January’s Program

2005 OUTINGS

YEAR IN REVIEW

Happy New Year from the Dallas Sierra Club!

Welcome to 2006 fellow DSC members (and prospective new members)! Your dedicated Program Committee has already been hard at work lining up some of the most exciting, educational, and entertaining programs we can for your enjoyment in 2006. Since conservation issues and outings programs are our primary focus here at the Dallas Sierra Club, we’re kicking off the New Year with a little of both.

Our first speaker is J im Schermbeck with our fellow environmental group “partner in grime,” Downwinder s At Risk. Like the Dallas Sierra Club, Downwinder s At Risk is fighting hard to help clean up our air quality in the D/FW region. In February, the State of Texas will be finalizing its State Implementation Plan (SIP) to clean up Texas’ air. J im will be here to talk to us about ways that we can help be a part of the solution, and provide a voice to local decision makers on ways to improve the air quality of North Texas.

Next, Dallas Sierra Club Outings Chair David Van Winkle will be here to take us on a pictorial review of our 2005 outings trips, and give us a preview of what we can expect from our outings program in 2006! (For more information see text below).

So come start the New Year off right with all of your friends here at the Dallas Sierra Club.

Bryan Carpenter
Program Chair

One of the comments I often hear from people that were formerly members of other Sierra Club groups, is what an outstanding Outings program we have here in the Dallas Sierra Club, especially in comparison to some of the other groups around the country. Without question, we have some of the most committed, passionate and knowledgeable Outings Leaders of any group around. Furthermore, we have enough leaders in our group to be able to offer you a wide variety of outings opportunities every single month here at the Dallas Sierra Club.

In January, as we begin a new year, our Outings Chair David Van Winkle will present an exciting pictorial overview of a number of our outings trips in 2005, and he will offer up some highlights of what you can expect from our 2006 outings program.

In 2005, the Dallas Sierra Club had a number of incredible outings opportunities. Backpacking to the backcountry is always an integral part of our program. We will see highlights from the many backpacking trips to Arkansas and Oklahoma on weekend trips in the fall and spring. The bus trips to Taos, White Mountains in New Mexico, Sangre de Cristo in Colorado, Weminuche Wilderness in Colorado, and Big Bend National Park will be highlighted.

Canoeing and kayaking also became an important part of the outings program in 2005. Canoeing and kayaking trips in the spring in Texas, and in the summer to Buffalo National River and Red River will also be presented.

Finally, the many other activities we did such as local day hikes will be presented.

For 2006, we will provide you a look at our bus trip plans, which include two new locations this year. We will also show you some of the other numerous outings opportunities we are planning in order to whet your appetite for future adventures with the Dallas Sierra Club.

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.dallasierrabc.org for directions. (Mapsco 1 4F)

WORLD LEADERS MEET TO ADDRESS CLIMATE CHANGE

World leaders met to define actions to address climate change at the UN Climate Change Conference in Montreal during the week of December 5. Paul Martin, Prime Minister of Canada, gave the keynote address to welcome ministers from more than 180 countries and more than 9000 delegates to the conference on December 7. Mr. Martin said ‘‘We must act and we must act now….it is well known that the primary cause of climate change is human activity….Climate change is a global challenge that demands a global response, yet there are nations that resist, voices that attempt to diminish the urgency or dismiss the science or declare, either in word or in indifference, that this is not our problem to solve….Well, it is our problem to solve. We are in this together. The time is past to seek comfort in denial. The time is past to pretend that any nation can stand alone, isolated from the global community - for there is but one Earth, and we share it, and there can be no hiding on any island, in any city, within any country, no matter how prosperous, from the consequences of inaction.”

