Time Out! Rally to Stop the Coal Rush

Sunday, February 11, 3-5 pm, Texas State Capitol, Austin
Lobby Training, 6-8 pm and Time Out! Lobby Day, Monday, February 12

“The upcoming state legislative session is going to determine the future quality of life and the protection of public health for all Texans…”
Ken Kramer, Director of the Lone Star Chapter of the Sierra Club

Coal-burning power plants continue to be major contributors to serious health problems in Texas, particularly among children, senior citizens and other sensitive groups. Particle pollution alone results in 1,160 premature deaths each year in Texas. Unfortunately, TXU and other electric utilities are working to build 19 dirty, coal-burning power plants, emitting more smog-forming pollution and brain-damaging toxic mercury and as much global warming pollutants as 20 million cars.

“Air pollution is already making Texas families sick and more dirty coal plants will mean more asthma, lung disease and premature deaths,” said Dr. Lisa Doggett of Austin Physicians for Social Responsibility. “The good news is we can meet our energy needs much faster, cleaner and cheaper by investing in energy efficiency and renewable energy.”

Following an executive order by Governor Perry, the coal plants are being rushed through the regulatory process, reducing the time for the public to voice their opinion and for scientists to complete studies on the long-term impacts of the plants. But despite the rush, the earliest the plants will be brought online is 2009, a full year after projected power shortages begin. A recent poll found that 74% of Texans “would prefer to see major conservation efforts undertaken in the state first in order to offset a major portion of the electricity that would be required from the proposed new coal-fired power plants.”

As judges in the Office of Administrative Hearings and State District Court hear the fast-tracked cases against the coal plant permits, the 80th Texas Legislature now has the opportunity to intervene in the process.

“It’s time for the Legislature to step in and take action on behalf of the Texans they represent. Lawmakers should stop the fast-track process so Texans can have a real voice in the crucial decisions about how we will power our state for generations to come,” said Bee Moorhead, Executive Director of Texas Impact.

“A decision this far-reaching and with such important public health implications should not be made, by just one individual.”

The Sierra Club invites you to attend the Time Out! Rally to Stop the Coal Rush and lobby day at the Capitol in Austin in support of a Moratorium on New Coal Plants. In its draft form, the Resolution calls upon the Legislature 1) to put the coal permits on hold “pending a review of the health, environmental and global warming implications of proposed technologies along with a comprehensive analysis of alternative strategies and their comparative costs and benefits;” 2) to expand energy efficiency programs; 3) Set serious renewable energy targets; and 4) Establish a carbon emission cap.

We Do Not Need the Coal Plants
Cleaner, Safer, and Less Costly Alternatives to Coal

“Energy efficiency standards are a win-win-win policy,” said Luke Metzger, Director of Environment Texas. “We can reduce our energy at half the cost of coal plants, in a fraction of the time and with none of the pollution.”

Environmental groups including the Sierra Club in the Alliance for a Clean Texas announced this week a comprehensive energy efficiency program that the Texas Legislature should adopt alongside the Moratorium. This efficiency program would require appliance manufacturers to improve the efficiency of ten consumer products like office water coolers and DVD players, require regular updates to commercial and residential building codes, increase the state’s efficiency goal to require that 50% of load growth be offset by efficiency, and establish a solar rebate program.

“We need to call a time-out on the permitting of these proposed coal plants until all the information is in, because when all the facts are considered, we’re confident they’ll show that clean energy and efficiency are the smarter choices”, said Tom “Smitty” Smith, Director of Public Citizen’s Texas office.

Please make your plans now to attend Time Out! Rally to Stop the Coal Rush. Tentative schedule: Rally at the Capitol, Sunday, February 11, 3:00-5:00 pm; Dinner and Lobby Training at the Capitol, 6:00-8:00 pm; Monday, February 12, Citizen lobbying appointments. Go to the Lone Star Chapter Sierra Club website for further information on registering to attend and connecting with other individuals from your area who may travel together. http://texas.sierraclub.org or phone 512-477-1729.

Sierra Club and TCONR Blast Lawsuits over Wildlife Refuge
Spokespersons Consider Dallas and State Lawsuits "Ridiculous" and "Without Merit"

On January 10, the Sierra Club and the Texas Committee on Natural Resources (TCONR) labeled two lawsuits trying to block a new Neches River National Wildlife Refuge in East Texas as “ridiculous” and “without merit.” Separate litigation was filed January 9th by the City of Dallas and the Texas Water Development Board (TWDB) to reverse a decision by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service last summer to establish the new Refuge.

