

DALLAS SIERRA CLUB
THE COMPASS

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NATURAL HIGH

ROCK CLIMBING EXPLORATIONS WITH MICHAEL HEALD

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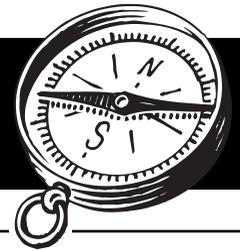
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MARCH'S PROGRAM

If you're afraid of heights,



Photo by Michael Heald

then you'll be sure to want to miss our March program at the Dallas Sierra Club because we're going to get really high! - High up in the mountains, and high on the natural beauty of Mother Nature.

Michael Heald, the Earth and Life Science teacher at the St. Marks School of Texas will be here to share with us some of his amazing rock climbing explorations - from El Capitan, to Mt. Blanc, to Cordiella Blanca in Peru. While we Sierrans oftentimes focus mainly on the flora and the fauna on our many outings adventures, Michael will teach us how to recognize the beauty and the story that is told in the rocks.

Michael Heald's passion for nature and science was nurtured in his native Utah, and further developed in Oregon where he attended Willamette University earning a Bachelor's degree in environmental science. He continued to foster a sense of stewardship of nature with his appointment as the Wilderness Director at St. Mark's in 2002. Michael recently earned a Master's degree in Geoscience from Mississippi State University. In addition to teaching sixth grade Life Science and seventh grade Earth Science, Mr. Heald administers the Wilderness program, coaches lacrosse, and advises a climbing club in the middle school.

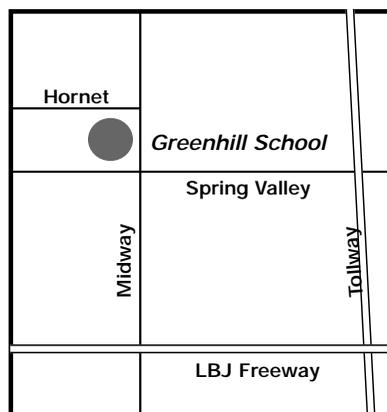
Michael's program will not only educate us on the subtle beauty of the geologic landscape, but his photographs will also inspire us to get out there and enjoy some incredibly high places. Maybe not necessarily dangling from a rope 10,000 feet in the air, but in whatever way you feel called to enjoy it. For more information about his upcoming adventures in 2006, go to his new blog at www.michaelangelatravel.blogspot.com.

And if you start feeling a little faint with some of the high altitudes in Michael's photos, our Outings Chair David Van Winkle will be here to cool you off with some amazing photos of his own on his trip to beautiful Alaska.

So please join us in March for a program that is sure to be HIGHly entertaining.

*Bryan Carpenter
Program Chair*

The Dallas Sierra Club's general meetings are held the second Wednesday of each month at 7:00 PM. Meetings are open to all interested persons. The meetings are held at Greenhill School located at the corner of Midway and Spring Valley. Please enter from Hornet Drive. Check www.dallasierraclub.org for directions. (Mapsco 14F)



RENEWABLES ARE GOOD FOR TEXAS

by David Van Winkle

Texas needs to develop a clean energy strategy that cost effectively addresses its needs. This task will certainly take some time to develop and implement, but there are some actions that the State can take now that moves us in the right direction.

First, the State Implementation Plan, or SIP, is being developed now that is intended to address the pollution of major cities in Texas. Implementation of the SIP is very important to Dallas air quality. Dallas and Houston have the 2nd and 3rd worst air quality in the USA. The current DFW SIP process calls for measures that will dramatically reduce nitrogen oxide (NOx) pollutants by 45%. This plan has an impact on all of us as we all breathe the Dallas' air everyday. 70% of the air pollution in Dallas comes from cars and off-road vehicles (i.e. construction equipment, trains, etc.) 21% of DFW's airborne pollutants comes from industrial sources, with the two largest offenders being cement kilns and power plants. Other sources include dry cleaners, print shops, etc.

Cars need to consume less energy in order to pollute less. So far, Texas has not acted to address auto fuel efficiency in a proactive manner. Other states - California, Oregon, Washington, and several northeastern states - have created laws that will require reduced pollution beginning in 2009. Texas could choose to join these states. So far, it has not seriously considered it.

Texas has a huge natural resource in wind power that is under utilized. Wind power is cost effective and clean. It has the potential to produce a significant portion of Texas' electricity. Currently, wind accounts for about 1% of the total electricity produced in Texas. The Texas legislature needs to enact an aggressive Renewable Portfolio Standard, or RPS, to increase wind to around 20% of the total electricity produced. The topic of wind energy will be addressed in more detail in a future edition of Compass.

Third, implementation of energy efficiency projects can have very high financial and energy returns. This topic will also be addressed in further details in a future edition.

Fourth, Texas is considering adding seven coal-fired power plants in the near future (see related article from Rita Beving). Governor Perry announced in October that he wanted to accelerate the approval of these plants. "Seven new coal plants are being planned for Texas, and they will threaten our air, our water, our wildlife, and our economy," said

Tom Smith of Public Citizen's Texas office. Numerous groups concerned with Texas' air quality are currently actively confronting this attack on our environment.

So, what are the facts about coal?

1) Coal-fired power plants produce more pollutants than other sources of electricity

Carbon dioxide is the primary greenhouse gas that is associated with increasing global temperatures and causing climate change. Per the PEW Institute, current best technology coal plants emit 820 metric tons of CO₂/GWh. Older plants produce even more pollution than this. This compares to 500 metric tons of CO₂/GWh for natural gas. Wind technology produces zero.