At the request of Sierra Club of Canada, former U.S. President Bill Clinton made a surprise visit to Montreal on Friday December 9 to address the conference attendees in the plenary room. His remarks included “There’s no longer any serious doubt that climate change is real, accelerating, and caused by human activities” He pointed to an array of gloomy scientific reports published in past weeks, including evidence that carbon dioxide levels are at their highest in 650,000 years, that glaciers in the Himalayas and Artic sea ice are melting and warm Atlantic currents that bathe northwestern Europe are slowing down. “We have a heavy obligation to act now that we know….it’s crazy for us to play games with our children’s future….The cleaner technologies would strengthen our economy...in America, there’s no telling how many jobs we could create”, referring to state and the world. He sees rising sea levels as a threat to the coast from an erosion perspective, it threatens the underground water supplies, and it threatens to eliminate stored water from the snow/ice of nearby mountains. He has set goals to reduce GHG by 80% by 2050, in the shorter term, the state plans to support increasing population energy demands by implementing improved efficiency plans to support 55% of the growth needs. The remaining 45% of the needs will come from renewable energy.

“NOT the Bush administration’s position that you must choose between the environment and the economy. There is no difference between being green and making green.”

- GREG NICKELS, Mayors Climate Protection Agreement

See Climate Change (pg. 2)
Letter from the Chair

Raising Money and Using it Wisely

As Chair, I have a responsibility to our volunteers to minimize the time they spend on fundraising, and I have a responsibility to our donors to make sure the money they give is spent wisely in furtherance of our mission.

Every year we ask our donors to provide a greater share of our revenue. The Dallas Group’s 2006 budget projects a record 50% of our revenue coming from donations. Those of you who are already supporting our Group with contributions have my immeasurable gratitude for making this a realistic goal.

In return, I promise to make sure that we make effective use of your money. Publishing a paper newsletter is extremely expensive, and digital communications – website and email - are valuable low-cost components of our communications toolkit. Guided by a commitment to cost-effectiveness and by internal Sierra Club research, we have decided to publish 9 issues of The Compass in 2006. We believe we can invest this savings in other activity areas without compromising the overall effectiveness of our communications with our members and the public.

All of the content of The Compass is now available on our website, www.dallassierranews.org, in an easy-to-read format. Our Dallas Sierra Club News email announces the posting of new content with links directly to articles of interest. If you have not subscribed to our Email Lists section on our homepage, or send your email address to me at ann@dallassierracommunity.org and I’ll sign you up.

The Lone Star Chapter, our parent organization, provides organizational support for all Groups around the state and works for all Sierra Club members in Texas as our advocate in the Texas Legislature. Chapter Director Dr. Ken Kramer is a recognized expert on water policy, Dr. Neil Carman is an expert on air quality, and they and the rest of the Chapter staff do invaluable work at the state level. On January 28-29, the Chapter will host our very own Sierra Club Founder John Muir (portrayed for years by veteran actor Lee Stetson), in two fundraising performances in Austin. Learn about the history and philosophy of the Sierra Club, be entertained and support the Chapter at the same time! Find our more and buy tickets at the Chapter website, http://lonestar.sierracommunity.org.

We appreciate all the ways you support the Sierra Club and its tireless volunteers and staff as they further the Club’s mission of environmental advocacy and education.

With best wishes for a happy and healthy 2006 to all of you -

Ann Drumm
Dallas Sierra Club Chair
214-350-6108
ann@dallassierranews.org

I think having land and not ruining it is the most beautiful art that anybody could ever want to own.

ANDY WARHOL

Holiday Party Closes With Successful Silent Auction

The 2005 Sierra Club Holiday Party received a record number of auction items which produced almost $2500 in revenue for the Club’s general operating fund. Thanks to the following donors who gave so generously to the Sierra Club’s Silent Auction:

- Lunacy Designs - Mitzi Z. and Mike V.
- Whole Earth Provision - Chris Fager
- CD Source - Allan Logan
- Mountain Hideout - Joanie Mein
- Exposure Climbing Gym - Molly Roeko
- David Hennessy Custom Jewelry - Art Johnson
- Dr. John and Margie Hailey - Richard Schramm
- Kent Tudsson and Laura Kimberly - Beth Hart
- Gayle Loefller and J ohn Weinkein - Charlotte Forst
- J udge Bruce and J an Woody - Wendel Withrow
- Caroline Alexander and Jim Vornberg - Olya Berksheir
- David Griggs and Rita Baving - George Zimmerman
- Mike Seay - David Van Winkle

New Members Dinner

Start off the New Year right and come to the New Members dinner. This is a great opportunity to meet new people, visit with Club leaders, find out what the Group has to offer, and to find out how you can get involved.

New members, those considering membership or current members wanting to find out more about the Dallas Group of the Sierra Club are welcome.

Enjoy a great DVD showing our activities and make some new friends.

Food and drinks are on us!

Date: J anuary 29, 2006
Time: 6:00 P.M.
Place: Ann Drumm’s house, 4340 Valley Ridge (Mapco 24Q). From Midway Rd. and Walnut Hill Ln., go south on Midway three streets to Valley Ridge and turn left. Ann’s house is the last house on the right.

Please RSVP to:
Dale Edelbaum dme246@aol.com, 214-343-6741
OR
Ann Drumm ann@swbell.net, 214-350-6108

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**General Calendar**

1/4 • 2/1 First Wednesday, Executive Committee Meeting 6:30PM at REI 2nd floor meeting room (I-1538 between Welch Road & Midway Road, MAPSCO 140Q) to discuss Club projects, policy and finances. All members are welcome to attend and participate. Call Ann Drumm at 214-350-6108.

1/9 • 2/6 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.

1/11 • 2/8 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.dallansierraclub.org for directions. Come early to pick up activity materials and afterward join the socializing at Pappa's Pizza.

1/18 • 2/15 Third Wednesday, Outings Committee Meeting 7:00 PM at REI (MAPSCO 140Q) 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.


**Volunteers Needed**

Sierrans Needed at January 18th Dallas City Council Briefing

DALLAS CITY HALL, ROOM 6E SOUTH AT 9:00 AM

The Dallas City Council will be briefed on a Sulphur River Basin Study which includes studying the proposed Marvin Nichols reservoir and a log jam. Come to the meeting; wear a badge in opposition to Dallas' paying for a study that includes unneeded, destructive Marvin Nichols Reservoir and other unneeded new reservoirs in the Sulphur Basin. Both newly-elected City Council members and those who have served for awhile need to see that citizens do not support this study. Last Spring Dallas withdrew its previous plans to join other suppliers in building Marvin Nichols Reservoir and wisely chose instead to get a portion of its future water supply from nearby existing Lake Wright Patman in the Sulphur River Basin that also has much additional available water. But since the Council agreed to join the Sulphur Basin Study as described last Spring, the study has changed such that for the coming year it will not further Dallas' chosen Patman strategy and it will further only the other suppliers' plans to build Marvin Nichols. Also, now there's no 50% federal funding, and the other suppliers have retained the very engineering firm the Council opposed because this firm will build Marvin Nichols if the study "concludes" that the reservoir should be built.

Call Rita Beving at 214-373-3808 or email her at ritaj@dallassierraclub.org and Beth Johnson at beth@bethjohnson.com if you can attend.

**Climate Change (cont from pg. 1)**

sources. Current law calls for California to have 20% renewable energy by 2017. The governor and the California PUC's policy is to attain 20% by 2010 and 33% by 2020. Further, California has created an initiative that provides support to home owners for solar technology installation.

U.S. Senator Jeff Bingaman of New Mexico sees growing support in the U.S. Senate for national legislative action due to 1) Continuing scientific evidence that climate change is caused by human activity, 2) Increasing public concern on this issue, 3) Strong support from elected officials at the state and local level, 4) Business leaders are seeing increasing regulations at the state level and internationally, 5) Business leaders see regulations as inevitable on this issue. Senator Bingaman said "We need to get bi-partisan support now". A senior aide to U.S. Olympia Snowe of Maine stated, in echo of these comments, adding that support for improved fuel economy standards (CAFE) are increasing in the U.S. Senate and action could be seen as early as 2006.

