

Dallas Sierra Club Newsletter - March, 2023



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Dallas Sierra Club General Meeting via Zoom - Tuesday, March 14

Ways to combat climate change, water pollution, and species extinction

Stephen Sturdivant will go over several important ways we can combat climate change, water pollution, and species extinction, as well as proven common sense measures to minimize food waste and source sustainable ingredients. Please join this live discussion and Q&A.

Stephen Sturdivant is an environmental engineer and Regional Coordinator for the United States Environmental Protection Agency Region 6's Sustainable Management of Food Program. He has worked for the agency for over 16 years..



FREE. 7:00 pm, Tuesday, March 14 10 via Zoom

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

Go to <http://dallassierraclub.org/> for details.

Everybody is welcome. You don't have to be a Sierra Club member.

For more information, contact Victoria Howard, 214 855 1580 Victoria@DallasSierraClub.org

April 14-16 Spring Campout - Make Reservations Now!

Join us for a wonderful weekend at Eisenhower State Park, a popular park nestled on the bluffs along the south side of Lake Texoma, just 90 minutes north of Dallas. Pitch your tent and relax in our reserved campsites. This is a perfect outing for beginner campers, including those wanting to base camp and also spend some time practicing their skills, checking gear, hiking and learning to backpack (optional). Saturday after breakfast we'll discuss and practice packing your backpack, then spend part of the day hiking easy, wooded trails. Carry a daypack with water and snacks or a packed backpack to get the feel of carrying a backpack while hiking – your choice. Sorry, no pets. For more details and reservation information, [click here](#).



Musings from the Chair

by Victoria Howard

March has arrived and with it our Spring-like temperatures and exceptionally manic weather have returned.

If you're like me, I'm checking my plants daily with anticipation to see which ones have survived the winter and which ones will be hibernating another season, hoping to bloom again in the future. If you, like my plants, are itching to unfold yourselves, enjoy the warmer temperatures, and "spring" into nature, then we need your help!

Dallas Sierra Club is firming up several activities for our members and their families designed to create community between our club, environmentally engage different areas of the Metroplex, and allow everyone a chance to visit and make new friends. We have sponsored several trails and shoreline areas in the Metro that desperately need our attention, and we have several more areas that we're eyeing for potential maintenance and clean ups! Because of this, we're asking for anyone that would like to help to please embrace the warming temps and join us! All inquiries and participatory emails can be sent to me at victoria@dallassierraclub.org

Alternately, if you're still not convinced that Spring is here to stay and are waiting before venturing out, please join us for our monthly General meetings via zoom the second Tuesday of every month. Each month boasts a new guest that will educate us on a different aspect of environmentalism and activism. All of the login information and meeting topics can be found on our website www.dallassierraclub.org

Cheers,
Victoria

Goat Island Preserve - A Wilderness in Dallas County

A hike in a previously unknown part of Dallas County on Saturday morning, February 18, opened my eyes to part of my home county I hadn't known. Just sixteen miles from Downtown Dallas, via Interstate 45 and either Wintergreen Road or Fulghum Road is Goat Island Preserve. Nobody recalls how or when the name originated, but the land could only be an island in an extreme flood. From a trailhead parking lot at 2800 Post Oak Road, eleven Sierra Club hikers joined Outings Leader Eduardo Gonzalez to explore an eight-mile loop on a preserve acquired by Dallas County. None of us except Eduardo had visited Goat Island previously, including newsletter editor Kirk Miller and me.



The drive to the trailhead was an adventure in itself, easy to find with Google Map directions. As I neared the trailhead, the landscape changed to a patchwork of ponds created by mining for gravel, topsoil, and various construction materials. As we left the trailhead, on a worn double-track trail, sounds of equipment loading gravel onto heavy trucks hauling away materials faded quickly.

Walking on, we passed a picnic table on a rise beside the Trinity River before the trail changed to a single file path through a deciduous forest with an understory of grasses and low shrubs. We all noticed the quiet of the location except for the constant chirps of birds. In almost four hours of hiking, we saw only one hiker outside our party. Our trail paralleled the Trinity River but was generally far enough from it that we glimpsed the river just occasionally. The trail was dry, not muddy, but the water table is high here, prompting us to a few short detours to avoid shallow water. That this forest

was once farmed was underscored by an old plow, now threaded by tree trunks between its tentacles. Other surprises on one stretch of the hike were the tires, some with trees at their centers. We wondered whether they had been dumped here or washed downstream by floods years ago and stranded in low spots as water receded. Despite the tires, other litter wasn't ubiquitous, although Kirk readily filled more than two plastic grocery bags with papers and plastics.