Coal-fired power plants also produce large quantities of mercury, a dangerous pollutant that can trigger birth defects, autism, neurological and kidney problems. It is especially dangerous for developing fetuses.

2) Cost effective alternatives are available

Current Texas wind production is at 1% of the potential, according to the Texas Railroad Commission's study group on energy that was published in 2004.

3) The only identifiable technology to provide clean coal output is carbon sequestration.

A sequestration of CO₂ emission is a technology that is currently unproven. The PEW Institute estimates that carbon sequestration from current coal power plants will cost 31% of the power output of the power plant. They also estimate that this technology is 15 years from production feasibility.

However, even if it proves technically feasible, will utility managers really implement a technology that causes a 31% loss of energy (read: revenue loss). New coal-fired power plants could use an approach called IGCC (Integrated Gasification Combined Cycle). This is a proven technology that produces 820 metric tons of CO₂/GWh. When combined with carbon sequestration, total emissions can be reduced to about 100 metric tons/GWh. The energy cost of IGCC with sequestration is 16% (PEW estimate). Better but the combined technology is 15 years away.

So, Texas would be better served to aggressively pursue clean, cost-effective wind energy in the next 10-15 years, as opposed to building more coal-fired power plants.

THE COMPASS

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Submissions: Article and photograph submissions are always welcome. Please send submissions by the deadlines given in the General Calendar. Send submissions to the newsletter editor at the e-mail address and phone number listed on the back fold.

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The clearest
way into the
Universe
is through
a forest
wilderness

JOHN MUIR



LETTER FROM THE CHAIR

Trying to "Walk the Talk"

A thought-provoking discussion course has me scrutinizing my choices, trying hard to be as much a part of the solution as I am a part of the problem.

I am one of a group of 10 Sierrans discussing the "Choices for Sustainable Living" curriculum published by Northwest Earth Institute (www.nwei.org). In weekly meetings, we are examining our individual responsibility in moving our society toward sustainability.

For example, a recent reading on the concept of ecological footprint has me thinking a lot about transportation and what I can do to reduce my footprint in a city designed for cars. As a work-at-home mom, I don't commute downtown. Instead, I run errands. As much as I love the yellow DART trains, I just don't have the opportunity to use them very often. But can I work bus trips into my routine more often? I decided to find out.

My first outing was to our discussion group meeting one evening in Addison. The #31 bus to the Addison Transit Center should have given me 4 minutes to transfer to the #400 that would take me to La Madeleine, but #31 ran late and I missed my connection. I had to call a fellow group member to come pick me up. Next time I'll have to choose between taking the earlier #31 and spending 30 minutes at the ATC waiting for my connection or just walking the second leg of the trip (which might burn off enough calories for my Caesar salad).

Since waiting until 9 p.m. to catch the next #31 southbound wasn't an attractive option, I asked my friend to drive me home.

Today I'll drive to the Forest Lane Station and take the #451 bus to Plano to meet another Sierran for lunch. It will be a combination drive/ride, an act of compromise made necessary by the fact that depending entirely on the bus would make the trip last 1 hour 53 minutes.

My food choices are undergoing similar scrutiny. I tried vegetarianism once before but experienced digestion problems; but the end result was a reduction in my consumption of animal proteins. Now that I am (again) reading about the environmental impacts of meat production, I am (again) asking whether I can further reduce my animal protein intake and whether I can alter my cooking habits to reduce my family's as well.

Then there's the "buy local/buy organic" quandary. I buy a lot of organic produce, but it's not local, so a lot of fossil fuels are used to deliver it to me. In the summer I buy at Farmer's Market, but it's not organic. What's a concerned mom to do? I could spend a lot of time cultivating my own organic backyard garden, but that would reduce the time I spend volunteering for the Sierra Club. My decisions about how to spend my time require an assessment of which activities have the greatest positive impact in the long run.

I am a prime example of why perfection is not a prerequisite for membership in the Sierra Club. I am also an example of a highly motivated individual. If these changes are difficult for me to make, what conclusions can I draw about the prospects for societal change?

I think it points out the paradox of change – that although societal change is happening with a rapidity that is unprecedented, individuals change slowly and reluctantly. It confirms the importance of education that causes people to examine their fundamental beliefs about what is necessary and desirable in life. It underscores the importance of market forces as drivers of change – DART isn't going to make it easier for me until more people using the system justify more frequent runs and additional routes, and that isn't going to happen until gas prices go high enough to get people out of their cars.

So if change is so difficult, can we make the necessary changes in time? I don't know. My small group of environmental activists started our first discussion asking the question, "How to you hold on to hope?" A common element emerged in several of the answers, the idea of a practice that promotes the individual's evolution – a quiet time to listen instead of speak, accept that I am not in control, and allow the illumination of my role in the unfolding of this great change.

Ann Drumm
Dallas Sierra Club Chair

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and protect the
wild places of
the earth..."

GENERAL CALENDAR

3/1 • 4/5 First Wednesday. Executive Committee Meeting 6:30PM at REI 2nd floor meeting room (I-635 between Welch Road & Midway Road, MAPSCO 14Q), to discuss Club projects, policy and finances. All members are welcome to attend and participate. Call Ann Drumm at 214-350-6108.

3/6 • 4/10 Monday before the General Meeting. Deadline for electronic materials to be submitted to the Compass E-mail editor@dallassierraclub.org or deliver diskettes to editors during the General Meeting.

