

# SIERRA CLUB CRIER

GREATER FORT WORTH GROUP • 817/588-1167

ONE EARTH, ONE CHANCE

JULY 2004

## Just when you thought it couldn't get worse

### Mexican trucks mean even dirtier air for the Fort Worth Dallas area

Here in the Fort Worth area, we should be fuming about the additional truck fumes we'll be breathing, courtesy of the North American Free Trade Agreement and the Bush Administration.

NAFTA's latest blow to environmental protections came as the Supreme Court allowed the Bush Administration's plan to allow outdated and polluting Mexican trucks onto American highways to move forward.

"The Bush Administration has basically told these old, polluting trucks they can go ahead and mess with Texas, and New Mexico and Arizona, and the rest of the country for that matter," said Stephen Mills, Director of Sierra Club's International Program. "The bottom line is that a lot of places that already have bad air are going to experience even dirtier air if these trucks are allowed in."

The North American Free Trade Agreement requires that participating countries allow trucks across their borders. However, because Mexican freight trucks are older and not subject to the Clean Air Act and other U.S. clean air laws, they will emit more dangerous particulate matter and nitrogen oxides than U.S. trucks. These pollutants can severely aggravate asthma, lung disease, heart disease and other health problems. Many areas in states bordering Mexico already suffer from unhealthy air.

In March, the Sierra Club joined with

a diverse coalition as a friend of the court in the case urging the Supreme Court to uphold a ruling that the Department of Transportation (DOT) must comply with domestic laws requiring review of the environmental

and public health threats that will result from permitting a huge new influx of heavy trucks from Mexico. The Sierra Club supported the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals decision holding that the

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## Fort Worth Group Conservation Notes

### Bicycle route system

The City of Fort Worth has executed an agreement with TXdot for funding of on-street bicycle routes, with the City receiving \$138,000 in state funds while contributing \$62,000. The project will initially provide for 60 miles of streets marked for bicycles on the near north and south sides of downtown, primarily following existing main streets. This network was recommended by the North Central Texas Council of Governments under the Fort Worth Bicycle Blueprint and anticipates an integrated network of 300 miles of on-street bicycle routes and regional biking trails. For further information, call the Fort Worth Transportation and Public Works Department at (817) 392-2443 or contact city planner Amber Mitchell at [amber.mitchell@fortworthgov.org](mailto:amber.mitchell@fortworthgov.org).

### Midlothian cement plant permit modification

TXI Operations, L.P. has applied to the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality for a modification of permits 1360A and PSD-TX-632M1 regulating its Midlothian cement plant. The application provides for discontinuing operation of the plant's regenerative thermal oxidizer (RTO) on kiln #5 except during the heaviest

ozone season, May 1st to October 31st. While admitting that this will increase over-all emissions, TXI executives cite rising costs to operate the RTO as the prime factor in their decision to request the modification. The application was strongly condemned by many Ellis County residents and Metroplex environmental organizations at a May 25th public hearing, and is currently in a pending status before the TCEQ.

### Fort worth gas drilling

Officials with the City of Fort Worth have stated that the city does not have current plans to locate drilling rigs on any city parkland for oil or gas drilling. In the fall of 2003, Mayor Mike Moncrief announced that the city "should get its straws in the ground" and tap the Barnett Shale gas formation to provide additional revenue for Fort Worth. Specifically named were several environmentally sensitive areas including the Fort Worth Nature Center, Buck Sansom Park, and the Village Creek Wastewater Treatment Plant adjoining Arlington's River Legacy Park. On June 16th a representative of the City Engineering Department said that drilling on parkland, if done at all, would utilize directional off-set procedures, with the platforms being 2,000 to 2,500 feet from the targeted gas formation.

**Program Notes**

**July Program:** Christine Sagstetter from the Southern Region S.C. will discuss "sprawl" in Texas, and talk about the big Interstate 69 corridor and its impact on the environment, such as sprawl and opening up land for development. From 2000 to 2003, changes in law now authorize a road-rail-utility corridor that could ultimately be one to four miles wide, and would include business leases by the state for hotels, restaurants, warehouses, gas stations, etc. to be run by concessionaires.

