



dallas group
lone star chapter

Explore, enjoy and protect the planet

dallas sierra club news

February, 2013: In This Issue. . .

- [Sierra Club General Meeting](#) - Tuesday, February 12
- [Climate Change Bus Rally](#) - Sign Up TODAY
- [Annual Taos Bus Trip](#) - February 14-18
- [Terrific Beginner Backpacking Class](#) - Saturday, February 23
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- [Calendar](#) - Find out what's going on in the Dallas Sierra Club

General Meeting Program - February 12 7:00 pm - Refreshments at 6:30

Our February General Meeting will include two fascinating and informative programs.

Texas Legislative Session

Cyrus Reed, Conservation Director of the Lone Star Chapter of the Sierra Club, will visit us from Austin with information about the current legislative session.

Straw House

Gene and Nancy Cushion live near Van Alstyne, Texas, and have built a straw bale home on 22 acres of mostly wooded land in the southeastern corner of in Grayson County. Using approximately 450 two string wheat straw bales specifically cut and baled for placement into the exterior walls, the overall project from ground breaking to move in was completed in a little under one year. Acting as the General Contractor, the couple extensively researched the construction techniques and participated in local projects to gain experience. Nancy is a nurse with a local children's hospital and Gene is a technical consultant for a worldwide IT services Company. Come to the meeting and learn about their unique house.

Everyone is welcome. You don't have to be a Sierra Club member. Just show up. We'd love to meet you.

Our General Meeting starts at 7:00 p.m. but come at 6:30 for snacks, information and fellowship. Our meeting takes place at REI, 4515 Lyndon B Johnson Freeway, Dallas, TX 75244. Click over to our [General Meeting page](#) of our website for more information and a map.

Climate Change Bus Rally

There is a Climate Change/Anti-Keystone rally on Sunday, February 17th. It is billed to be the LARGEST tar sands/eco rally ever to get Obama to deny the northern segment of Keystone, and send a message that if he is serious about the environment and climate change as noted in his inaugural speech-- he needs to deny the Keystone northern segment now. This is also our

opportunity send a message that Texas needs protection not only from Keystone, but other tar sands pipelines like the Seaway tar sands pipeline and its additional twin line that would run near Dallas down south through Houston neighborhoods.

Join the masses in DC who believe something needs to be done about Climate Change and the tar sands pipelines like Keystone and Seaway that threaten the U.S., Texas, and our DFW area. We will leave from Austin, Dallas, and Tyler via charter bus.

For more details, call Rita Beving now or email her at 214.557.2271. Space is limited.

Valentine's / President's Day Weekend in Taos!

Make your reservations now (**Sunday, February 10, is the Reservation Deadline**) to spend a memorable weekend enjoying the beauty of northern New Mexico! Fun activity options for outdoor enthusiasts of all levels, including hiking, snowshoeing, skiing, snow tubing, shopping... your choice! [Click here for complete trip details](#) and reservation information. The trip usually sells out so send in your reservation soon. Don't get left out in the cold with nothing fun to do - get a seat on this year's "love bus to Taos"!



Beginner Backpacking Class

Always wanted to explore those special places away from the crowds? Did you carry an old heavy pack as a student but your skills (and gear) are a bit worn and rusty. This comprehensive class is ideal for those who want to learn all about backpacking and those wanting to refresh your backpacking knowledge and skills. Topics include: outdoor clothing, boots, backpacks, tents, sleeping bags, cookware, food, wilderness ethics, preparing for a trip and even a short, late afternoon breakout session to discuss men's and women's outdoor 'issues'. Instructors are experienced Dallas Sierra Club leaders. There will be time for questions and a hands-on look at outdoor gear. You will also have the opportunity to learn about, and sign up for, several beginner backpacking weekend trips. Lunch of backpacking food is included. (Feel free to bring anything else you prefer to eat.) Handouts will be provided. PLEASE BRING a writing utensil and your water bottle. The fee is \$20 for Sierra Club members and \$30 for non-members. No reservations are necessary, just show up. The class meets in the Guadalupe Peak clinic room, 2nd floor of Dallas REI store, 4515 LBJ Freeway, Dallas, TX 75244 (north side of LBJ between Welch and Midway). Please arrive by 10:15am to register and get settled. The class will begin promptly at 10:30 AM and end about 4:45pm PM. Coordinator: Liz Wheelan [Send Email](#) 214-368-2306

March Classes

Mark your calendar now so you can join us and be ready for those adventures you've been dreaming about.

