendar

Here is our calendar through February. For complete listings, visit us at www.dallassierraclub.org.




JAN 7 (THU) YOUNG SIERRANS HH/DINNER - INDIA WEST - ADDISON/DALLAS Please join us for a Happy Hour/Dinner at India West on Thursday, January 7th! Arrive anytime after 6:00p for happy hour; dinner at 7:00p. Please RSVP by noon on 1/7 to the Pingg invitation or the youngsierrans@dallassierraclub.org email address so we have a rough estimate for seating. All 20s/30s welcome; you don't have to be a Young Sierran or Sierra Club member to attend. **Address: 5290 Beltline Rd. Addison 75254** Contact: [Candace Weinberg](mailto:Candace.Weinberg@dallassierraclub.org)




JAN 9 (SAT) WHITE ROCK LAKE CLEANUP. Walk and talk while helping to pick up trash and recyclables at the Sierra Club's adopted section of White Rock Lake Park. Meet at 8:15 AM at the Love of the Lake office on the Northeast corner of Garland Rd. and Buckner Blvd. Look for a crowd of people drinking free juice and coffee. Gloves, trash bags, etc. provided. Our area includes


one of the wonderful prairie restoration areas, so there are always birds and wildflowers to enjoy. The lake and your karma will thank you. Brunch afterwards. Leader: [Carol Nash](#) 214-824-0244(H)


 **JAN 12 (TUE) DALLAS SIERRA CLUB GENERAL MEETING.** See [above](#) for details about our Ride The Rockies slide show.


 **JAN 15 (FRI) SIERRA SINGLES: DALLAS MUSEUM OF ART WITH BRAVE COMBO!**
BRAVE COMBO AT DMA 6:30 PM Late Night at the Dallas Museum of Art on a Friday night, January 15th, in the atrium at the Dallas Museum of Art. Please google the DMA for more info and directions. The music will start at 8 PM, featuring Brave Combo, and they are really fun. Their nuclear polka sounds are terrific. Meet up with Ginger and some other Sierra Singles. She will have on a green bandana, and hopes to have a table or two reserved in the middle of the atrium. Come on out and enjoy yourselves, and see some of the Museum while you're at it! Organizer: [Ginger Bradley](#) 469-223-7902(C)


 **JAN 16 (SAT) COME JOIN THE PACE CAMPAIGN.** Learn how you can help make energy conservation more affordable in the Metroplex. See meeting information [above](#).

 **JAN 20 (WED) OUTINGS COMMITTEE MEETING.** Meet in the upstairs program room at REI (on north side of LBJ between Midway and Welch), at 6:30 PM. Bring your ideas for the Dallas Sierra Club Outings program. We will be planning local outings and bus trips. All outings leaders, future outings leaders, and interested Sierrans welcome. Ask Bill to be placed on the email list for an agenda. Contact: [Bill Greer](#) 972-247-0446(H)


 **JAN 23 (SAT) SATURDAY MORNING BICYCLE RIDE AT WHITE ROCK LAKE** Let's ride around White Rock Lake. Meet at 9:30 AM at the Stone Tables near Lake Highlands Drive and Buckner Blvd. This will be a leisurely trip of 9 miles in about 1-1/2 hours. Any bike and any body is welcome. All participants in Sierra Club bike rides must wear an approved helmet. The trip will be canceled if it is raining at White Rock Lake. Optional brunch afterwards. Leader: [Mark Adams](#) 972-658-1281(C)


 **JAN 23 (SAT) YOUNG SIERRANS 2009 POST-HOLIDAY PARTY - UPTOWN DALLAS** Tired of having so many holiday party options in December, then having a wide open calendar in January? Please join us for our 1st Annual Young Sierrans Post-Holiday Party! We will have games, music and good times for all! Same holiday cheer, only without the holi-daze. Location: Candace's Place. Time: 6:30p-?? Details: BYOB and bring a dish to share - local/organic ingredients encouraged! More info to come! All 20s/30s welcome; you don't have to be a Young Sierran or Sierra Club member to attend. Please RSVP by 1/22. Contact: [Peter Wilson](#)


 **JAN 26 (TUE) INNER CITY OUTINGS MEETING.** Snacks and social starts at 6:45 pm, meeting starts at 7:00 pm. Inner City Outings ("ICO") is an outreach program of the Sierra Club comprised of volunteers who provide wilderness experiences such as day hikes and camping for disadvantaged youth. ICO meets on the fourth Tuesdays at REI, 4515 LBJ Freeway, Farmers Branch, TX 75244 (north side of LBJ between Midway and Welch). All volunteers and those considering becoming an ICO volunteer are welcome. Contact the [ICO Chair](#) for more information. To receive future announcements and meeting information you may sign up for our [email list](#).