The proposed Fastrill reservoir would devastate the Big Thicket National Reserve downstream and would preclude development of the Refuge.

The litigation claims that the federal agency should have prepared an environmental impact statement or a formal environmental assessment before making that decision.

“The attempt by Dallas and TWDB to try to use the environmental impact statement process to block creation of a national wildlife refuge in order to promote a reservoir is nothing short of ridiculous,” said Sierra Club state director Ken Kramer. “The reservoir would destroy one of the most ecologically sensitive habitats in the United States. It’s a perversion of the NEPA process (the National Environmental Policy Act, or NEPA, is the federal law that sets up the environmental impact study procedures for major actions by federal agencies). A federal court has already ruled in a similar case in Texas that preparation of an EIS was not necessary for an action to protect wildlife habitat. This new litigation is totally without merit.”

"The U.S. Fish and Wildlife bent over backwards to meet every provision of NEPA," added Janice Bezanion, issues coordinator for TCONR. "The agency even contracted for an extra socioeconomic

Conservation News Continued on Page 5
FEBRUARY PROGRAM

Hiking the Northern Appalachian Trail

Does Mt Washington really have the worst weather in America? Is Mahoosuc Notch really the hardest mile on the Appalachian Trail (AT)? All this and more will be revealed by Dale Edelbaum at the Feb, 2007 program of the Dallas Sierra Club. A long time member of the Dallas Group, Dale will share his experiences on a northern section of the AT covering 264 miles between Mt Katahdin, Maine, northern terminus of the AT, and Crawford Notch, NH. Having now competed over half the length of the AT, he has started preparing videos of the hikes that he and Diana Christopulos, a former member of the Dallas Group are currently hiking. The slideshow will be accompanied by a musical soundtrack.

Dale has been a member of the Dallas Group of the Sierra Club since 1976. He served on the EXCOM from 1980-1983 as Chairman of Publications, from 1985-1987 as Co-Chair of Outings Committee and is currently on EXCOM and Co-chair of Membership. He has been a member of the Outings Committee since 1980 and has lead many Bus Trips, Backpacking trips, and Day Hikes over the years.

OUTINGS CORNER

By Bill Beach

Repair Kit Essentials

One of the great pleasures of hiking, biking, or kayaking in the great outdoors is being away from the hustle and bustle of civilization. If this is the yin of experiencing the outdoors, then the yang of the experience is being prepared to handle an “Oh No” situation. Unfortunately, the essence of an “Oh No” experience is having the unexpected occur away from outside help.

My “Oh No” bag contains those items I trust will allow me to survive the unexpected. Here are the items in my “Oh No” bag.

1. Space blanket (tube type) – it is amazing how much warmth these retain.
2. Water purification tablets
3. Fire starting material
4. Water proof matches
5. 30 feet of parachute cord
6. Duct tape can be used to fix many things….shoes, tents, air mattresses, etc.
7. Small leatherman type multi-tool
8. 5 wire ties (2 large and 3 small)
9. Eye glass repair kit
10. Spare boot lace
11. Needle, thread and buttons
12. Tent repair sleeve

Given access to water, I think my “Oh No” bag will keep the unexpected at bay for many days alone in the outdoors and keep me from being “Oh Dead”.

I always carry a map, compass, whistle and First Aid kit, too. Enjoy the wilderness.
LETTER FROM THE CHAIR
Campaign 2006 Honor Roll

Thank you for making the 2006 campaign an unprecedented success! With your help and support we raised $16,277. Your gifts made it possible for the Dallas Group to support the Lone Star Chapter’s work during the current legislative session with a gift of $10,000. That money will support the Club’s agenda on issues such as the proposed coal-fired power plants, air and water policy, and state parks. Your gifts are also helping to build our Cool Cities teams which are hard at work promoting energy efficiency in cities around North Texas. Thank you!