Wilderness Navigation Class - March 5 and 7 (part 1 Tuesday, Part 2 Thursday)

Hiking to special places is a lot more fun if you know how to get there, how to explore while there and peace of mind you could find an alternate way if plans need to change. Learn the fundamentals of finding your way in the wilderness in this comprehensive two evening class.

Among the subjects covered are: purchasing maps, how to read maps, how not to get lost, what to do if you do get lost, GPS, different kinds of compasses and how to use your compass. If you have a compass, bring it to the class. If you don't have one, we will have an extra you can use and will show you what to look for when you purchase your own. The class will be held at the Dallas REI store (Guadalupe Peak clinic room, 2nd floor), 4515 LBJ Freeway, north side, between Midway and Welch. This two-night class (second night Thur., March 7) will start promptly at 6:30 PM and will finish at about 8:45 PM. The fee for the class is \$15 for Sierra Club members and \$20 for non-members (cost covers both nights). Handout included. Bring water bottle and writing utensil for taking notes and writing navigation exercises. No reservations are necessary; just show up. Contact: Bill Greer [Send Email](#) 972-247-0446

Advanced Backpacking Class - Wed, March 13

Great - you have a few weekend backpacks under your belt; now you want to do more challenging backpacking to explore even more. This class will cover advanced backpacking tips and skills including winter camping, fly-drive planning, equipment, bear barrel packing and week+ long trekking. Location: Guadalupe Peak clinic room (2nd floor) at Dallas REI, 4515 LBJ Freeway, Farmers Branch, TX 75244 (north side of LBJ between Midway and Welch). The class starts promptly at 6:30 PM and finishes about 8:45 PM. Cost is \$15 for Sierra Club members and \$20 for non-members. Handout provided. Please bring water bottle and writing utensil if you want to take notes. No reservations are necessary; just show up. Contact: Bill Greer [Send Email](#) 972-247-0446

Which Battery is Best

by Bill Greer, Dallas Sierra Club Outings Chair

Most of us are increasingly taking our electronic gadgets with us on outings, and these gadgets all have one thing in common: batteries. Weight is usually a worry and replacements are hard to find in the woods so selecting the correct battery for the job is important. There are many choices, so which one is best? As with most engineering decisions the answer is "it depends." We'll look at three types of battery: lithium, rechargeable nickel-metal hydride (NiMH), and the ubiquitous alkaline. All are readily available in the AA size so that's what we'll look at. Everything said here would apply just as well to other sizes except specific numbers would change.

Lithium The choices here are the Energizer "Ultimate Lithium" battery or "Advanced Lithium" battery. Except at very heavy loads the performance of these is very similar. "Ultimate" is more expensive than "Advanced." These batteries are attractive to backpackers due to light weight and claims that they "last up to 9X longer." There is no question that they are lighter than other batteries (14.5 grams vs. 23 grams for alkaline and 30 grams for NiMH) but do they really last 9 times as long? The answer is, again, "it depends." Under a very heavy 1 amp load they will indeed last longer than an alkaline battery. It's more like 3 or 4 times than 9 times. But under very light load there is little performance difference between lithium and alkaline. Lithium batteries do perform much better at low temperatures than the other batteries. Lithium batteries are good down to -40°F. The others are good down to 0°F. Under a 1 amp load at 0°F the lithium AA may actually approach that "9X" advantage over an alkaline battery.

This battery is not rechargeable. When it's dead it's headed for the landfill. They can be stored unused for as long as 15 years. Cost is over \$2 each. This is the lightest battery.

NiMH The big advantage of this battery is that it is rechargeable for hundreds of cycles. Take them out of your charger just before a trip and they are always fully charged and ready to go. When you come home with tired batteries charge them up and they're ready to go again. Take a solar panel on your canoe trip and you can charge them up any time the sun shines. Freshly charged they deliver almost the same life as a new alkaline. Under heavy loads they will outlast an alkaline. If

you have a battery hungry device and occasional access to a charger they will keep your devices humming without contributing nearly as much to the landfill.