Labor leaders also echo their concern with the Bush administration's position on climate change. David Foster, Director of District 11 United Steelworkers Union stated: "We need new US government policies to support climate change action. The Bush administration's position that you must choose between the environment and jobs is a false one. The USW has supported renewable energy portfolio legislation and improved auto fuel economy in several states.....The USW is concerned about the isolation policies that the current US government has adopted and is placing the US in uncompetitive positions in a world market."

Enlightened business leaders see action on climate change as an important element in their business. Ray Anderson, Founder and Chairman of Interface, Inc., an Atlanta based manufacturer of rugs and tiles, one of the world's largest said: "We began our journey towards a zero energy footprint 11 years ago. Our energy use is down by about 50% per revenue in the last 11 years. We are closing smokestacks and effluent pipes. We are making a lot of progress up the sustainability mountain. We intend to continue doing well, by doing good. Our costs are down and our product quality is up.....The US needs to get on with increasing CAFE standards, the technology is there, the Japanese are already showing us."

On December 7, 25 leading U.S. economists (including three Nobel laureates) sent a letter to President Bush that said: "...unless we act now, the price of dealing with global warming will mean huge sacrifices to business and consumers significant amounts of money, as well as create high-quality jobs and reduce pollution."

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### Bottom Line:

1. **We have the opportunity and technology to cut our emission of greenhouse gases which fuel climate change.**

2. **American national leaders have failed to take meaningful steps to address this serious problem. Some still want to deny the science behind climate change created by human activity, instead of taking responsible action.**

3. **The U.S. must join the world on solutions to climate change.**

4. **Americans want the Bush administration to stop blocking progress on international global warming agreements.**

5. **Right now, the real U.S. leaders on climate change solutions can be found in America’s city halls and state capitals. They represent the American public’s desire to protect our climate.**

So, what can you do to help?

1. **Reduce your own energy consumption.**

2. **Lobby your municipal leaders to sign up to the Cool City program.**

3. **Lobby your state congress persons to increase the renewable portfolio standard for Texas.**

4. **Lobby our governor to develop a comprehensive energy strategy that reduces our dependence upon fossil fuels.**

5. **Lobby your U.S. Senators and Representatives to pass 1) improved CAFE standards to improve auto gas mileage, 2) Climate change action plan.**

### Meanwhile in Texas

Texas Governor Rick Perry issued an executive order on Oct. 27 calling for state agencies to expedite the permitting process for new power generation facilities. Since the only new power generating facilities with permits pending are coal-fired power plants, they are the only ones that will benefit from the governor’s order.

### “Seven new coal plants are being planned for Texas, and they will threaten our air, our water, our wildlife and our economy,” said Tom “Smitty” Smith of Public Citizen’s Texas office. “Burning more coal means we’ll be importing more coal from other states, making the skies over our urban areas even dirtier and ignoring much cleaner and cheaper ways to meet our state’s future energy needs.”

Note: Thank you to Sierra Club of Canada and to Steve Crowley, Chairman of Sierra Club’s national conservation committee on Global Warming and Energy, who made the trip of David Van Winkle to the UN conference possible.

The Compass
January 2006

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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 or 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 or trip. Outing or 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, packs not allowed unless specified in advance. Bringings offerings begin at the trail head or outing start point. Leaders cannot assign carpools, but can help coordinate carpools for any convenient carpooling to promote fuel efficiency. Non-commercial transportation is the responsibility of the individual. Car pooling is 50% voluntary, but the costs are shared. The usual method of sharing transportation cost is for all riders in the car, the driving, to divide the total cost equally. The recommended method of computing cost is to multiply round trip mileage by $0.10 for small cars, $0.16 for large cars and $0.19 for vans before leaving. Because this or some other method is agreed upon.