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## Web Pages

Fort Worth Group <http://sierraclub.org/chapters/tx/fortworth/index.html>

National [www.sierraclub.org](http://www.sierraclub.org)

Lone Star Chapter [www.texas.sierraclub.org](http://www.texas.sierraclub.org)

The Planet [www.sierraclub.org/planet](http://www.sierraclub.org/planet)

# Bush Administration stalling on fuel economy standards

■ **Sticker shock may also apply to actual miles per gallon a vehicle will get**

While the Bush administration continues to promote a national energy policy favoring more fossil fuel use – oil drilling in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge, denying widely accepted scientific data on climate change, underwriting oil exploration and drilling in wilderness areas with public tax dollars – the Environmental Protection Agency is dragging its heels on revisions for tests that determine automobiles' actual miles-per-gallon performance.

The Bluewater Network, a California-based environmental policy organization, petitioned EPA and the Department of Transportation in 2002 to update their fuel economy programs, which were initially mandated by Congress in the mid-1970s.

EPA last adjusted its testing methods

in 1985. "In today's environment with mounting evidence of global warming, concern about the security implications of our dependence on foreign oil, and relatively high gasoline prices, consumers and policymakers are increasingly taking fuel economy into account. It is vital that they be provided with accurate information on which to base these decisions," Bluewater wrote.

While drivers now spend more time in congested driving conditions due to urban sprawl than in the mid-70s, and drive at faster highway speeds, fuel economy is still calculated based on driving conditions and auto technologies over two decades out of date. According to figures cited in the Bluewater petition, cars are getting 14.5 percent fewer miles per gallon than EPA's estimates, and light trucks 19.3 percent less. These shortfalls are likely to rise over time.

Without updated standards and testing, consumers cannot judge how

*Please see UPDATED, Page 3*



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The Greater Fort Worth Group of the Sierra Club

# Greater Fort Worth Group Sierra Club Outings

*Fort Worth Sierra Club outings are open to members and nonmembers. Trip leaders serve in a volunteer capacity and assume no responsibility above that of organizing the trip. If you have special needs or medical requirements, notify the leader prior to the trip. All outings officially begin at the trailhead. Leaders cannot assign carpools, but may help coordinate ride sharing. Many outings require advance reservations at the trip designation as well as from the participant. Notify the trip leader promptly if you must cancel. Donations of \$3 per person and \$5/family are requested for overnight trips to be used for conservation efforts of the club. Any park and/or camping fees are the responsibility of the participant. In order to participate on one of the Sierra Club's outings, you will need to sign a liability waiver. If you would like to read a copy of the waiver prior to the outing, please see <http://www.sierraclub.org/outings/chapter/forms> or call 415-977-5630.*

## July 7, Wednesday

Outings Meeting at the Great Outdoors Sub Shop, 3204 Camp Bowie Blvd, Fort Worth at 7 pm to plan new outings and reminisce about old trips. For more info, contact Tolbert Greenwood, 817-737-8698 (email [tgreenwood@canteyhanger.com](mailto:tgreenwood@canteyhanger.com)).

## July 10, Saturday

Bike the Trinity Trail for about 10 miles with Claudia Blalock early at 7:30 a.m. Meet at the parking lot beside the Hoffbrau Steak House on University Drive, less than 1 mile south of I-30 and University Drive. Bring water and sunscreen. We will eat afterwards at Panera Bread for a light breakfast. For more info, contact Claudia Blalock, 817-924-6242 or email [claudia.blalock@alconlabs.com](mailto:claudia.blalock@alconlabs.com).

## July 16-18, Friday-Sunday

Campout at Enchanted Rock State Park. Easy car camping with numerous hiking alternatives for all levels of experience and fitness. This park is about 17 miles north of Fredericksburg, which has a certain appeal of its own. The state park website is <http://www.tpwd.state.tx.us/park/enchantd/enchantd.htm#directions>. As always everyone is responsible for their own transportation, but carpooling is encouraged. To sign up and for more information, contact Bob Brandhorst at 817-271-7181 or [b.brandhorst@sbcglobal.net](mailto:b.brandhorst@sbcglobal.net).