I like a charger that charges each cell individually, such as the La Crosse LC-BC700 or the Powerex MH-C9000.

These batteries tend to slowly lose power when stored for very long (called self discharge) so they're best used shortly after charging. Some versions offer lower self discharge but at the cost of slightly lower capacity. Cost varies widely but they can be found for around \$2.50 each. When dead they are headed for your charger rather than the landfill! They are the heaviest of our three types.

Alkaline This battery is available everywhere in vast quantities at low cost. In low drain devices at room temperature there is little performance difference in life between an alkaline and lithium battery. It will probably outperform a NiMH battery in low drain service due to the NiMH tendency to self discharge. You'll probably have to wait several months to notice very much difference. At high loads the amount of power an alkaline can deliver drops significantly. Our other two types will last nearly half as long under twice the load. With an alkaline it may be more like 1/3 or less.

They also tend to deliver that last part of their energy at lower voltage than the first part. Your headlamp will not be as bright at half charge as when the battery was fresh. The other two hold their voltage well and then fall off a cliff. While desirable, this characteristic can make it hard for devices to tell how much battery life they have left.

This battery is not rechargeable. When it's dead it's headed for the landfill. When stored for a long time they may leak and swell. They can be found for \$0.60 each. Off brands can be found for less than half that and may perform almost as well. Weight is between lithium and NiMH.

Same is good Do not mix batteries of different types, age, or charge state. Bad things can happen if you put one used battery together with two fresh ones.

So which is best? Again, "it depends" on what you use it for. A battery that is best for one job may not be best for another. It may perform OK but cost too much. Let's look at a few cases:

Backpacking headlamp: There's no clear winner here. I prefer the lithium battery for long trips due to the small performance advantage and big weight advantage. When you're talking about a trip to Wyoming a few dollars extra for batteries doesn't amount to much. For weekend trips I use NiMH. With a fresh charge these will last several days.

Cold weather Lithium is the clear winner here. In cold conditions they deliver a lot more power than anything else. They're good down to 40 degrees below zero. If it ever gets that cold I'm not going to worry much about my batteries. According the Energizer data sheets there is little difference between energy delivery for a lithium battery at 32°F and at room temperature. An alkaline battery may give you half as much power or less in the cold as it did at room temperature. If you're going on the Taos trip you want lithium batteries.

Frequently used devices If you have a device that needs fresh batteries often (a kid's game for example) you want a set of NiMH batteries and a charger. You'll always have fresh batteries and won't contribute as much to the landfill. After 5 or 6 cycles the cost difference will have been recovered.

General purposes If you have a device that is used infrequently and doesn't place a huge load on its batteries you're probably better off with alkaline. Don't leave them in a device for years or they may leak and ruin it.

More info than you probably want:

Ultimate Lithium: <http://data.energizer.com/PDFs/l91.pdf>

Advanced Lithium: <http://data.energizer.com/PDFs/ea91.PDF>

alkaline: <http://data.energizer.com/PDFs/E91.pdf>

NiMH: <http://data.energizer.com/PDFs/nh15-2500.pdf>

engineering guide: <http://data.energizer.com/>

Calendar

Here is our calendar for the next two months. For complete listings, visit us at www.dallassierraclub.org.



Feb 12 (Tue) Dallas Sierra Club General Meeting

Everyone is invited to the Dallas Sierra Club's General Meeting. Full details will be on our [home page](#) about a month before the meeting.



Feb 14-18 (Thu-Mon) Bus Trip to Taos - Come Play in the Snow!

