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## **Dallas Sierra Club Newsletter - May, 2021**

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### **Dallas Sierra Club General Meeting via Zoom - Tuesday, May 11**

#### **Canada's Ocean Plastics Charter: A Move Toward Sustainability**

Please join us as we welcome Dr. Rachel McCormick, Consul General of Canada to the states of Arkansas, Louisiana, New Mexico, Oklahoma and Texas, as she highlights Canada's focus on the Government of Canada's work with all levels of government, industry, non-government organizations, academia, and Canadians to take action on plastic waste and pollution.

Under Canada's Group of 7 industrialized nations presidency in 2018, the Government of Canada championed the development of the Ocean Plastics Charter to move toward a more sustainable approach to producing, using, and managing plastics. By signing onto the Charter, governments, businesses, and organizations join Canadians in committing to a more resource-efficient and lifecycle approach to plastics stewardship, on land and at sea. Through these partnerships, we can grow the momentum for real action on plastic pollution around the world. Canada's strategy takes a circular economy approach to plastics and provides a framework for action in Canada in key areas.

Rachel McCormick, Ph.D. is currently the Consul General of Canada to the states of Arkansas, Louisiana, New Mexico, Oklahoma and Texas. Previously, she was head of the Energy and Environment Section at the Canadian Embassy in Washington, DC, from 2014 to 2019 and joined the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade in 2004. She represented the Government of Canada in a range of international forums, including the Arctic Council, the North American Commission for Environmental Cooperation, and the United Nations, and held positions within the Canadian energy sector and at the World Trade Organization in Geneva.

From 6:45 to 7:00 p.m. you can log in to the meeting, chat, and ask questions. The meeting will begin at 7:00 with announcements, followed by our speaker's presentation.

How to join the meeting via Zoom: <https://zoom.us/j/99535860396>

One tap mobile: +13462487799,,99535860396#

Dial in: +1 346 248 7799 - Meeting ID: 995 3586 0396

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### **Videos of prior General Meetings are on YouTube.**

[Click here](#) for a list of meetings with varied topics such as national parks, Critterman, beautiful photos from around the world, wild animals, activism, and more.

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## Dallas Sierra Club Outreach Speakers Program - Speakers for Your Group

The Dallas Sierra Club provides outdoor/environmental education in the form of entertaining and informative presentations by Dallas Sierra Club members with expertise in the topics offered. These presentations range in length from 30 minutes to one hour and cover a variety of topics in the general categories of outdoor adventure, environmental education, and general ecology. These talks are appropriate for a wide range of audiences including youth groups, school classes, civic and social groups, nature and gardening clubs, church groups, etc. Any group interested in an available topic is welcome to contact us. To see available topics and to schedule your speaker, [click here](#).

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### Note from the Chair

by Dan Moulton

[Green Source On the Air](#) is a new online show, produced by Green Source DFW and its parent nonprofit, the [Memnosyne Institute](#). The inaugural show on Earth Day featured host Wendel Withrow, environmental justice activist Marsha Jackson, who faced down Shingle Mountain and won. Also, Green Source DFW columnist and author Amy Martin, who is writing a new book called *Wild DFW* talked about the best places to hike in DFW. In addition, Public Citizen activist Rita Beving reported on environmental bills moving through the Texas Legislature. Finally, Victoria Howard, chair of the Dallas Sierra Club's Conservation/Eco Action Committee, shared some ways people can get involved in DSC causes. To round out the show, the Austin-based band Montopolis streamed their program [The Legend of Big Bend](#).

*Your DSC is one of the sponsors of Green Source on the Air.*

*If you do not subscribe to the free Green Source DFW e-newsletter, you should.*

President Biden hosted a two-day virtual climate summit during Earth Week meant to signal the US's return to global leadership on climate change. The summit brought together the leaders of more than three dozen countries, including the largest emitters of greenhouse gases- China, USA, and India. China and India made no new commitments. The US goal is to slash the nation's emissions in half by 2030. Greta Thunberg warns the US congress that these goals can't be met as long as the US continues to subsidize the mining and use of fossil fuels (go Greta go!)

For me, it feels great that we now have a national government that wants to be part of the solution, rather than most of the problem! I'm hoping that Biden won't waste much more time pursuing the false hope of bipartisan legislation.