## August 20, Friday

Join us on a night hike at the Fort Worth Nature Center for a star show and adventure along the trails of the prairie of west Fort Worth. Meet at 7 p.m. at the Hardwicke Interpretative Center inside

the Nature Center to begin this hike. We will travel for about 3-4 miles with frequent stops for star gazing and wildlife encounters. Bring water, flashlights, and insect repellent. Wear sturdy shoes and cool clothing. In the event of rain, the hike is cancelled. For directions to the Nature Center, call 237-1111. Hike will be led by park naturalist. Limited to 20 person. Contact Claudia Blalock, 817-924-6242., to sign up.

## September 11, Saturday

Camping 101 Want to tent camp again with your family or just by yourself? Learn to select the best tent for your needs, how to cook on a Coleman stove, and how to maximize your camping experience with the proper tools and plans. Class will be taught by members of the Outings Committee who have camped across the United States and abroad. Class will be 9 a.m.-1 p.m. at the Fort Worth Nature Center, Hardwicke Center near Lake Worth off Hwy 199 west. Cost: \$15 per person. Families are welcome. Must have 10 participants to hold the class. To register, call Claudia Blalock, 817-924-6242 or email [claudia.blalock@alconlabs.com](mailto:claudia.blalock@alconlabs.com).

## September 25-27 Friday-Sunday

Join us for a car camp at Isle du Bois State Park just north of Denton on beautiful Lake Ray Roberts. We will hike on Sat, have a potluck dinner on Sat. night, and hike or bike on Sunday. We will be camping in the Hawthorne

camping area on or near the lake so bring your fishing pole. Check-in time at the park is 2 p.m. We will leave the park in late morning on Sunday with an optional lunch afterwards. Contact the leader, Claudia Blalock, 817-924-6242, or email [claudia.blalock@alconlabs.com](mailto:claudia.blalock@alconlabs.com) to reserve your place. In addition, you need to reserve your own campsite NOW by calling the Texas State Park and Wildlife Office: 512/389-8900 or online by at the Texas State Parks and Wildlife website [www.tpwd.state.tx.us](http://www.tpwd.state.tx.us).

## October 22-24, Friday-Sunday

Cruise Caddo Lake under a full moon. We will camp at Caddo Lake State Park near Marshall in east Texas about 3 hours from Fort Worth on Friday night. On Saturday, we canoe about 1 mile to a nearby island to enjoy the seclusion and beauty of Texas' only natural lake. Saturday night meal will be a potluck affair complete with campfire and ghost stories. Canoe rentals are available through Pine Needles Lodge (903-665-2911) and are limited so contact immediately to reserve your canoe. Call Texas State Park Reservations at 512-389-8900 or email [www.tpwd.state.tx.us](http://www.tpwd.state.tx.us) to reserve your campsite for Friday night. This trip is open to families. Trip ends with a catfish lunch at noon on Sunday. Leaders: Tolbert Greenwood, 817-737-8698 (email [tgreenwood@canteyhanger.com](mailto:tgreenwood@canteyhanger.com)) and Marilyn Sumner, 817-491-2382, (email [marilynturnage@msn.com](mailto:marilynturnage@msn.com)).

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## Updated mph standard needed CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

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much they will really spend on gasoline for a new car or truck, or how much carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>), a significant greenhouse gas, a vehicle will emit.

Cars and light-duty trucks contribute nearly 20 percent to annual U.S. emissions of CO<sub>2</sub> – roughly five percent of the world's annual CO<sub>2</sub> emissions.

Late last year the National Highway Traffic and Safety Administration (part of DOT) proposed revisions to fuel economy standards, including the creation of new weight classes for current types of cars and trucks.