3/8 • 4/12 Second Wednesday. Sierra Club General Meeting 7:00 - 8:30 p.m. Come to the General Meeting at Greenhill School located at the corner of Midway and Spring Valley. Check www.dallasseierraclub.org for directions. Come early to pick up activity materials and afterwards join the socializing at Pappa's Pizza.

3/15 • 4/19 Third Wednesday. Outings Committee Meeting 7:00 PM at REI (MAPSCO 14Q) to discuss schedules and issues. All outings leaders, future outings leaders, and interested Sierrans are welcome. Call David Van Winkle at (972) 562-7174 for more information.

3/22 • 4/26 Fourth Wednesday. Newsletter Party 7:00PM at the Churchill Recreation Center at Hillcrest & Churchill Way (MAPSCO 15V). Help sort, bundle and label the newsletter. Socializing afterward. Contact Charlotte Forst at 972-248-7581.

COMMUNITY SUPPORTED AGRICULTURE PROJECT

In our first Environmental Study Group we recently covered the topic of changing food purchasing habits to focus more on organic, locally produced products. There are farms in the DFW area which market to local consumers on the basis of prepaid shares of their production. I would like to put together a group to subscribe to a farm's CSA service, and car-pool to the farm on a weekly basis to pick up our shares. Anyone interested in participating or in just learning more about the concept, contact Don Callaway at 817-312-4657 or don.callaway@comcast.net.

CORRECTIONS

In last month's Compass we featured a crossword puzzle in the Conservation News section. We would like to give credit and thanks to Thomas Green for contributing the puzzle and would love to see more in the future! A correction to note: the clue for 15 Across should have read "when chemicals become concentrated in the top of a food chain." The answers for the puzzle are listed below:

Down		Across	
1) poaching	11) warming	5) desertification	21) oil spill
2) methane	13) kyoto	9) invasive	22) TED
3) CFC	14) biodiversity	10) hybridization	24) wetland
4) ethic	16) acid rain	12) habitat	25) clearcut
6) ecosphere	17) overpopulation	15) biomagnification	26) erosion
7) eutrophication	19) overgrazed	18) extinction	27) superfund
8) nonpoint	23) sprawl	20) dead	

COAL-FIRED POWER PLANTS, TXU, AND TEXAS' DIRTY AIR

By Rita Beving, Conservation Co-Chair

There are currently 17 coal-fired power plants in Texas (with 1- 4 boilers per plant). In October, Governor Perry asked for expedited permits with a 6-month time frame for 7 proposed new coal-fired power plants in East Texas. One is already now permitted with applications pending or about to be

- Texas is the #1 coal-consuming state in the nation.
- Two of the dirtiest coal-fired plants of the remaining new applications are being proposed by Dallas-based TXU.
- TXU ranks #1 for air pollution among all

THE DFW AREA'S AIR QUALITY COULD BE DOWNGRADED TO A "SERIOUS" CATEGORY IF OUR 9-COUNTY REGION DOESN'T CLEAN UP ITS AIR BY THE 2010 DEADLINE.

processed for the others. These new power plants would have a significant impact on the development of our local clean air plan as required by the EPA, and could most likely prevent us from meeting attainment under the Clean Air Act by 2010.

All of these coal-fired power plants could be permitted before new air pollution regulations for our region become effective, which will affect us all as individuals and business owners.

The DFW area's air quality could be downgraded to a "serious" category if our 9-county region doesn't clean up its air by the 2010 deadline. DFW could face federal sanctions, which could include the loss of highway funds, not to mention escalating respiratory illnesses and loss of economic growth due to not cleaning up our air.

On February 7th, Sierra Club, Public Citizen, Blue Skies Alliance, the League of Women Voters and the SEED Coalition launched the Texas Coal Rush tour statewide to call attention to Governor Perry's sweetheart deal for the utility companies and the proposed dirty coal-fired plants. The tour started in Austin, stopping in Dallas and other cities statewide.

Here are some fast facts on coal-fired power plants and coal:

- Texas is #1 in global warming emissions nationwide.
- Coal plants are the single largest industrial source of sulphur dioxide, nitrogen oxides, soot, and mercury air pollution in Texas.

Texas companies-- producing more than 47% of all Texas power plant pollution.

- TXU has the distinction of having the dirtiest coal-fired facility in the nation at its Monticello plant. TXU's newly proposed plant in Franklin would supersede Monticello as the dirtiest power plant in the nation due to the fact that TXU does not want to use the best available control technology for that plant even though this "cleaner coal" technology exists.
- Texas ranks #1 nationwide for mercury air pollution due to coal plants' lack of pollution controls. Mercury is a dangerous neurological pollutant, which can cause brain and kidney damage, autism, and severe birth defects.
- 12 Texas lakes and the Gulf of Mexico have been determined to have fish unsafe for human consumption due to mercury contamination.

(Statistical Data Sources- Texas Commission on Environmental Quality, Texas Dept. of Health, 2005 Clean Coal Technology Report, EPA Toxic Release Inventory Data for 2002-2003)

Is this what Texas wants for its energy future? Is this what the state needs for its power when cities other than Dallas already face critical air quality problems and we are one of the best states for wind power potential? The facts speak volumes. For more information on the air planning process and our clean air efforts, please go to dallassierraclub.org, lonestarchapter@sierraclub.org, publiccitizen.org, or DFWairplan.org.

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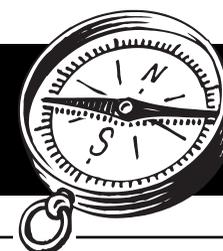
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Type SUBSCRIBE OUTINGS LIST on the subject line.