Want to make Valentine's weekend really memorable? Make your reservations now and join us on this annual trip to enjoy the winter beauty of northern New Mexico. We'll leave Dallas on our sleeper bus on Valentine's evening and return early morning on Monday, February 18 (President's Day - a day off for some). The trip is very economical and offers your choice of accommodations including a great hotel in Taos with hot tub or backpacking to stay in a yurt! The area offers a variety of fun things to do and you can design your own combination of activities including alpine snowshoeing (beginner and more advanced), downhill skiing, snowboarding, snow tubing (it's a blast!) and hikes in the scenic Wild Rivers Recreation Area. You can also join the group to tour a few local historical sites or spend all or part of your trip being on your own to experience the galleries, museums, shops, food and beauty of this scenic and historical town. Participants staying at the hotel in Taos are invited to enjoy a wine and cheese social Saturday before dinner. Activity ratings range from easy to strenuous. Rental snowshoes, ski equipment, snow boots, snow pants and jackets are available. The trip includes transportation to/from Taos, Taos Ski Valley, trailheads and destinations to activities included in the trip. Complete details including all costs and reservation information are in [this PDF file](#). Bus trip leader: Liz Wheelan [Send Email](#) 214-368-2306



Feb 16 (Sat) Trail Maintenance at Cedar Ridge Preserve

It's fun and it's helpful to get out to the Cedar Ridge Preserve to help upgrade some of the beautiful walking trails just south of Dallas. The address is 7171 Mountain Creek Pkwy, Dallas, TX 75249. It's a great morning workout, and the scenery is exceptional. No tools are required, (maybe gloves) just show up and be ready to lend a hand or two. We'll work from 9 AM to 12 or earlier, and then walk around the preserve and admire the wildflowers and fauna! Bring some water for sure. It's on Saturday the 16th of February, and please see their website at www.audubondallas.org/cedaridge.html for directions and info. Their number is 972-709-7784. See you then! If you wish to carpool, then let me know, and we'll arrange a meeting spot. Come on out and stay green, people! Contact: Ginger Bradley [Send Email](#) 469-223-7902



Feb 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 [Send Email](#) 972-247-0446



Feb 23 (Sat) Beginner Backpacking Class - Get set for spring exploring!

This comprehensive class is ideal for those who want to learn all about backpacking and those wanting to refresh your backpacking knowledge and skills. Topics include: outdoor clothing, boots, backpacks, tents, sleeping bags, cookware, food, wilderness ethics, preparing for a trip and even a short, late afternoon breakout session to discuss men's and women's outdoor 'issues'. Instructors are experienced Dallas Sierra Club leaders. There will be time for questions and a hands-on look at outdoor gear. You will also have the opportunity to learn about, and sign up for, several beginner backpacking weekend trips. Lunch of backpacking food is included. (Feel free to bring anything else you prefer to eat.) Handouts will be provided. PLEASE BRING a writing utensil and your water bottle. The fee is \$20 for Sierra Club members and \$30 for non-members. No reservations are necessary, just show up. The class meets in the Guadalupe Peak clinic room, 2nd floor of Dallas REI store, 4515 LBJ Freeway, Dallas, TX 75244 (north side of LBJ between Welch and Midway). Please arrive by 10:15am to register and get settled. The class will begin promptly at 10:30 AM and end about 4:45pm PM. Coordinator: Liz Wheelan [Send Email](#) 214-368-2306



Feb 26 (Tue) Inner City Outings (Outreach) - Volunteer Orientation & Meeting

NEW VOLUNTEER ORIENTATION, 6:00 pm PIZZA/MONTHLY MEETING, 6:45 pm/7:00 pm Looking for meaningful volunteer work where you can enjoy the outdoors and give back to kids? ICO is the place for you! For over 25 years, amazing and dedicated Inner City Outing volunteers have provided opportunities for underserved kids to get off the cement and explore the great outdoors. Activities are mostly on Saturdays/weekends and typically include outings to such places as nature centers, wildlife refuges and state parks to enjoy day hikes, camping, service work and occasional backpacking and canoeing. Being an ICO volunteer doesn't take much time but the impact is immeasurable. To learn how you can be a part of this rewarding and fun Sierra Club program, attend the ICO orientation (required before you may volunteer for an outing.) Volunteers must be at least 18 years old. For more information and to make a reservation, please contact Liz. Contact: Liz Wheelan [Send Email](#) 214-368-2306



Mar 2-3 (Sat-Sun) Car Camping at Horseshoe Bend COE Campground Dierks Lake, Arkansas

We will meet Saturday morning at the pavilion at 8:30am and drive to a nice trail in the Ouachita National Forest. We'll have a 7 mile dayhike where we'll eat lunch on the trail and enjoy some awesome ridgetop views. Saturday evening we will cook dinner at the park's pavilion complete with a wood burning fireplace. Sunday morning walk the local park trails. Optional lunch in DeQueen on Sunday where we will end. This should be a very interesting time to visit this park with the trees getting ready to produce their spring leaves with cool nights. This trip will fill up fast so e-mail the leader to be put on the list. All campers must make arrangements with the leader to attend. Saturday's dayhike is mountainous and remote so this trip is listed as moderate. Leader: Mark Adams [Send Email](#) 972-658-1281



Mar 5 (Tue) Wilderness Navigation Class - Part 1 (aka Learn to Explore!)