This new system would close a current loophole that exempts certain weights of trucks from fuel economy

standards, but it would also establish weaker standards for heavier vehicles. U.S.PIRG notes in a recent report that automobile manufacturers may actually add weight to vehicles in order to avoid the stricter requirements.

"The Bush administration should be looking for ways to save consumers money at the pump and wean us from oil, foreign or domestic, in the long term," U.S.PIRG writes. "Instead of taking advantage of [existing] automobile technology to achieve a 40 mpg standard, the administration is pushing an energy policy that emphasizes the technologies of yesterday and has opposed all meaningful increases in fuel economy."

# Coming Events

## July 7, Wednesday

Outings Meeting at the Great Outdoors Sub Shop, 3204 Camp Bowie Blvd, Fort Worth at 7 pm to plan new outings and reminisce about old trips. For more info, contact Tolbert Greenwood, 817-737-8698 (email [tgreenwood@canteyhanger.com](mailto:tgreenwood@canteyhanger.com)).

## July 13, Tuesday, 7 p.m.

The Conservation Committee meets on the second Tuesday of the month at 7 p.m. All members are welcome and encouraged to attend. For meeting location, contact: Chair Glenn Ford, 469-6540 or Earl Burnam, 244-2328 or Bob Scott, 282-1372.

## General Meeting

Wednesday, July 21

**Program:** See bottom of Page 1 for description of the July Program.

**7:00** Main Auditorium, University of North Texas Health Science Center, Camp Bowie at Montgomery (exit Montgomery off I-30, go north about a mile to Camp Bowie).

## July 21, Wednesday, 7 p.m.

Fort Worth Sierra Club General Meeting.

Newsletter deadline. Submit articles, ads, letters, or other information in writing. Articles may be submitted by mail, email, or on Iomega Zip disks accompanied by hard copy. B&W or color nature photos and electronic

images (150dpi or greater) will be accepted (prints returned if submitted with SASE). Photographs of outings or other club activities are particularly encouraged. Identify subject of photo and state photographer's name. Please do not write on the back of photos. Mail submissions to Newsletter Editor, P.O. Box 1925, Fort Worth 76101, bring to the ExCom meeting, the general meeting, or email [jmoody166@aol.com](mailto:jmoody166@aol.com).

## August 2, Monday

Newsletter folding party at Burger King, I-30 and Oakland. Call Steve Turner, 457-7131.

## August 3, Tuesday, 6:30 p.m.

Fort Worth Sierra Club ExCom Meeting, 6:30 p.m., at Panera Bread, 1700 S. University Dr. in Fort Worth. For more information, contact Dan Smith, 410-2955.

# Bush secrecy imperils environmental, public health

The Bush administration is applying new levels of secrecy to public information, using the excuse of "national security risks" to undercut the public's right to know about contamination of the environment, transport of hazardous materials, pipeline routes, and more, putting public health at risk and chilling community activism.

"We've had national security exemptions for a long time under the Freedom of Information Act, and the ability to classify information if needed under other laws, and for good reason," Paul Orum, director of the non-partisan Working Group on Community Right-to-Know, tells BushGreenwatch (<http://www.bushgreenwatch.org/>). "Now, secrecy is creeping forward into other areas, and in subtle ways."

According to the Working Group, over six thousand public documents have been removed from the web sites of over a dozen government agencies since the fall of 2001.

The Environmental Protection Agency, for example, has removed parts of formerly-public Risk Management Plans from the web, documents that helped communities identify nearby chemical hazards. The Department of Energy has taken down environmental impact statements related to nuclear power plants, and hazardous materials transport information. The Department of Transportation removed from its web site much of the national pipeline mapping data that allowed communities to find hazardous

pipeline routes.

President Bush has also issued executive orders that broaden the authority of agencies to withhold information from the public. May 2002's Executive Order 12958 gave the EPA Administrator authority to designate documents "Secret" or "Confidential," two of the three highest possible security classifications. It also allows the Administrator to delegate classification authority to senior EPA officials. Once classified, a person can gain access to information only when an agency head or their designee reviews the request, the person signs a non-disclosure agreement, and the person can establish a "need-to-know" to the satisfaction of agency officials.