Nearing Belt Line Road, tranquility slowly yielded to gunfire from Mickey's Riverbottom Gun Range and relief that an unseen road separated us from it. As we encountered a trail of huge wooden pallets laid end-to-end, we grasped that these formed a temporary roadway for heavy trucks to deliver sections of steel poles to support electric lines spanning the Trinity River. Walking the platforms we viewed the ruins of Lock and Dam #2, built a hundred years ago when the Trinity River was viewed as a transportation link to the Gulf of Mexico. It was a perfect spot for our sack lunches. Delighted with our experience and newfound awareness of southeast Dallas County, we reversed course, eventually using a parallel trail further from the river to loop back to our starting trailhead.

Responding to a shorter account of this hike in Dallas Sierra Club's monthly *Outings News*, Dallas County Open Space board member Amy Martin told me this was the second most popular preserve in the network of preserves owned by Dallas County. She related that newer preserves in the Trinity River corridor promise even more trails and wilderness experiences. I look forward to her book, *Wild DFW*, to be published in August.

- Mark Stein

Agrivoltaics

Researchers calculate that devoting about 1 percent of U.S. farmland to agrivoltaics, the emerging practice of integrating solar installations with working farmland, would satisfy about 20 percent of present electricity demand. Agrivoltaics can reduce emissions, save water, and even boost crop yields.



A 2019 study from the University of Utah and Oregon State University found that the best places for solar installations tend to be the areas where we already grow food, because photovoltaic (PV) panels lose their efficiency at higher temperatures. Enough sunlight to grow crops gets past the panels, which act as a shield against extreme heat, drought, and storms. By placing solar panels high above the ground, sun can be harvested twice -- by solar panels and by food that is grown. Solar panels reduce the amount of sunlight hitting the ground, reducing water evaporation. Soil retains more moisture.

University of Arizona researcher Greg Barron-Gafford and his team were able to triple the yield of chiltepin peppers by growing them under PV panels on test plots versus unshaded control plots. Cherry tomato output doubled, and the soil on the PV plots retained 5 to 15 percent more moisture between waterings. "The plants aren't just freeloading under the solar; they actually help the panels become more efficient," he adds.

Click [here](#) and [here](#) for 5 and 3 minute videos about agrivoltaics.

Click [here](#) to read an article about agrivoltaics.

Take action for Recovering America's Wildlife Act

Save America's Birds and Other Wildlife

America's wildlife is in crisis. Science tells us that we've lost 3 billion birds in less than a human lifetime and that two-thirds of North American bird species are at risk of extinction due to climate change.



The Recovering America's Wildlife Act (RAWA) will help thousands of wildlife species, including more than 800 bird species, and prevent future extinctions. Learn what makes RAWA so important and ask your members of Congress to support the act. **Click [here](#) and [here](#) for 1 minute and 3 minute videos about the Recovering America's Wildlife Act.** Click [here](#) for information about the Act.

Click [here](#) to send a message to your members of Congress. It takes less than a minute!

Why We Should Ban Styrofoam

Click [here](#) for eight reasons to ban Styrofoam.



Oak Cliff Earth Day - April 16

A celebration of People and Planet

This is an annual community event celebrating nature, the environment, and the majesty of our planet.

Noon - 5:00 p.m., Sunday, April 16

Lake Cliff Park, 300 E Colorado, Corner of Zang & Colorado, Dallas

Remember: The Earth is the one thing we all have in common. - [click here](#) for details

Oak Cliff Earth Day

People - Planet - Purpose

16 April 2023 - Sunday
Lake Cliff Park • 12 noon - 5pm
corner of Zang & Colorado

EATS • ENTERTAINMENT • EDUCATION • VENDORS
ARTISTS • DANCERS • MUSICIANS

SPECIAL PERFORMANCES BY:

Booker T Washington Jazz Band
W.E. Greiner Exploratory Arts Academy
Bandan Koro African Dance & Drum Ensemble

Founded in 2007 by a grassroots group
to help educate the community
on the importance of
our environment.

 DALLAS
COLLEGE



Rain ...or Shine.



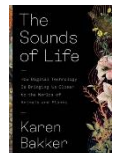
www.oakcliffearthday.com

Recommended Reading

Click on a book's title (below) for a link to information about the book at [goodreads.com](https://www.goodreads.com)

The Sounds of Life: How Digital Technology Is Bringing Us Closer to the Worlds of Animals and Plants by Karen Bakker, 2022

All sorts of creatures can hear and make sound along a wide range of the sonic spectrum, often well beyond human hearing. Since scientists could not hear sounds, they concluded that animals, creatures, and plants did not make sounds and could not hear sounds. Boy,



were they wrong!

Advances in technology with digital bioacoustics shows that animals once believed to be silent can hear, make music, and exchange information.