Learn the fundamentals of finding your way in the wilderness in this comprehensive two evening class. Among the subjects covered are: purchasing maps, how to read maps, how not to get lost, what to do if you do get lost, GPS, different kinds of compasses and how to use your compass. If you have a compass, bring it to the class. If you don't have one, we will have an extra you can use and will show you what to look for when you purchase your own. The class will be held at the Dallas REI store (Guadalupe Peak clinic room, 2nd floor), 4515 LBJ Freeway, north side, between Midway and Welch. This two-night class (second night Thur., March 7) will start promptly at 6:30 PM and will finish at about 8:45 PM. The fee for the class is \$15 for Sierra Club

members and \$20 for non-members (cost covers both nights). Handout included. Bring water bottle and writing utensil for taking notes and writing navigation exercises. No reservations are necessary; just show up. Contact: Bill Greer [Send Email](#) 972-247-0446



Mar 6 (Wed) Dallas Sierra Club Executive Committee Meeting

The Executive Committee (or Excom) is the elected governing body of the Dallas Sierra Club and meets at REI, 4515 LBJ Freeway, Farmers Branch, TX 75244 (north side of LBJ between Midway and Welch) at 6:30 pm. Contact the [Dallas Group Chair](#) for more information.



Mar 7 (Thu) Wilderness Navigation Class - Part 2

This is the second night of our two part class. See the class listing above (March 5) for details. Contact: Bill Greer [Send Email](#) 972-247-0446



Mar 9 (Sat) Knob Hill Trail Dayhike Flower Mound, TX.

Come join us as we day hike 6 miles on the northern reaches of Denton Creek. This is a packed dirt trail used by mountain bikers and hikers heading to Grapevine Lake. No pets, please. Bring water and a snack as we will be walking all morning. We will leave the trail head promptly at **9 AM**. To reach the trailhead from the intersection of HWY 377 & FM 1171, go south on 377 about 1/3 mile and the trailhead will be on your left just before the road crosses the creek. From Dallas go north on 114 West past DFW Airport and thru Grapevine to Roanoke. Turn north on HWY 377 and go approximately 2.5 miles. The trailhead will be on your right after crossing the second bridge. I will be near the trailhead sign in a red GMC. Optional lunch afterwards. Leader: Mark Adams [Send Email](#) 972-658-1281



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Mar 28 (Thu) Sustainable Living Summit

Green is a state of mind, not simply recycling a bottle or a can. Sustainability is a way of life, not just a one-time project. Together, both concepts provide the foundation and focus for the Dallas County Community College District's 2013 Sustainability Summit, scheduled Thurs., March 28, at Mountain View College in Dallas.



Mar 30-31 (Sat-Sun) Weekend Backpack at Buckeye Mountain Trail, Arkansas

Hike one of the most scenic Wilderness trails in Arkansas in the Caney Creek Wilderness of west central Arkansas. Saturday we'll enjoy the views from the ridgetop Buckeye Mountain Trail. Sunday we'll hike out along the creek bottoms of the Caney Creek Trail. With any luck the wildflowers will be starting to emerge. This trip is rated moderate and would be suitable for beginners in good shape. Both days cover about 4 1/2 miles. Saturday includes an 800 foot uphill section. We'll camp Friday night near our cars, Saturday night near a nice little waterfall. Leader: Mark Adams [Send Email](#) 972-658-1281

The Dallas Sierra Club News e-newsletter, sent monthly (and occasional for late-breaking news or events), keeps you up-to-date on meetings, activities, issues and special events. Visit us at www.DallasSierraClub.org.
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