HOW THE OUTING PROGRAM WORKS

Dallas Sierra Club Outings are open to members and non-members. Some trips may require special qualifications and capabilities. The leaders of each outing / trip are serving in a volunteer capacity and assume no responsibility above that of trip organizer. If you have a medical problem, it is your responsibility to inform the leader before the outing / trip. Outing / Trip leaders are encouraged to participate in training and classes to increase their skills, but they are not paid professionals. They will assist you within their limitations. It is the responsibility of the participant to be aware of any personal limitations before going on an outing.

Radios and firearms are prohibited from all outings. Pets are not allowed unless specifically stated. All outings officially begin at the trail head or outing start point. Leaders cannot assign carpools, but may help coordinate ride sharing for energy conservation and to promote fellowship. All non-commercial transportation is the responsibility of the individual. Car-pooling is SOLELY voluntary, but the costs are shared. The usual method of sharing transportation cost is for all riders in the car, including the driver, to divide the cost of transportation equally. The recommended method of computing cost is to multiply round trip mileage by \$0.13 a mile for small cars, \$0.16 for large cars and \$0.19 for vans. Before leaving, be sure this or some other method is agreed upon.

Most outings require reservations. To participate in an outing contact the leader, who will decide if the trip you are interested in is suitable for you based on your capabilities and the demands of the trip. There is usually a limit to the number of people allowed on a given outing / trip. Reservations are necessary for outings unless otherwise noted. If you must cancel, inform the leader as soon as possible so that someone else can go in your place.

Please respect the wishes of your leader who has volunteered his / her free time to allow you to go on the trip of your choice. If you have any questions, or if you are interested in becoming a leader, contact either the Outings Chair or the appropriate Outings Committee Coordinator on the newsletter back page.

MAR 4-5 (SAT-SUN) PAT MASEY WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT AREA BEGINNING CAR CAMP.

We will take some walks in the WMA in both the lake and field areas in this Corp of Engineer managed property. Saturday evening we will cook dinner on a shared grill. Sunday morning we will walk around some of the local area. Later on Sunday we might visit the Caddo Grasslands WMA to the west of Pat Masey. This park is north of Paris Texas just south of the OK border within 2 hours of the Dallas Metroplex. This is a beginning car camping trip where we will assist you in "getting into" car camping. The lakes in this area support a variety of wildlife and birds. The nights should still be cool with the days starting to heat up.

Leader: Bob Gates 972-678-1221(H) or gates.rr@verizon.net

MAR 5 (SUN) SUSTAINABLE SUNDAY LUNCH & DAYHIKE

Thai plant-based buffet at Thai Jasmine, 3104 Harwood at Hwy 121, Bedford. This all-you-can-eat buffet is served from 11:30 am to 2:00 pm. \$8 for adults, \$4 for children. Sierra Singles Table. Walk it off with an optional urban hike at a nearby park at 2:30 pm. No dogs please.

Leader: Terry Jensen 972-988-8687 ext 3101(W) or ss@dfwnetmall.com

MAR 11-12 (SAT-SUN) BEGINNER BACKPACK TRIP TO MCGEE CREEK IN OKLAHOMA.

It's time to hit the trails again. Join us for an easy hike in a quiet wooded area of southeast Oklahoma. We will meet Saturday morning at McGee Creek Natural Scenic Recreation Area and hike in 2-3 miles to camp. We will have plenty of time for day hikes or just relax under a tree. Sunday we will enjoy a leisurely hike back to our cars. McGee Creek is close enough that you can drive up from Dallas on Saturday morning. Happy Trails.

Leaders: Faith Mauk 214-642-8331(C) or faithmauk@comcast.net and Laura Thornton carolmcfarland@sbcglobal.net

MAR 11-15 (SAT-WED) CANOE-KAYAK TRIP ON RED RIVER.

Come paddle a remote 65 mile stretch of the Red with no bridges and little signs of civilization. You'll never believe that you're in North Texas! (And sometimes you won't be - you'll be in Oklahoma.) We'll put in north of Bonham at Sowell's Bluff and take out north of Paris at Arthur City. The frequent changes of river course prevent development near the river and make it look more like wilderness. There is no whitewater but some prior river camping experience is required. There are no outfitters on this seldom paddled stretch so you'll need to have or rent your own boat. Leader: Bill Greer 972-964-1781(H) or wbgreer@verizon.net

MAR 15 (WED) OUTINGS COMMITTEE MEETING.

Meet in the upstairs program room at REI (on north side of LBJ between Midway and Welch), at 7:00 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.

Contact: David Van Winkle 972-562-7174(H) or davidvw@dallassierraclub.org

MAR 18 (SAT) SUSTAINABLE SATURDAY LUNCH & DAYHIKE.

Lunch buffet at Kalachandji's Restaurant, 214 821-1048, 5430 Gurley Av, Dallas, from noon to 2:00 PM. \$7. Sierra Singles Table. No reservation needed. Exit I-30 at Grand Av, turn northeast. Turn left 3 blocks at Beacon St and left again at Gurley. Walk it off with an optional urban hike at White Rock Lake Bird Sanctuary at 2:30. No dogs please.

Leader: Terry Jensen 972-988-8687 ext 3101(W) or ss@dfwnetmall.com

MAR 18-19 (SAT-SUN) LITTLE MISSOURI RIVER BACKPACKING TRIP

We'll do a moderately-easy backpack of about 10½-miles over 2-days along one of the most scenic backpacking trails in Southwest Arkansas. Because the trail follows the upper reaches of the Little Missouri River there is minimal elevation change, but do be prepared for a couple of difficult stream crossings. Drive up Friday night and return Sunday. This hike is suitable for graduates of the Beginner Backpacking Class who are in good shape.