Most outings require reservations. To participate in an outing contact the leader of 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 / reservation. 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 or her 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.

JAN 14 (SAT) WHITE ROCK LAKE CLEANUP. Walk and talk while helping to pick up trash and recyclables at the Sierra Club’s adopted section of White Rock Lake Park. Meet at 8:15 AM at the Love of the Lake office on the Northeast corner of Garland Rd. and Buckner Blvd. Look for a crowd of people drinking free juice and coffee. Gloves, trash bags, etc. provided. Our area includes one of the wonderful prairie restoration areas, so there are always birds and wildflowers to enjoy. The lake and your karma will thank you. Brunch afterwards.

Leader: Carol Nash 214-824-0244(H) or cnash@dallasisracl.org

JAN 18 (WED) OUTINGS COMMITTEE MEETING. Meet in the upstairs program room at REI (on north side of LB) 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@dallasisracl.org

JAN 22 (SUN) SUSTAINABLE SUNDAY DAYHIKE. Start your sustainable New Year by joining Sierra Club for an extensive plant-based buffet at Hunan Dynasty, 972 444-9760, 8150 North MacArthur Blvd, Suite 190, Irving/Vally Ranch 75063, one block north of LB) at Ranchview. This all-you-can-eat buffet is served from noon to 2:00 pm. No reservation needed. Follow with an optional 3-mile urban hike at nearby Campion Trails at 2:30 pm, weather permitting. No dogs please.

Leader: Terry Jensen 972-988-8867 ext. 3101(W) or ssf@fwnetmail.com

JAN 27-29 (FRI-SUN) CABIN WEEKEND AT BEAVERS BEND STATE PARK. Shake off those winter blues. Beavers Bend State Park is a 1,35-acre park situated along the Mountain Fork River just South of Broken Bow Reservoir in Southeast Oklahoma. Total drive is about 200 miles. The park has cabins of various sizes accommodating 2 - 6 persons. All cabins have kitchens and some are available with fireplaces. We plan to spend Friday and Saturday nights in the cabins and day hike part of the David Boren Trail. There will be a potluck dinner on Sat night. The winter rates are $68 - $130 per night. You must preregister with trip leader since trip is limited to 12 persons. Please make your own cabin reservations.


Leader: Claudia Ballock 817-924-6242(H)

FEB 3 (FRI) DEADLINE for submission of outings to be listed in the January Outings List and March Newsletter. Contact: David Van Winkle 972-562-7174(H) or davidvw@dallasisracl.org

FEB 4-5 (SAT-SUN) LAKE MINERAL WELLS STATE PARK BEGINNING CAR CAMP. We will take some walks around both the lake and rock areas in this very special State Park. Saturday evening we will cook dinner on a shared grill. Sunday morning walk the Nature Trails and local park trails. Lunch in Weatherford on Sunday where we will end. The park is West of Fort Worth and will be for four hours of the Dallas Metroplex. This is a beginning car camping trip where we will discuss car camping, equipment, conservation and other related topics. This is a very interesting and challenging experience for each skill level. Special outdoor gourmet cooking will be a featured trip.

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FEB 6 (SAT) WHITE ROCK LAKE CLEANUP. Walk and talk while helping to pick up trash and recyclables at the Sierra Club’s adopted section of White Rock Lake Park. Meet at 8:15 AM at the Love of the Lake office on the Northeast corner of Garland Rd. and Buckner Blvd. Look for a crowd of people drinking free juice and coffee. Gloves, trash bags, etc. provided. Our area includes one of the wonderful prairie restoration areas, so there are always birds and wildflowers to enjoy. The lake and your karma will thank you. Brunch afterwards.