 **FEB 6 (SAT) 2ND ANNUAL SUPER WEEKEND 10K DAYHIKE** Hike 10K (6 miles) on the Lake Ray Roberts Greenbelt Corridor. This is an easy trail running along side the Elm Fork of the Trinity River. No reservations required, just show up. Please, no pets. Bring water and a snack. Meet at 9:00 AM at the Hwy 380 Trailhead Park. Admission to the park is \$5.00 per person or free with a Texas State Parks Pass. There will be an optional lunch afterwards. The Park is on US Hwy 380 2.1 miles west of Hwy 377 or 2.8 miles east of Loop 288 in Denton. Hwy 380 can be reached from Central


Expwy, Preston Rd., or the Tollway. Bring extra shoes in case the trail is muddy. The trip will be canceled if it is raining at the trailhead. Leader: [Mark Adams](#) 972-658-1281(C)

 **FEB 13 (SAT) WHITE ROCK LAKE CLEANUP.** Walk and talk while helping to pick up trash and recyclables at the Sierra Club's adopted section of White Rock Lake Park. Meet at 8:15 AM at the Love of the Lake office on the Northeast corner of Garland Rd. and Buckner Blvd. Look for a crowd of people drinking free juice and coffee. Gloves, trash bags, etc. provided. Our area includes one of the wonderful prairie restoration areas, so there are always birds and wildflowers to enjoy. The lake and your karma will thank you. Brunch afterwards. Leader: [Carol Nash](#) 214-824-0244(H)

 **FEB 13 (SAT) BEGINNER BACKPACKING CLASS.** This class is an ideal way to learn about backpacking. Topics include: wilderness ethics, outdoor clothing, boots, backpacks, tents, sleeping bags, cookware, food, and preparing for a trip. Instructors are experienced Dallas Sierra Club leaders. There will be time for questions and a hands-on look at outdoor gear. Lunch of backpacking food is included. You will also have the opportunity to learn about, and sign up for, several beginner backpacking trips. The fee is \$20 for Sierra Club members and \$30 for non-members (cash or check) You can sign up to be a Sierra Club member at the class. No reservations are necessary, just show up. The class will be held at REI, 4515 LBJ Freeway, Dallas, TX 75244 (north side of LBJ between Welch and Midway). The class will start at 10:30 AM and end at about 5:00 PM. Leader: [Bob Gates](#) 972-678-1221(H)

 **FEB 17 (WED) OUTINGS COMMITTEE MEETING.** Meet in the upstairs program room at REI (on north side of LBJ between Midway and Welch), at 6:30 PM. Bring your ideas for the Dallas Sierra Club Outings program. We will be planning local outings and bus trips. All outings leaders, future outings leaders, and interested Sierrans welcome. Ask Bill to be placed on the email list for an agenda. Contact: [Bill Greer](#) 972-247-0446(H)

 **FEB 18-22 (THU-MON) BUS TRIP TO TAOS, NM** Come play in the snow! Reservations are now open for this very popular annual trip to enjoy the winter beauty of northern New Mexico. We'll leave Dallas on our sleeper bus around dinner time on Feb. 18 and return early morning on the 22nd. The trip is very economical and offers hotel with hot tub or backpacking/yurt accommodations. Several activity options including alpine snowshoeing, downhill skiing, snowboarding, snowtubing, an outdoor photography walk and visit to Taos Pueblo, or just time to relax and enjoy the galleries, museums, shops, food and beauty of this scenic and historical town. Activity ratings range from easy to moderately strenuous. Trip includes transportation to/from Taos, Taos Ski Valley and trailheads. Click [here](#) for pdf version of the complete trip write up which includes trip details, activity descriptions, costs and required forms for your reservation. RESERVATIONS ARE NEEDED by JANUARY 27. Bus trip leader: [Liz Wheelan](#) 214-368-2306(H)

 **FEB 20-21 (SAT-SUN) WINTER IN ARKANSAS BEGINNER BACKPACKING TRIP** We'll do a moderately-easy backpack of about 6-1/2 miles over 2 days along one of the most scenic backpacking trails in Southwest Arkansas. Because the trail follows the valley of the Little Missouri River there is minimal elevation change, but do be prepared for a couple of wet stream crossings. Drive up Friday night and return Sunday. We'll meet Saturday morning at Albert Pike Campground. This hike is suitable for graduates of the Sierra Club Beginner Backpacking Class. This is a beautiful time of year on the trail with no crowds and great views during leaf-off. The weather could be nice but come prepared for cold wet conditions. Leader: [Mark Adams](#) 972-658-1281(H)

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