Leaders: Steven Longley 214-824-1128(H) or sclongley@sbcglobal.net and Marcos Jorge

MAR 25 (SAT) DAYHIKE AT GREENBELT 380 PARK IN DENTON.

Meet at Greenbelt 380 Park in Denton at 10 AM for 4-to-5 mile hike to see the beginnings of spring and many types of birds/wildlife along Trinity River. Follow hike with lunch at a local restaurant. From I35 E in Denton, exit Loop 288 and turn right or north. Turn right on University Dr E (Hwy 380). Travel 2.8 miles to the Greenbelt Trail entrance on your left. \$5 fee to enter trail or free with State Park Pass. Joint event with Cross Timbers Sierra Club. Email leaders for potential carpools.

Leaders: Terry Jensen 972-988-8687 ext 3101(W) or ss@dfwnetmall.com and Peggy LaPoint 940-891-4984(H) or tnplapoint@msn.com

MAR 25-26 (SAT-SUN) BEGINNERS BACKPACK TRIP ON THE DAVID L. BOREN TRAIL IN OKLAHOMA.

We'll hike a total of about 6 miles on this very scenic trail in Beavers Bend State Park in Southeastern Oklahoma. Saturday, we'll hike up a rather imposing hill and then hike along the Skyline section of the trail before camping next to a wonderful creek. Sunday we have an easy two mile hike to our cars. Beginners going on this trip should be in reasonable shape because this trip is pretty hilly.

Leader: Arthur Kuehne 214-902-9260(H) or arthur@akuehne.com

MAR 26 (SUN) DESIGN A TRAIL AT DISD ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION CENTER IN SEAGOVILLE.

Plan a new trail through Post Oak Preserve putting ribbons on trees. Dayhike afterwards if time. Bring picnic lunch. We should be finished by early afternoon. Meet at Env. Ed. Ctr. at 9:00 AM. Take 175 East towards Kaufman from 635 or 45, In Seagoville, take Simonds Rd exit (also prison exit), Go right 2 mi to Bowers Rd, Go Left 2 mi to DISD Env. Ctr. or meet for optional carpool at Nwy Hwy @ Plano Rd (Krogers) by 8:30 AM.

Leaders: Dale Edelbaum 214-343-6741(H) or dme246@aol.com and Carol Nash 214-824-0244(H) or cnash@dallasisd.org

MAR 30 (THU) BIRDING 101 CLASS

Are you tired of classifying most birds as LBB's (little brown birds)? We have a beginning birding class for you to learn about the birds that you see on your outings. Georgette Guernsey, who is not only a Texas Master Naturalist, but also the field trip coordinator for the Prairie & Timbers Audubon Society, and an excellent birder, will teach you how to identify those LBB's. David Van Winkle, who is a Master Naturalist Intern and holder of the Bird Biology certificate from Cornell University, will also have a short program about interesting topics in ornithology (a.k.a. LBB biology). Join us at REI on LBJ 6:30pm-8:30pm to see the informative and entertaining program. Fee is \$15 for Sierra Club members and \$20 for non-members. Reservations are not needed. Just show up.

Contact: David Van Winkle 972-562-7174(H) or davidvw@dallassierraclub.org

APR 1 (SAT) EIGHTH ANNUAL WORLDS LONGEST DAYHIKE.

It may be April Fools Day, be this is no joke. We really are going to take a long walk. Come and join your fellow

Sierrans for a 23-mile dayhike on the White Rock Creek and White Rock Lake trails. Meet at 8:00 AM at the north end of the White Rock Creek trail in Valley View Park, on Valley View, just east of the intersection of Hillcrest and Valley View (just north of 635, Mapsco 15-R). We'll hike down to White Rock Lake, around it, and back. Bring your most comfortable walking shoes, Mole Skin, extra socks, water (water and bathrooms are available along the trail), lunch, and rain gear (if rain is in the forecast). We'll make a snack/lunch stop at the 7-11 near the White Rock Lake spillway. Optional dinner and foot replacement after the hike.

Leader: Arthur Kuehne 214-902-9260(H) or arthur@akuehne.com

APR 1-2 (SAT-SUN) BEGINNER BACKPACK AT MCGEE CREEK IN OKLAHOMA

This is a great trip for beginners - easy hiking, nice scenery, and close to Dallas. The area is designated as a natural scenic recreation area and has thick woods, scenic bluffs, and interesting trails going down to the lake. There will be a short backpack into camp, then plenty of opportunities for day hiking or just hanging out. The trip will start late Saturday morning, so you can stay home Friday night if you prefer.

Leader: Mike Rawlins 972-783-0962(H) or mike@dallassierraclub.org

APR 7 (FRI) DEADLINE for submission of outings to be listed in the April Outings List.

Contact: David Van Winkle 972-562-7174(H) or davidvw@dallassierraclub.org

APR 8-9 (SAT-SUN) BACKPACK TRIP TO LITTLE MISSOURI FALLS IN ARKANSAS

Are you tired of those freeze dried dinners and packaged rice meals out on the trail??? Then join us for a hike in beautiful Arkansas and discover gourmet cooking on the trail. I will share recipes and ideas, as well as, a few samples. If you are not interested in gourmet cooking then come along for the hike of it. Happy trails. Rated moderate.