Ann Drumm
Dallas Sierra Club Chair
214-350-6180
ann@dallasscierraclub.org

ENVIRONMENTALIST
Anonymous (2)
Ann & David Drumm
Jesse & Cynthia Ferrer

CONSERVATIONIST
Anonymous (1)
Garrett & Cecilia Boone
Dr. John & Margie Haley
Richard Schramm
Carl & Jamie Weisbrod
David Van Winkle
George Zimmerman

TRAIL BUILDER
Anonymous (1)
Lawrence Brough
Ken & Becky Bruder
Don & Mary Coiston
Nora Czigan
Joanne Fell
Stefan & Barbara Fern
James D. Henderson
Bob Jud
Karen Keller
Laura Kimberly & Kent Trulsson
Gayle Leeffler & John Weinkin
Bill maina
Philip & Joanie Mein
Lori Peniche
Ze’ev Saggi
Melvin & Linda Sharp
Mark Stein
Dave Street
Dan & Sue Vining
Wendel & Ada Marie Withrow

BACKPACKER
Anonymous (3)
Lige & Maron Balceszak
John & Robin Caldwell
Bryan & Lyn Carpenter
Gregory Crown
Edwin Dissoway
Patrick & Debbie Doyle
Gary & Janet Drumm
Helen Elkins
Rick Englot
Charlotte Forst
Jeff & Brenda Gaba
Bill Greer
Leonard & Sonnie Greer
Beth Hart
Tom Heath
Martha Heinberg
Paul HIler
Marc Hinkley
Kathryn Hurn
Frances Jeng
Art Johnson
Roger Kallenberg
Marianne Malouf
Rob Massonneau
Phil Mayben
Paul Molnoski
Jerry Moore
Carol Nash
Calvin & Judy Nichols
Martha Ohlson
John Rath
Mike & Diana Rawlins
Allen Stern
Terry & Marilyn Sullivan
Whitney Taylor
Peggy Turlington
Jim & Caroline Vornberg

DAY HIKER
Anonymous (1)
Rich & Leslie Casey
James D. Cuniffle
Ned & Genie Fritz
Joy Gist
Deborah Greer
Peggy Henger
Karan Marshall
Angela Neville
David & Louise Rosenfield
Anne Rowe
Shirley Smith
Raynor K. Stout
Chris Unruh
John Vories
Tom Wilbanks

Volunteer Opportunities
ANTI-COAL PLANT RALLY
SUNDAY, FEB. 11 & COAL MORATORIUM LOBBY DAY
MONDAY, FEB. 12: We need LOTS of Sierrans to show Gov. Perry and the Legislature what we think of the plan to build more coal-fired power plants in Texas. Big rally on the Capitol grounds on Feb. 11 at 3 p.m. will feature speakers, entertainment, and include citizens from around the state. On Monday we’ll meet with legislators to ask for a “Time Out!” on coal plant permitting. Buses or carpools from Dallas are planned. Go down for just Sunday or both days; either way, large turnout is imperative. Contact Ann Drumm, ann@dallasscierraclub.org or 214-350-6180.

JOIN THE COOL CITIES TEAM: Volunteers needed to join lobbying teams to ask mayors around N. Texas to sign the US Mayors Climate Protection Agreement, to make presentations to audiences about addressing global warming through energy efficiency; and to provide background support for lobbying teams and speakers. Contact Ann Drumm, ann@dallasscierraclub.org or 214-350-6180.

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Stefan & Barbara Fern
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Karen Keller
Laura Kimberly & Kent Trulsson
Gayle Leeffler & John Weinkin
Bill maina
Philip & Joanie Mein
Lori Peniche
Ze’ev Saggi
Melvin & Linda Sharp
Mark Stein
Dave Street
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Charlotte Forst
Jeff & Brenda Gaba
Bill Greer
Leonard & Sonnie Greer
Beth Hart
Tom Heath
Martha Heinberg
Paul HIler
Marc Hinkley
Kathryn Hurn
Frances Jeng
Art Johnson
Roger Kallenberg
Marianne Malouf
Rob Massonneau
Phil Mayben
Paul Molnoski
Jerry Moore
Carol Nash
Calvin & Judy Nichols
Martha Ohlson
John Rath
Mike & Diana Rawlins
Allen Stern
Terry & Marilyn Sullivan
Whitney Taylor
Peggy Turlington
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Deborah Greer
Peggy Henger
Karan Marshall
Angela Neville
David & Louise Rosenfield
Anne Rowe
Shirley Smith
Raynor K. Stout
Chris Unruh
John Vories
Tom Wilbanks
OUTINGS COMMITTEE MEETING: Meet in the uplands program room at REI (on north side of LBJ between Midway and Weicholz), at 7:00 p.m. Bring your ideas for the Dallas Sierra Club Outings program. We will be planning local outings and bus trips. All interested Sierra Club members, trip leaders, and interested Sierrans welcome. Contact: David Van Winkle 972-562-7174(H) or davidvw@dallasiercuerac.org