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### Conservation / Eco Action

by Victoria Howard, Conservation Committee Chair

#### Why Curbside Recycling Matters

I have lived the majority of my life in small town Texas. I remember when our local roads were gravel, when we had party lines ringing at 5 am on a Saturday, and when all men wore Cowboy hats, which they tipped when appropriate.

By 1987 it was a common fact in our house that recycling mattered. There was no curbside recycling back then, but that was no deterrent. We would save our recycling: papers, glass, cardboard. Arguments would ensue about who had to load the truck with our weekly stash. No one wanted to be the recipient of the stale rinse water that never quite made it out of the soda or beer cans. A dousing or two of stagnant bilge squeaking in our flip-flops was enough to make anyone think twice. My dad would swear about all of the "crap your mother keeps," but he'd load the truck, begrudgingly, and help take the recycling. We replayed this scenario for years. It was Saturday. It was ritual. This ritual has now evolved.

Recycling in North Texas has exploded since I was a kid schlepping our recycling every Saturday. Now virtually every town has curbside recycling. The evolution of recycling in the last 30 years, from those of us puttering around each and every Saturday to those of us relying on our curbside recycling service, is remarkable. Curbside recycling matters and it's not merely for personal convenience.

As of 2017, data collected by the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality shows that 35% of monitored active and inactive landfills in the state of Texas are leaking hazardous substances. Eight active and seven inactive landfills in the DFW area fall under this category, says TCEQ's State of the Region Recycling Report (2017).

What does this statistic have to do with recycling? Everything. In McKinney, with a population explosion totaling in excess of 182,055, there is an already state-permit-approved new landfill site. The CRWC construction waste landfill is a 147-acre site located on University Drive, not far from downtown. Potential pollution from a nearby landfill is now not only reserved for far off places, but rather it is now in thousands of people's back yards.

The TCEQ report, prepared by the Texas Groundwater Protection Committee, reports that The North Texas Municipal Water District landfills in both McKinney and Wylie have had open groundwater contamination investigations conducted by the state. Notable chemicals detected were: **Chlorobenzene, 1,2Dichloroethylene, and metals.**

The less recycling accessibility we have, the more need for future landfills there will be. TCEQ reports that "In the North Central Texas region alone, 9.6 million tons of waste were disposed of in landfills in 2015, the highest out of 24 different regionals, accounting for almost 30% of the state's total waste." At this rate, our 21 active area landfills have a remaining life of less than 40 years -- and this doesn't account for our growing population.

The reduction of consumer waste and the increase in recycling practices coupled with more biodegradable and compostable packaging is the primary step in making sure that more and more communities are not faced with their own newly permitted landfills. Local residents and environmental advocates have to be vigilant and ward off threats of wasted resources, water pollution, and chemical contamination, and the subsequent landfill expansions that are exacerbated by weak recycling practices. Whether one lives in an urban sprawl or the small towns like those where I grew up, awareness and utilization of effective and improved recycling practices are paramount to keep impending and additional landfills at bay.

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## Outings

by Mark Stein, Outings Chair

First the bad news: Sierra Club outings are still indefinitely postponed through at least July 4. I participated in a Zoom session for local outings chairs two weeks ago. A ground rule announced at the session's onset by staff was that no discussion of WHEN Club outings resume would be entertained during at the session, nor would there be discussion of protocols for resumption of local outings. My perception is that Club policy is heavily influenced by the Club's insurance company and lawyers cautious about liability.

The good news is that the CDC announced this week that risk of contagion when outdoors in small groups is extremely low. Let's hope this welcome news pushes the Sierra Club to allow us to resume outings! Private invitational hikes are great, but I've missed the influx of new faces that Dallas Sierra Club outings attract.

More good news: As of today we hold reservations for group campsites Q and R in the Chisos Basin for the nights of Wed., Feb. 9 through Sat., Feb. 12, 2022. We also have reservations for group site B at Rio Grande Village for the nights of Feb. 11 and 12. With those reservations, we have latitude to offer a menu of hiking options for as long as 3½ days or as short as 2 days. Yes, the south half of the Chisos Basin burned earlier this month, but fires have

always been a part of the Big Bend National Park ecosystem. Plan to see the fire impacts for yourself in February.