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

FEB 11 (SAT) WHITE ROCK LAKE CLEANUP. Walk and talk while helping to pick up trash and recyclables at the Sierra Club’s adopted section of White Rock Lake Park. Meet at 8:15 AM at the Love of the Lake office on the Northeast corner of Garland Rd. and Buckner Blvd. Look for a crowd of people drinking free juice and coffee. Gloves, trash bags, etc. provided. Our area includes one of the wonderful prairie restoration areas, so there are always birds and wildflowers to enjoy. The lake and your karma will thank you. Brunch afterwards.

Leader: Carol Nash 214-824-0244(H) or cnash@dallasisracl.org

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

FEB 18 (SAT) BEGINNER BACKPACKING CLASS. Aimed at beginners, this class is a great opportunity for people just beginning to experience the wonderful beauty of winter or for individuals wanting to expand their winter camping skills. Our convenient sleeper bus will leave Dallas late afternoon of 2/23 and return early morning of 2/27. You will find complete details on the Outings page on dallasisracl.org. Reserve your place on this great trip now.

Bus trip leader: Carl Tucker 912-826-5461(H) or carl.tucker@sbcglobal.net

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 watch the birds. This is north 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.rj@verizon.net

APR 15-16 (SAT-SUN) PEDERNALES FALLS STATE PARK CAR CAMP. 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 gregholm@webnet.com

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 wggreer@worldnet.att.net

JUN 30-UL 5 (FRI-WEDE) 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 experience the heat of Dallas. This mountain range has numerous peaks, streams, lakes, waterfalls, and wild-flowers. There will be five trips available rated from easy 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.

Leader: Bill Greer 972-964-1781(H) or wggreer@worldnet.att.net

Notice: To receive this outings list monthly via e-mail, send message to: outings.list@dallasisracl.org

Type SUBSCRIBE OUTINGS LIST on the subject line.
LEAVE NO TRACE

by Arthur Kuehne

In the early days of Sierra Club outings, the Club used to take hundreds of people at a time into the high country of the Sierra Nevada Mountains in California. Over the last 100 years or so, we have learned a thing or two about how to minimize our impact on the wild places that we love. Today, a sophisticated set of outdoor ethical principles known as Leave No Trace goes beyond yesterday’s simple message of “pack it in, pack it out” and “take nothing but pictures, leave nothing but footprints”.

The Leave No Trace principles have been developed over many years by leading experts in backcountry ethics. In 1994, representatives from the National Outdoor Leadership School, the Outdoor Recreation Coalition of America, and others met and formed the Leave No Trace Center for Outdoor Ethics. The center is a non-profit organization dedicated to promoting and inspiring responsible outdoor recreation through education, research, and partnerships. Sierra Club is a Leave No Trace partner and has worked for years to promote the responsible use of our wildlands.

Here is a brief outline of the seven Leave No Trace principles:

Plan Ahead and Prepare
- Know the regulations and special concerns for the area you’ll visit.
- Prepare for extreme weather, hazards, and emergencies.
- Include your trip to avoid times of high use.
- Visit in small groups. Split larger parties into groups of 4-6.
- Repackage food to minimize waste.
- Use a map and compass to eliminate the use of marking paint, rock or flagging.
- Travel and Camp on Durable Surfaces.
- Durable surfaces include established trails and campsites, rock, gravel, dry grasses or snow.
- Protect riparian areas by camping at least 200 feet from lakes and streams.
- Good campsites are found, not made. Altering a site is not necessary.
- In popular areas:
  - Concentrate use on existing trails and campsites.
  - Walk single file in the middle of the trail, even when wet or muddy.
  - Keep campsites small. Focus activity in areas where vegetation is absent.
- In pristine areas:
  - Disperse use to prevent the creation of campsites and trails.
  - Avoid places where impacts are just beginning.
- Dispose of Waste Properly:
  - Pack it in, pack it out. Inspect your campsites and rest areas for trash or spilled foods. Pack out all trash, leftover food and litter.
  - Deposit solid human waste in catholes dug 6 inches deep at least 200 feet from water, camp, and trails. Cover and disguise the cathole when finished.
  - Pack out toilet paper and hygiene products.
  - To wash yourself or your clothes, carry water 200 feet away from streams or lakes and use small amounts of biodegradable soap. Scatter strained dishwater.