Leaders: Faith Mauk 214-642-8331(C) or faithmauk@comcast.net and Laura Thornton carolmcfarland@sbcglobal.net

APR 14-16 (FRI-SUN) BACKPACK THE OZARK HIGHLAND TRAIL IN HURRICANE CREEK WILDERNESS

This 21 mile backpack trip at Easter weekend takes you through one of the most scenic spots in Arkansas. You will begin the hike at Haw Creek Campground at 9am on Friday. This is also a good spot to stay Thursday night. The highlight of Friday's hike will be Hurricane Creek Natural Bridge. Both hikes on Friday and Saturday will be 8-9 miles with Sunday's hike 4-5 miles. We end the hike at Fairview Campground. This hike is section 6 of the OHT as described in Tim Ernst's book "Ozark Highlands Trail Guide", plus 1.7 miles added onto the front of the hike. This trip is rated moderate, as the elevation increases by 1500 feet over the course of the three days.

Leader: David Van Winkle 972-562-7174(H) or davidvw@dallassierraclub.org

APR 15-16 (SAT-SUN) PEDERNALES FALLS STATE PARK CARCAMP. Saturday dayhike 7 miles round trip to Jones Spring and eat lunch. Saturday evening cook dinner on the grill. Sunday morning go to Hamiltons Pool and hike 2 miles round trip to the Pedernales River. Lunch will be at The Salt Lick in Driftwood where the trip will end. The park is west of Austin, about four hours from Dallas. This is the peak of the wildflower season in the hill country.

Leader: Greg Holman 214-398-8061(H) or gregholman@webtv.net

APR 19 (WED) OUTINGS COMMITTEE MEETING. Meet in the upstairs program room at REI (on north side of LBJ between Midway and Welch), at 7:00 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.

Contact: David Van Winkle 972-562-7174(H) or davidvw@dallassierraclub.org

APR 29-30 (SAT-SUN) CAR CAMP AND ROCK SCRAMBLING AT WICHITA MOUNTAINS IN SW OKLAHOMA. The club hasn't been to the Wichita Mountains Wildlife Refuge in SW Oklahoma for awhile, and we thought we were overdue for a return trip. We'll be checking out some of the more interesting rock formations in the area and doing some non-technical rock scrambling. You may even get to have an up close and personal encounter with a buffalo. The day hike portion of the trip is rated strenuous.

Leaders: Mike Rawlins 972-783-0962(H) or mike@dallassierraclub.org and Bill Greer 972-964-1781(H) or wbgreer@verizon.net

APR 29-30 (SAT-SUN) 27TH ANNUAL TEXAS WILDERNESS POW WOW. Come to the woods of East Texas for guided nature walks, live music, interesting programs, a great campfire, and surprise features. This year's Pow Wow will be held at Ratcliff Lake Recreation Area in Davy Crockett National Forest. Sponsored by the Texas Committee on Natural Resources.

For more information: Arthur Kuehne 214-902-9260(H) or arthur@akuehne.com and TCONR 512-441-1122(W) or tconr@texas.net

MAY 21-24 (SUN-WED) GRAND GULCH BACKPACKING TRIP Kelsey ranks this trip as the best place to see Anasazi ruins on the Colorado Plateau. Another guide book shows 25 distinct ruins on this route. We will meet at the Kane Gulch Ranger Station early on Sunday May 21 and do a shuttle to the trail head of the government trail. We will hike 7.3 miles to camp at Dripping Canyon. On the way, we will pass Polly's Island and Big Man Pictograph. On day 2, we will backpack 6.7 miles to our campsite at the confluence of Grand Gulch and Bullet Canyon. After setting up camp, we will day hike up the lower Bullet Canyon to see Jail House and Perfect Kiva Ruins for a round trip of 5 miles. The third day will take us past 11 distinct ruin sites on our 8.4 mile hike to the campsite at the confluence of Grand

Gulch and Todie Canyon. The last day's hike of 7.2 miles will take us past Junction Ruin, one of the largest in the canyon, on our way back to the Kane Gulch Ranger Station. Due to the BLM permit process, the exact dates could change and will not be available until early March.

Leader: David Van Winkle 972-562-7174(H) or davidvw@dallassierraclub.org

MAY 25-30 (THU-TUE) MEMORIAL DAY BANDELIER NATIONAL MONUMENT BUS TRIP. The Dallas Sierra Club returns to Bandelier National Monument for the first time in 5 years. So, join us on this Memorial Day weekend bus trip to explore this area west of Santa Fe, New Mexico. We will provide a variety of sub-trips tailored to allow backpackers of all skill levels to have an opportunity to enjoy this great area. Special adventures will include learning about Native American history and exploring their ruins in this unique area.

Bus trip leader: Bill Greer 972-964-1781(H) or wbgreer@verizon.att.net

JUN 30-JUL 5 (FRI-WED) FOURTH OF JULY BUS TRIP TO PECOS WILDERNESS IN NEW MEXICO. This Fourth of July weekend trip to the Pecos Wilderness east of Santa Fe, New Mexico is for backpackers who want to escape the heat of Dallas. This mountain range has numerous peaks, streams, lakes, waterfalls, and wild-flowers. There will be five trips available rated from moderate to strenuous. Each trip will be created to provide an interesting and challenging experience for each skill level. Special outdoor gourmet cooking will be a featured trip.