Just as the microscope revealed another world of animalcules, digital bioacoustics is acting like a sonic microscope to reveal a universe teeming with hitherto unknown sound, from teeny corals to gigantic whales in the ocean, from tiny bees to huge elephants on land -- enabling us to interpret their language and better understand the Tree of Life.

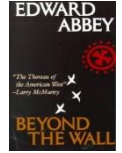
The subject matter is fascinating, and the author writes in language that is easily understood. Check it out! - Kirk Miller

Available at local libraries and at local and online bookstores

Beyond The Wall by Edward Abbey, 1971

In this wise and lyrical book about landscapes of the desert and the mind, Edward Abbey guides us beyond the wall of the city and asphalt belting of superhighways to special pockets of wilderness that stretch from the interior of Alaska to the dry lands of Mexico.

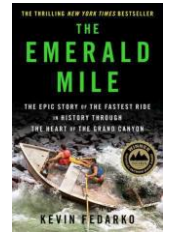
Available at local and online bookstores



The Emerald Mile by Kevin Fedarko, 2013

This is the thrilling true tale of the fastest boat ride ever, down the entire length of the Colorado River and through the Grand Canyon, during the legendary flood of 1983. I read this book at the urging of some friends, even though it didn't seem to appeal to me, and I'm glad that I did. Great book, easy read, difficult to put down. - Kirk Miller

Available at local libraries and at local and online bookstores



Previous book recommendations are here. <http://dallassierraclub.org/page.htm?buystuff>

Please give us YOUR reading recommendations via newsletter@dallassierraclub.org

Recommended Viewing

Click [here](#) and [here](#) for 1 minute and 3 minute videos about the Recovering America's Wildlife Act.

Click [here](#) for a 5 minute video on how trail designers build hikes.

Click [here](#) for a 4 minute video on how furniture is made from recycled plastic

Previous video recommendations are here. <http://www.dallassierraclub.org/page.htm?videos>

Please give us YOUR viewing recommendations via newsletter@dallassierraclub.org

Et Cetera

A walk in nature walks the soul back home. -- Mary Davis

I hike to burn off the crazy.

Two's company, tree's a crowd.

Limerick

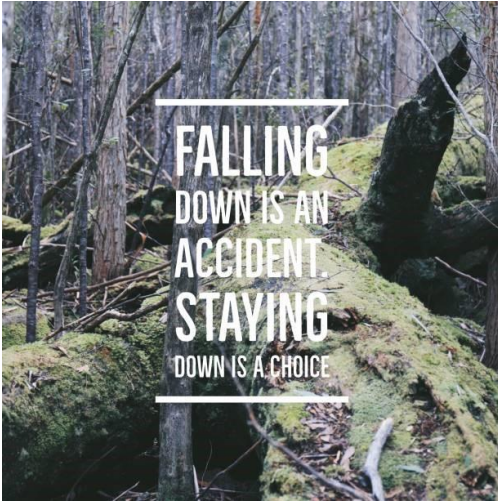
Flattop Mountain's our goal, so we press
'Gainst a blustery wind that's a mess.

With each bone-chilling blow,

Every hiker does know

That the wind is a howling success.

- by Kirk Miller



Let Us Know

Please let us know **your opinion**. Give us **an article** for the newsletter. Give us **feedback** on articles. What would you like to see in the newsletter? Changes? Improvements? What **books** and **videos** do you recommend? Please let us know. This is YOUR newsletter. Feedback is welcome (comments, suggestions, letters to the Editor, etc.). Submit feedback to newsletter@dallassierraclub.org

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

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.



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](#).

Calendar of Upcoming Events

Here is our calendar for the next few months. For complete listings, click [here](#).

March 14, Tuesday - General Meeting

Ways to combat climate change, water pollution, and species extinction - [click here](#) for details.

March 25, Saturday - LBJ National Grasslands Hike

Day hike - Hike through forests and grassy glades. [Click here](#) for details.

April 1-2, Saturday - Sunday, Ouachita Trail in Oklahoma

Hike 6 miles Saturday and 4.6 miles Sunday. [Click here](#) for details.

April 5, Wednesday - Dallas Sierra Club Executive Committee (Excom) 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.

April 11, Tuesday - General Meeting

Details will be posted on our website soon.

April 14-16, Friday - Sunday, Camp/Hike at Scenic Eisenhower State Park

Hike and-or practice backpacking. [Click here](#) for details.

April 16, Saturday - Oak Cliff Earth Day

Annual community event celebrating nature, the environment, and the majesty of our planet - [click here](#) for details

April 20-23, Thursday - Sunday, Eagle Rock Loop, Arkansas

Hike the scenic Eagle Rock Loop. [Click here](#) for details.

May 17-21, Wednesday - Sunday - New Mexico Hikeapalooza

Day hikes with base camping [Click here](#) for details.