Leave What You Find
- Preserve the past: examine, but do not touch, cultural or historic structures and artifacts.
- Leave rocks, plants and other natural objects as you find them.
- Avoid introducing or transporting non-native species.
- Do not build structures, furniture, or dig trenches.

Minimize Campfire Impacts
- Campfires can cause lasting impacts to the backcountry. Use a lightweight stove for cooking and enjoy a candle lantern for light.
- Where fires are permitted, use established fire rings, fire pans, or mound fires.
- Keep fires small. Only use sticks from the ground that can be broken by hand.
- Burn all wood and coals to ash, put out campfires completely, then scatter cool ashes.

Respect Wildlife
- Observe wildlife from a distance. Do not follow or approach them.
- Never feed animals. Feeding wildlife damages their health, alters natural behaviors, and exposes them to predators and other dangers.
- Protect wildlife and your food by storing rations and trash securely.
- Control pets at all times, or leave them at home.
- Avoid wildlife during sensitive times: mating, nesting, raising young, or winter.

Be Considerate of Other Visitors
- Respect other visitors and protect the quality of their experience.
- Be courteous. Yield to other users on the trail. Stop to the downwind side of the trail when encountering pack stock.
- Take breaks and camp away from trails and other visitors.
- Let nature’s sounds prevail. Avoid loud voices and noises.

The Dallas Sierra Club has its own rules that incorporate the Leave No Trace principles but that go a bit further in a couple of cases. For instance, we do not allow pets on any outing (except for a few dog-specific day hikes), and we generally don’t allow campfires on any of our backpacking trips.

If you would like to learn more about the Leave No Trace principles, I encourage you to explore their website at www.lnt.org. You will find detailed discussions of each of the seven principles listed above, as well as training courses, educational literature and reference material.
I subscribe to an electronic “quote of the day” web service, and I received a quote a few months back that was so plainly obvious, you could miss its profundity if you weren’t careful. The quote was, “If you want to make peace, you don’t talk to your friends. You talk to your enemies,” by Moshe Dayan. My first response was, “Well, duh!”

As I pondered that quote for a while though, it became glaringly obvious to me that I haven’t done a very good job of talking to my enemies (a/k/a people with divergent view points) in the past. This is something I am really working on lately. Being a passionate and committed activist entrenched in my own convictions, I can tell you I’ve done a good job of shouting at my enemies. This last Presidential election was a great example of that, and made for some pretty tense family/friends get-togethers, both pre and post election. Thanksgiving and Christmas were sure fun at our house in 2004, how about yours? And don’t even get me started about all of those e-mails I shouldn’t have hit the send button on (oh come on, you know you sent them out too).

And then what do we tend to do after one of those stressful communications where “they just didn’t get it”? We run back to the base camp and complain and whine to our friends that understand how stupid and clueless and wrong those “other” people are. As comforting as it is to rally the troops, that doesn’t get us any closer to making peace with our “enemies.”