Bus trip leader: Jim Oursler 972-849-8279(C) or jimoursler@excelsys.mailstreet.com

AUG 31-SEP 5 (THU-TUE) LABOR DAY BUS TRIP TO THE WEMINUCHE WILDERNESS IN COLORADO. Escape the Texas heat this Labor Day weekend and join us for our trip to the cool Colorado mountains of the Weminuche Wilderness. This trip has mountains, lakes, streams, and valleys. Trips will range from a short backpack with day hikes to strenuous long hikes. The Weminuche Wilderness offers a great diversity and all the miles you want to hike. It is a hidden jewel and one of our most popular trips.

Contact: David Van Winkle 972-562-7174(H) or davidvw@dallassierraclub.org

NOV 22-27 (WED-MON) THANKSGIVING BUS TRIP TO BIG BEND NATIONAL PARK. This Thanksgiving weekend trip to Big Bend includes five trip options. Included in the five options will be the wild Rancherias Trail in the Big Bend Ranch State Natural Area. If you've never been, you owe it to yourself to discover this unique part of Texas. Within the National Park, trips within the Chisos Basin are always popular for their unique mountain beauty. Desert trips will include the Outer Mountain Loop and Mesa de Aguilla.

Contact: David Van Winkle 972-562-7174(H) or davidvw@dallassierraclub.org

OUTINGS CORNER

A monthly column that answers questions about various outings issues.



Photo by David Van Winkle

TEN ESSENTIALS

by Bill Greer

And What To Do With Them If You're Lost In The Woods

On a beginner backpack trip I lead a few years ago one of the hikers became separated from the group while we were on a 2 hour day hike. We didn't see the lost hiker again until the next morning. Fortunately the weather was mild, and some kind strangers were encountered, so all was well in the end. In spite of everything we do, misfortunes will happen. This makes it vital to discuss two closely related subjects: the basic safety items you should always have with you when you're hiking, and what you should do with those items if you find yourself lost in the woods.

The 10 Essentials

The "10 Essentials" are the tools you should have with you to deal with an emergency in the woods. These things are your own emergency gear. You should not depend on someone else to have them. It's tempting to say, "Why should I carry all this stuff? I know the leader has it all!" There are two answers to that. First, what if you get separated from the leader? An item in the leader's pack will not help you. Second, what happens if both you AND the leader find yourself in trouble? Who gets the one piece of gear you both need? Like the incident mentioned above, emergency situations happen suddenly. When they do, it's too late to prepare. You will see small variations in different "10 essentials" lists, but here is mine. They should be with you on any dayhike or backpack, whether you are a beginner or expert.

- 1) Map of the area. Know where you and your camp or car are on this map at all times! If you're not sure, ask the trip leader.
- 2) Compass. If you don't know how to use it, ask the leader to show you. And take the Wilderness Navigation Class!
- 3) Whistle. Not one of the wimpy tin things many people have, but one of the orange plastic ones that can be heard for a 1/2 mile or more. The "Storm" whistle is very good. Three blasts is a universal emergency signal, use one blast for an attention getter. The whistle is also a very useful communication tool for the searchers. It ends up being used on lots of trips, and one of the most frequent uses is to recall hikers who have headed down the wrong trail. Keep it where you can get to it quickly.
- 4) Flashlight with spare bulbs and batteries. The new LED lights are a good bet since the LEDs don't burn out. Of course you should always plan

to be back well before dark. We're talking about emergencies here, and that means things didn't go as planned. Trying to walk in the dark can lead to a fall that turns a potential emergency into a real one.

- 5) Rain gear. Even if it's not supposed to rain! The weather can change in minutes without regard to what the forecast says. Good rain gear is also a valuable wind barrier.
- 6) Extra warm clothing. It may be 60 degrees when you start your walk but a strong cold front can drop the temperature 20 degrees in an hour. A 40-degree temperature with a 25-mph wind gives a chill factor of 29 degrees, prime conditions for hypothermia. Throw in some rain and it really gets nasty. At night the temperature could easily continue to drop into the 20s.
- 7) Extra food. You should come back from a dayhike or backpack with some extra food. It can make the difference between surviving or not when things go wrong.
- 8) Waterproof matches and fire starter. We usually don't build fires on our hikes. In an emergency we do.
- 9) Pocket knife. Leave the giant sheath knife or folding toolbox for the boy scouts. A Swiss Army Knife is lighter and will do the job just fine.
- 10) First aid kit. It must include moleskin, waterproof surgical tape, Second Skin, and basic bandages. In snake country include your Extractor. The small rubber cup "snake bite kits" are useless. Include any medication you may need. If you're not sure what the kit should include or how to use it, take a Wilderness Medicine class. A standard Red Cross first aid class doesn't cover what you need to know in a backcountry medical emergency.

CONTINUED ON PG. 7



OIL FOREVER?

By Bill Greer

In his State Of The Union address President Bush pointed out a painfully obvious fact: our country is addicted to foreign oil. Administration spinmeisters over the next few days hastened to assure us that he really didn't mean we should do anything about this situation. Cuts were soon announced in energy efficiency research. Exxon Senior Vice President Stuart McGill stated confidently that it was impossible to end oil imports. "No combination of conservation measures, alternative energy sources, and technological advances" can end oil imports he said. Drilling the last remaining pieces of wilderness remains the centerpiece of administration energy policy.

Are we really condemned to destroy the Arctic Refuge and still have our economy tied to imports from one of the most volatile parts of the planet? A front page article in the January 9, 2006 Wall Street Journal indicates that for an answer to that question we can look south to Brazil.