APR 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. 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 ants and wildflowers to enjoy. The lake and your karma will thank you. Brunch afterwards. Leader: Carol Nash 214-924-0244(H) or crash@dallasierc.org

MAY 26-29 (FRI-TUE) MEMORIAL DAY BUS TRIP TO THE WHITE MOUNTAINS WILDERNESS: Enjoy one of five different backcountry trips to this central New England location near Ruidoso. Backpack trips range from easy to strenuous. Explore the great views from the rim. Contact: David Van Winkle davidvw@dallasierc.org

HOW THE OUTING PROGRAM WORKS

Dallas Sierra Club Outings are open to members and non-members. Some tips may require special qualifications and capabilities. The leaders of Sierra Club outings 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. Outing 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 the outing.

Radios and firearms are prohibited from all outings. Pets are not allowed unless specifically stated. All outings typically begin at the trail head. Carpooling is a must. Leaders cannot assign carpools, but may help coordinate ride sharing for energy conservation and to promote foliage. No non-commercial transportation is the responsibility of the individual. Carpooling 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, before leaving, be sure this or some other method is agreed upon.

Reservations are necessary for outings unless otherwise noted in the outing description. To participate in an outing, contact the leader. The leader will decide if the trip you are interested in is suitable for you based on your limitations and the demands of the trip. There is usually a limit to the number of people allowed on a given outing. 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 time and not set aside time to go on the trip of your choice. If you have any questions, or concerns, or if you are becoming a leader, contact either the Outings Chair or the appropriate Outings Committee Coordinator listed on the newsletter back page.
TREE FULL OF GRATITUDE
ICO Giving Tree at REI

By Liz Wheelan

Just like kids with new toys on Christmas morning, the volunteers of Inner City Outings, Sierra Club outreach program, are beaming with excitement over the many new items of equipment we received from our first Giving Tree at REI over the holidays. Whether it was a packet of first aid bandages or a Ridgeregret, priced large or small, each item will be put to good use and help us as we take inner city kids into the woods on their first hikes, camping trips and more. This year’s tree was even topped with a wonderful hand-painted heart, thanks to the students from Pegasus School (an ICO agency).

We are truly grateful to all the donors, ICO volunteers and REI for helping make this event such a huge success!

If you missed the giving tree opportunity and still want to help with our equipment needs, simply purchase an electronic gift card at REI.com and address it to ico@dallassierierclub.org.

Conservation News Continued from page 1.

assessment of the impacts of creating the wildlife refuge. At Dallas’ request, Fish and Wildlife also did an analysis of alternatives sites for the refuge and found that one of the alternatives matched the value of the site selected. I am fully confident that the Fish & Wildlife Service assessment will withstand the strictest review by any court."

"The most absurd aspect of this litigation is that it’s directed at building a new water supply reservoir for Dallas that is totally unnecessary,” said Kramer. "Dallas and the Metroplex have some of the highest per capita water use figures of any metropolitan area in Texas. In the most recent state water plan the 2003 per capita water use in Dallas was 238 gallons, contrasted to the per capita water use in San Antonio of 142 gallons. Dallas wants to flood East Texas and major wildlife habitat to provide water to keep lawns green during the summer. If Dallas becomes serious about water conservation and using existing water supply reservoirs to meet any remaining needs, the prospect of building a new reservoir won’t even be in the picture."

Bezanson noted that the new Neches National Wildlife Refuge has widespread support in East Texas and that a number of Texas officeholders have endorsed creation of the refuge.

Outings Continued from page 4.

Sierra Single Outings

FEB 14 (WED) SINGLES VALENTINE’S DINNER Celebrate a green Valentine’s evening at Tha Jasmine, 817-283-9228, 3104 Harwood at Hwy 121, SW corner, Bedford. Come at 6:30 to mingle over wine. We order at 7 pm. Leader: Tony Jensen 972-988-8687 ext 3101(W) or ssi@fwsnet.com

Non-Sierra Club Outings

The following are privately sponsored and administrated trips. Sierra Club takes no responsibility and makes no representations or warranties about the quality, safety, supervision or management of these trips. They are published as a service because they may be of interest to readers of this list.