We still plan to offer a brief refresher course for leaders who have previously completed Outdoor Leader Training (OLT) 101 certification. We're waiting to schedule that session until we know a date after which we can resume outings. There's no point starting the clock on certifications that last 4 years until leaders may actually lead outings. We'll organize a more complete OLT 101 class for new leaders later. We anticipate hiring Mindy Pardini to teach a Basic First Aid class for a sizable group of leaders who need the class this fall. At my most recent check no Wilderness First Aid (WFA) classes were scheduled in the Dallas area-just Austin. Hopefully WFA classes will return to Dallas this fall.

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## Political

by David Griggs, Political Chair

### **Don't Forget to VOTE in the Dallas City Council Runoff Elections - Saturday, June 5th, 2021**

Please vote in the upcoming municipal runoff elections in Dallas! Five of our endorsed city council candidates won re-election on May 1st, but seven more are in runoff elections on Saturday, June 5th, 2021.

Our city council has supported the Dallas Comprehensive Environmental Climate Action Plan (CECAP). We need to ensure that the plan is fully implemented and enforced in the coming years. As before, we need both your vote and your financial support to preserve our environmental majority on the council.

Go to [TurnTexasGreen.org](https://TurnTexasGreen.org) and click on 2021 endorsements to learn more about the runoff candidates and to contribute to our PAC through the PayPal link. We need your financial support now more than ever. Watch your email and the TurnTexasGreen.org website for details on a special May fundraiser over Zoom to meet the candidates!

Early voting runs from May 24 - June 1st. Final election day is Saturday, June 5th. Check the back of your voter registration certificate for your district number. Find voting center locations in Dallas at [dallascountyvotes.org](https://dallascountyvotes.org).

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## Programs

by Reneé Roberson, Programs co-chair

The position of Program Chair(s) is essential for setting the agenda of speakers for the Sierra Club for the year. Program Chairs collaborate and network with organizations, non-profits, individuals who share the same passion for the environment, and the community and its leaders. Program Chairs are responsible for coordinating the speaker dates on the agenda, finding speakers for each month, and posting on the Sierra Club Face Book page. Program Chairs report to the Executive Committee for approval of speakers chosen. Speakers for each month are posted on the Sierra Club Website. Program Chairs are responsible for responding to individuals who contact the Sierra Club to present or share their contributions. The Sierra Club needs and welcomes communication from the community. All who share the passion for the environment are potential speakers.

### Current Program Directors

Victoria Howard

Renee Roberson

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## Voices from the Campfire

by Wendel Withrow, Vice Chair

### Passing the Torch

The crashing lightning and rolling thunder shook the trees and sent the dogs into hiding. It wasn't quite the opening of the heavens of a few years ago where I witnessed the Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse descend on our Beavers Bend campground in Oklahoma, but it was a serious Texas thunderstorm, nothing to trifle with.

The next morning broke clear and cool with the heat of summer still a month away. I headed out on the trail expecting the usual suspects only to find a small army of 'volunteers' cleaning up a local park. Mostly high schoolers toting trash bags and pick-up sticks looking for 'Kleenex' flowers or a stray beer can. What I really discovered was the next generation of nature lovers who know that a local clean-up benefits each of them. They instinctively know that 'fouling your own nest' is just what it sounds like.

After a few words of encouragement from this gray bearded hiker, I continued my walk along the creek meeting Ashley from Cumberland Charter School in Tyler and Daniel from East Texas Council of Government. Ashley was assisting her sociology students in the clean-up. Daniel was trying to keep them out of harms way. But this was not your ordinary kind of clean-up crew. Ashley's students, led by a fearless young lady named Rilyn, were in the creek and blazing small openings in the banks of heavy brush to get those hanging pieces of trash placed there by wind and flood over many years. Without these young volunteers giving up their cell phones and valuable weekends for a better way of life, those non-biodegradable pieces of trash would be there for a lifetime, at least.

So, let's celebrate everyday as Earth Day and also celebrate the passing of the torch (clean fuel of course) to this next generation of conservationists and those dedicated teachers who lead and inspire them.