What I am learning is that effective communication doesn’t include raising your voice and shouting at someone if they don’t hold the same viewpoints as you do. It involves listening to each other. It involves having an open mind and sincerely trying to understand the other person’s viewpoint. It involves trying to find the common ground and values you each hold dear, rather than focusing on your differences. The more I have worked on listening to my “enemies” and finding our common values over the last few months, I have actually found that we have way more in common than I previously thought. I am learning how to have healthy and productive discussions with folks I thought were my complete opposites. While we are quoting people, one of my favorites was from Mahatma Ghandi, “Be the change you want to see in the world.” If you want to be heard, listen to others. If you want people to be receptive to your viewpoints, be receptive to theirs. If you want them to adopt some of your viewpoints, consider adopting some of theirs. I share this with you because I know a lot of environmentalists have a pre-conceived notion of “who the enemy is” – big business, crooked politicians, corporate lobbyists, developers, etc. I know that sometimes it is even “necessary” to label people or entities the “enemy” and point out all of the awful things they are doing in this world in order to rally the troops to take action against them (this happens in politics constantly). But most of the time we can be far more effective and persuasive in bringing about the changes we environmentalists want if we open the lines of communication with those persons that we have labeled “the enemy” and try to find the common ground. There are many big businesses, politicians, conservatives, liberals, developers and others that are doing some very progressive things to move us towards a more sustainable and healthy environment. But if you have already put them in the “enemy” camp, you just might close yourself off to some of the gems they have to offer you. I’m not saying you will always reconcile your differences, but you won’t even find out how close or far apart you are if you aren’t talking to each other.

As we start a new year in 2006, I encourage you to examine your own relationships and see if there might be room for improvement in the way you communicate with people of different mindsets. Peel off the labels, try not to take different opinions or held values personally, and get out there and talk to the enemy. Remember, be the change you want to see in the world!
After the statewide public outcry over its secretive attempt to sell nearly 46,000 acres of Big Bend Ranch State Park to an adjacent landowner, the Texas Parks and Wildlife Commission wisely abandoned its ill-advised plan. But other state parks do not have the iconic aura of Big Bend country, and it is these that are endangered.

Years of legislative neglect have finally culminated in a hemorrhage. The Parks and Wildlife Department is completing the elimination of 73 needed positions in its parks division. Of these, 39 are filled by experienced employees. The other 34 positions were unfilled due to a lack of money.

With a shrinking staff, public access to the parks will diminish. Hours of operation will be cut, overnight use in some parts will change to day-use only, some park sites will only be open on weekends — all consequences of a park system on a starvation budget.

An inadequate budget also has led some state policy-makers to push for the transfer of state parks to already financially strapped local governments.

To address these problems, we must look to Gov. Rick Perry and leaders in the Texas Legislature.

The Legislative Budget Board has stalled at setting a meeting where a desperately needed emergency appropriation for the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department can be approved. The parks division needs about $5 million to stay afloat. And the state park system is not the only supplicant clamoring for funding from the budget board.

Holding the meeting would require the cooperation of Lt. Gov. David Dewhurst and House Speaker Tom Craddick, who jointly co-chair the budget board. These leaders must ensure that the board meets to fulfill its function.

But the key to a healthy state park system is not a one-time, $5 million transfusion, which is not a panacea for habitually underfunded budgets. The problem is rooted in a philosophy that says parks should pay for their own keep.

If we believe that state parks should be self-supporting luxury items, they will always be the red-headed stepchild in the state budget.

Parks commissioners will be perpetually reducing staff, delaying maintenance or selling/transferring parks out of the system. Long-term decisions will not be guided by what is best for individual parks or the public, but by an expectation of fiscal hunger. And the parks receiving the maintenance dollars and attention will be the ones easiest to market.

If we believe, however, that Texas’ parks are essential to the public’s need for recreation and education, that they are a place for stewardship of diverse natural and historical resources, then we must formulate a funding policy that provides adequate support.

In the short term, the governor should make the $5 million emergency appropriation a priority for the Legislative Budget Board. He should use his influence with Dewhurst and Craddick to push for the board to set a meeting date, put the parks funding item on the agenda and approve the funding. Perry shouldn’t miss this opportunity to put himself on record as a supporter of Texas’ state parks.

Evelyn Merz is a member of the Sierra Club Lone Star chapter’s executive committee and is chairwoman of the Club’s Houston regional group. Originally published in the Austin American Statesman and the Houston Chronicle December 10 and 11, 2005.