At the time of the 1973 oil crises Brazil was importing 80% of its oil needs. The sudden rise in prices hit the economy hard. Brazil's military leader, Gen Ernesto Geisel, ordered a shift to ethanol. Succeeding military leaders kept the pressure on. The state run oil company was ordered to make ethanol available at filling stations. Car companies were given tax breaks to produce ethanol burning vehicles. By 1983 90% of new cars ran on pure ethanol.

Brazilian ethanol is made from sugar, so scientists studied sugar cane production. The amount of ethanol produced per acre rose from 800 liters in 1975 to 2,400 liters today. The government phased out subsidies to force sugar growers to become more efficient.

Today, based on a price adjusted for energy content, Brazilian ethanol costs about 2/3 as much as gasoline. The most efficient producers make ethanol for 80 cents per gallon. An average driver with a compact car using nothing but ethanol can save about \$350 a year over what would be paid for gasoline. A

modification to the software in standard car computers allows almost all new cars to run on ethanol, gasoline, or any mixture of the two. Some of these cars are sold by Ford's Brazilian unit.

In 2006 Brazil expects to become energy independent.

The latest US energy bill calls for increased use of ethanol in this country. Is this going to put us on the same path Brazil has followed? Not likely, for several reasons. Corn growers have a lot of influence in Congress, so US ethanol is made from corn by a much more expensive process than the one the Brazilians use. Some studies have shown that replacing gasoline with corn ethanol actually increases oil consumption.

Can we diversify our imports by replacing some expensive imported oil with Brazilian ethanol? No luck there either. According to the Journal "US trade barriers make Brazilian ethanol expensive to buy." Other countries are starting to use Brazilian ethanol in the hope that its lower carbon dioxide emissions will help them meet Kyoto Protocol commitments. The US has refused to make any such commitments.

It's not likely that the United States could duplicate Brazil's method of reducing oil use. For one thing our climate is not as favorable for growing sugar as Brazil. For another it may be more difficult for our government to enforce some of the measures Brazil did. And growing sugar can be more destructive than drilling for oil. The main point to gain from this story is that our economy and way of life do not have to be tied forever to environmentally destructive oil, imported or otherwise. If we can ever come up with the will to do so we could have practical cars and comfortable homes on a lot less oil. We would have to find our own way to become energy independent. But Brazil shows that with a sensible energy policy it can be done. Remember that the next time a politician or oil executive tells you that the only way to drive your car is to drill the Arctic Refuge!

FAST FACTS on Kids, Dirty Air and Health

Today more than 5 million Texans suffer from poor air quality. Children and the elderly are the most susceptible due to problems from dirty air. Dirty air can trigger asthma, lung dysfunction, heart disease, birth defects, and cancer. Below are some fast facts that pertain to children and dirty air:

- Asthma is now the leading reason why children miss school, surpassing the flu and the common cold.
- 1 out of 8 children have asthma or will develop asthma in their lifetime.
- Children's Medical Center in Dallas is the busiest children's hospital in the country, primarily due to respiratory problems.

(Source: American Lung Association and Dallas County Records)

INVITE A GUEST

Help the Dallas Group of the Sierra Club meet its goals for 2006.

If you know someone who might:

- Participate in Conservation projects such as Clean Air, Clean Water and Sensible Energy Solutions
- Participate in Local Service projects
- Enjoy Outings
- Enjoy our great monthly programs
- Become active in Sierra Singles

Why not bring them to our monthly meeting?

If they can't make the monthly meeting, get a newsletter for them or have them call someone from the membership committee. We will guide them how they can find out more about their areas of interest.

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OUTINGS CORNER CONTINUED

What To Do If You Get Lost

You have left the group for a few minutes, and you're hurrying to catch up. All of the sudden you realize that the trail has vanished. What do you do now?

The very first thing you should do, the instant you realize that things don't look right, is to stop! I can't say it any clearer, so I'll say it louder:

STOP!!!!

You are headed in the wrong direction or there wouldn't be a problem, so any farther progress only makes the situation worse. Mountain rescue workers will tell you that keeping going when you are lost makes you almost impossible to find and decreases your chances of surviving.

The next thing you should do is get out your whistle and blow a good long, blast. If the rest of the group is nearby, they'll come check on you. Blow the whistle before they have a chance to get farther away. This may be a little embarrassing, but it's a lot less trouble and danger for everyone than a major search.

The next step is to think back to the last time you saw the trail, or otherwise knew where you were. If you are sure you can backtrack to it, do so. If you've been paying attention you should not be very far from the trail.

Next, get out your map and compass. See if you can figure out where you are. If you are absolutely sure you know where you are and how to get back to where you should be, do so. Otherwise

just stay put. Don't make the situation worse by continuing on in the wrong direction.

This is now an emergency, so blow three long blasts on your whistle every few minutes. The rest of the group will start looking for you where you were last seen, and you shouldn't be over a mile from there. If it is a good one your whistle will carry that far, so you should be found right away.

If it's starting to get dark and you still have not been found, settle in for the night. Find what cover you can, maybe build a fire, and save your strength to keep you warm. No searching takes place after sunset. It's too dangerous for the searchers and not likely to produce any results. Eat your extra food, put on your extra clothes and rain gear, and get ready for the night.

When daylight comes, continue to stay where you are. Don't make things worse by moving. Unless you have done something you shouldn't have you will not be very far from where you were last seen. This is where a search for you will start. The farther from that place you are the longer it will take to find you. Continue to blow your three whistle blasts every few minutes.

If you ever take children into the woods be sure that they have a whistle and keep it with them. Give them some practice using it. Your neighbors may not be amused but the kids will think it's great fun. Be sure to impress this rule on them: if you're lost, stop and whistle!



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