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### Sierran Profile - Sahan Yerram

I was born in New York and have lived in the Dallas area for 14 years. I joined the Dallas Sierra Club in June, 2020, during the pandemic because I wanted to find ways to stay involved in the community while staying at home. Everyone was extremely welcoming, and I was able to contribute a lot to the political efforts, including organizing letter-writing campaigns and youth telethons for endorsed candidates. I love organizing local cleanups with the student committee and meeting new political candidates. I love playing the bassoon in my free time. I also love going hiking and watching Netflix. My favorite food is fried chicken. My favorite natural places are Caddo Lake and Lake Texoma.



I love to go camping with my family, and I also love to hike. I also love kayaking whenever I can. One of my favorite memories in nature is hiking and zip lining through the Costa Rican Rainforest. I'm very concerned about the unsustainability of eating beef and the environmental effects of raising large amounts of cattle in factory farms. I believe we need to be unified in our effort to curb carbon emissions and improve the air, water, and land quality. I believe if we all did small things every day, such as using a paper bag for groceries instead of a plastic bag, we could have a large positive impact on the environment with minimal effort. Most people don't know that I have a collection of foreign currencies!

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### Et Cetera

**Illegal aliens always have been a problem in the United States. Ask any Native American.**

## **Recommended reading**

### *Strangers In Their Own Land* by Arlie Russell Hochschild

This is a thought-provoking book that gives insight into why some conservatives think the way that they do. I have wondered why some people seem (to me) to vote against their own interests, and this book showed me why. - Kirk Miller

Available at the Dallas, Richardson, and Plano libraries, and at local and online bookstores

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### *60 Hikes Within 60 Miles: Dallas-Fort Worth* by Joanie Sánchez

This detailed guide presents the best day-hikes in the Dallas/Fort Worth area. Each hike description features key information on length, hiking time, difficulty, configuration, scenery, traffic, trail surface, and accessibility, as well as information on the history and natural history of the area.

Available at the Dallas, Richardson, and Plano libraries, and at local and online bookstores

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### *Best Tent Camping: Texas: Your Car-Camping Guide to Scenic Beauty, the Sounds of Nature, and an Escape from Civilization* by Wendel Withrow

The Lone Star State provides a spectacular backdrop for some of the most scenic campgrounds in the country, from the High Plains of the Panhandle to the beautiful beaches of the Gulf Coast. But do you know which campgrounds offer the most privacy? Which are the best for first-time campers? Wendel Withrow has traversed the entire state and compiled the most up-to-date research to steer you to the perfect spot!

Whether you seek a quiet campground near a fish-filled stream or a family campground with all the amenities, grab *Best Tent Camping: Texas*. It's not only a guidebook; it's an escape manual for all who wish to navigate the back roads of Texas to find those special locales that recharge the head, heart, and soul. This guide is a keeper.

Available at the Dallas, Richardson, and Plano libraries, and at local and online bookstores. To get a signed copy of Wendel's book, contact him by email - [Wendel@DallasSierraClub.org](mailto:Wendel@DallasSierraClub.org)

## **Limerick**

Mountain climbers who go on a quest  
And attempt to climb up to the crest  
    Of the highest on Earth  
    Say there's never a dearth  
Of fatigue. They cannot Everest.

- by Kirk Miller

**Feedback is welcome (comments, suggestions, letters to the Editor, etc.). Please submit items to [newsletter@dallassierraclub.org](mailto:newsletter@dallassierraclub.org)**

**Previous issues of our newsletter are available [here](#),**

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## **Calendar**

**Here is our calendar for the next two months. For complete listings, visit us at [www.DallasSierraClub.org](http://www.DallasSierraClub.org).**

**May 11 (Tue) Dallas Sierra Club General Meeting**

**Canada's Ocean Plastics Charter: A Move Toward Sustainability** - Everyone is invited. Details are on our [home page](#) now.

## **Jun 2 (Wed) Dallas Sierra Club Executive Committee Meeting**

The Executive Committee (Excom) is the elected governing body of the Dallas Sierra Club and meets at 6:30 p.m. via ZOOM. For more information, contact the Dallas Group Chair.

## **Jul 4 (Sun) No outings through July 4, 2021**

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the national office of the Sierra Club has precluded all local Sierra Club outings through at least July 4, 2021. The Dallas Group of the Sierra Club will resume outings when we have clearance to do so. Hopefully, recent CDC advice that contagion risk is extremely low for vaccinated people in small groups in the outdoors will usher resumption of Sierra Club outings this fall! Contact: Mark Stein [Send Email](#) 214-789-4596

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