FEB 24-25 (SAT-SUN) CARCAMP AT DINOSAUR STATE PARK Come see the famous footprints of dinosaurs preserved in the limestone bed of the Paluxy river and dayhike trails at this 1500 acre park. This trip will combine with the Fossil Rim Wildlife Center tour on Sunday afternoon. Facilities include campsites with water/electricity, locker, fire ring and/or grill; restrooms & showers. For those interested, primitive backpack campsites are also available. After seeing the dinosaur tracks, we can dayhike to the Golden-choked Wablers area and hopefully get a glimpse of this endangered species unique to Texas. State park fees are $5 per person to enter, and then $25 per campsite (max 6 people per campsite). Primitive campsites are $12. Contact: Tom Green 972-578-1929(1)

FEB 25 (SUN) SPECIAL TOUR AT FOSSIL RIM WILDLIFE CENTER, NEAR GLEN ROSE, TX Did you know that there are fewer than 50 Allwater’s Prairie Chickens in the wild? Come learn about the important program at Fossil Rim to save this critically endangered species of Texas. We will also visit the captive breeding programs for cheetahs, raptors, wolves, followed by a tour in an open-air tour van to see other animals at the center. The tour will take between 1.5 to 2 hours and cost $30 per person. Meet at the front gate at 1:45, and be dressed for the weather. Also, only water may be brought on the tour, since other food & drink smells can disturb the animals. Contact: Tom Green 972-578-1929(1)

APR 27-30 (FRI-FRI) BACKPACKING TRIP TO GRAND GULCH - Backpacking trip to Grand Gulch in southeastern Utah to see Ancient Puebloan ruins and rock art. Expect a 5000’ climb out at the end in moderate heat. Ride in Coop van rental or fly to Albuqueme and rent a car. Leave after work April 27 return evening May 4. We will stay hike one other park on the way home. Leader: Donald Purinton 972-685-1774(H) or dpurinton1@verizon.net
Sierra Club Files Legal Action to Halt “Fast-Tracking” of Texas Coal-Fired Power Plants

Major New Challenge to Governor’s Attempt to Short-Circuit Full Public Review of Health, Environmental, and Pollution Control Issues in the Permitting Process

The Sierra Club, represented by the Austin office of Environmental Integrity Project (EIP), took legal action on December 27 to stop the “unprecedented, unreasonable, and … illegal” plan by Governor Rick Perry to “fast track” administrative hearings for construction of up to 18 dirty coal-fired power plants in the state. Most of the plants in question are being proposed by the Dallas-based utility giant TXU.

EIP Austin Office Counsel Ilan Levin filed the petition on behalf of the Sierra Club to intervene in a state district lawsuit originally brought by Environmental Defense over the processing of coal plant permits. This legal action by Sierra Club stems from a recent state agency decision to consolidate six proposed TXU coal plant permits into one hearing, and to set those permits for a speedy decision. The lawsuit seeks to halt Perry’s controversial executive order of October 27, 2005, directing the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ) to accelerate consideration of permit applications and the Texas State Office of Administrative Hearings (SOAH) to issue unusually fast decisions on air pollution permits for new electric power plants.

The intention of the Sierra Club’s action is to see that all of these issues are reviewed by the courts and to see that the rights of citizens to protect themselves in pollution permitting cases are upheld.
Sierra Singles Usher in the New Year

by Paul Heller

Thirty-five Sierra Singles from the DFW area had a great time bringing in the New Year with games, merriment, and the traditional black-eyed peas at midnight. Thanks to Mitzi Zappala who organized the event at her condo clubhouse in Garland with help from Sierra Singles co-chair Ginger Bradley. Charlotte Forst brought her portable craps/roulette/blackjack table, others brought different games, and Cheryl Lehmburg took pictures. Thanks to all who brought the tasty dishes and beverages to share. A good time was had by all. We even had a few bucks left over after expenses to give to the Dallas Sierra Club.

ICO Partners with Pegasus School

Dallas Sierra Club Inner City Outings volunteers helped 114 students from Pegasus School enjoy a day the DISD Outdoor Lab in Seagoville. Pegasus School, a charter school in downtown Dallas, is the newest agency to partner with ICO.

Wendell A. Withrow
Attorney at Law

Board Certified
Civil Trial Lawyer
&
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Texas Board of Legal Specialization

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