The Bush administration has also reduced the public's access to unclassified information. 2002's Homeland Security Act allows agencies to withhold "sensitive but unclassified" information from the public. Information can be restricted with no review, even if public under other laws.

"The Bush administration is hostile to the idea that citizens need to watchdog the government," says Orum.

In Maryland, the Aberdeen Proving Ground Citizens Superfund Coalition took the Department of Defense to court in 2003, to regain access to fully detailed maps of perchlorate-contaminated groundwater sites on and near the Aberdeen Proving Ground (APG). Perchlorate, a highly toxic ingredient of rocket fuel, has been used at APG

for decades.

DOD removed details including streets, road names, and the extent and location of contamination, making the maps nearly useless to the community group, which has monitored environmental contamination and remediation at APG since 1991. "DOD's new secrecy at Aberdeen [coincided] with pressure on DOD to clean-up perchlorate contamination in the drinking water of some 20 million people nationwide," according to the Working Group.

"Laws that specifically encourage citizen participation in environmental and public health planning are being undercut," says George Sorvalis, the Working Group's outreach coordinator. "The Bush administration's secrecy makes it much harder for citizens to engage. They don't have an effective seat at the table if they can't get this information."

The Bush Justice Department has encouraged federal agencies to block requests made under the Freedom of Information Act. In one of the most prominent cases, the Natural Resources Defense Council had to sue to obtain documents related to Vice President Dick Cheney's 2001 energy task force, in which high-ranking administration officials met with representatives from utilities and the oil, gas, coal and nuclear power industries to formulate national energy policy. The Bush administration ultimately turned over about 13,500 pages -- less than half of NRDC's FOIA request.

The Greater Fort Worth Group of the Sierra Club

# Sierra Singles Events for July

## July 19, Monday

Dinner at Piccolo Mondo Italian Restaurant in Arlington. We meet at the refreshment facility at 6:30 with dinner at 7:00.

The restaurant is at 829 Lamar Blvd E. (<http://www.piccolomondo.com/Location.htm>) at the corner of Lamar

## Air just got worse

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

transportation agency violated federal laws by failing to conduct a thorough review of the environmental impacts of the truck traffic.

"This is yet another example of how the Bush Administration's approach to trade puts communities at risk and weakens our hard-won clean air protections," said Mills. "The Bush Administration shouldn't put trade deals ahead of public health. Instead they should make sure that environmental protections are part of trade agreements."

Tarrant and Dallas counties, as well as those counties bordering them, have already been designated non-attainment areas because of unhealthy air quality.

and Hwy. 157. It's in the same center as Whole Foods. The restaurant's number is 817.265.9174. The website is [www.piccolomondo.com](http://www.piccolomondo.com). Contact Bob Brandhorst at 817-271-7181 or [b.brandhorst@sbcglobal.net](mailto:b.brandhorst@sbcglobal.net) with any questions.

See also the outings for July 10 and July 16-18 under Outings on Page 3.

It's not necessary to be single to participate in Sierra Singles events.

## Keep informed earlier

Keep up with the latest outings and read the newsletter at least a week earlier than it comes in the mail. The newsletter is posted to the Fort Worth Group's web site: <http://sierraclub.org/chapters/tx/fortworth/index.html> usually not later than the end of each month.

That means that the newsletter can generally be read online two weeks or more before it is delivered to you by mail. Up-to-date outings information is also displayed on the web site.

### Membership

*Yes, I want to join the Sierra Club! My check is enclosed.*

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Individual (\$35)      Joint (\$43)

Annual dues include subscription to Sierra (\$7.50) and chapter publications (\$1.00). Dues are not tax deductible.

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## **Mission statement**

The purposes of the Sierra Club are: To explore, enjoy and protect the wild places of the earth; to practice and promote the responsible use of the earth's ecosystems and resources; to educate and enlist humanity to protect and restore the quality of the natural and human

*. . . dedicated to the conservation and appreciation of our natural world.*

