

# SIERRA CLUB CRIER

GREATER FORT WORTH GROUP • 817/588-1167

ONE EARTH, ONE CHANCE

MAY 2004

## Half of all Americans are breathing bad air

### ■ Widespread pollution raises new concerns of the Administration's efforts to weaken our clean air laws

Having all of Ellis County designated as a part of the D/FW Nonattainment Area was good news for North Texas, but everything is not coming up roses on the clean air front.

Despite the best efforts of Rep. Joe Barton, who hails from Ellis County, that county joined eight others that must improve their air quality or face sanctions.

Over most of the nation, however, it's the people themselves who are feeling the sanctions – the air they breathe is dirty.

The Environmental Protection Agency recently released an updated list of areas, which taken together show that more than half of all Americans live in places with unhealthy air. Meanwhile, the Bush administration continues to promote policies that weaken the nation's clean air laws.

"With this announcement, the Bush administration is admitting that Americans face a serious air pollution problem, but across the board the administration has worked to weaken the nation's clean air laws," said Nat Mund, who heads the Sierra Club's clean air program.

For areas on the list, EPA's warning means that air quality poses a health risk to residents – especially children, the elderly, and those with asthma and other respiratory diseases.

EPA had little choice but to make new smog designations after the Supreme

Court rejected an industry challenge in 2001. The Bush administration, however, has done little to ensure that states and municipalities actually implement plans to reduce air pollution in a timely manner and in some places even caved to political pressure by leaving areas with air problems off the list.

Since coming into office, the Bush administration has moved to weaken

### Conservation notes

## Ellis, other counties added to EPA list

Environmental Protection Agency Administrator Michael Leavitt has added five North Texas counties to the Dallas/Fort Worth clean air nonattainment area.

Rockwall, Kaufman, Parker, Johnson, and Ellis counties will be included with the Metroplex core of Tarrant, Dallas, Collin, and Denton counties in bearing responsibility for meeting the new eight-hour standard on emission control.

April, 2007 will be the deadline for submission of a regional plan to reduce pollutants with implementation of the plan scheduled for 2010.

Leavitt made his decision to include Ellis County while facing an intense lobbying effort by Congressman Joe Barton of Ennis to protect industrial ozone sources in his home county. North Texas political leaders and environmental organizations were successful in convincing the EPA that inclusion of Ellis County was absolutely essential if the goals of the Clean Air Act are to be met.

power plant clean-up laws on smog, soot, and mercury. Under the current law, the oldest and dirtiest power plants and refineries must install modern preventative equipment when making changes that increase pollution. The Bush administration has created a huge exception for utilities from this rule, placing local communities and those

*Please see ENFORCING, Page 3*

### Buyout proposed for Padre

The Sierra Club is campaigning to protect Padre Island National Seashore from drilling for natural gas by petitioning for a federal buyout of mineral rights in the park. Additional exploration operations will be devastating to the ecology and the tourist-based economy of the island with the disruptions caused by noise, lights, and truck traffic inherent in drilling activities. A federal buyout of mineral rights will protect this valuable part of our Texas heritage for future generations. To join in this effort, contact Chris Wilhite, Southern Plains Field Office, (512) 472-9094 or [chris.wilhite@sierraclub.org](mailto:chris.wilhite@sierraclub.org).

### Arlington Sierran honored

Bonnie Bowman, Arlington Sierran, has been recognized with an Environmental Awareness Award by the League of Women Voters. This Earth Day award was given in honor of Bonnie's 25 years of dedicated work on issues ranging from clean air and water to recycling and tree preservation. Congratulations and thanks, Bonnie.

**Name  
That  
Tune?**

**Or better still, (re)name that newsletter:** Think the name of this newsletter should be The Shouter! or The Screamer! or some other name not as wimpy as The Crier? We're open for suggestion and we'll even give a prize to the person submitting the winning entry. Send your suggestions by June 4 to Greater Fort Worth Sierra Club, P.O. Box 1874, Burleson, TX 76097 and members of the ExCom will review them (and maybe pick a winner) at its June 8 meeting.

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# Greater Fort Worth Sierra Club

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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)

# Park service directors silent as cell towers grow in nat'l parks

Under the watch of the Bush Administration, construction of cell phone towers in America's national parks has proliferated.

As controversies have developed, however, directors of the National Park Service have remained silent. Public Employees for Environmental Responsibility (PEER) has charged the Park Service with failure to protect the special qualities of the parks, develop a coherent management plan for locating the towers, or follow Congressional instructions to both inform and accept comment from the public.

Under the Telecommunications Act of 1996, federal lands were opened to the placement of cell towers.

However, Congress instructed the NPS to develop appropriate regulations for implementing the law, noting that "the Washington Monument, Yellowstone National Park or a pristine wildlife sanctuary, while perhaps prime sites for an antenna and other facilities, are not appropriate and the use of them would be contrary to environmental, conservation, and public safety laws."

Last month PEER protested the placement of a cell tower that overlooks Old Faithful in Yellowstone National Park.

The group stated that the NPS increased the height of the tower after submitting the plan for review to the state of Wyoming. PEER said the NPS also failed to file a notice with the Federal Register that it was considering or approving the tower – as required by law – and in addition failed to allow for public comment.

PEER Board member Frank Buono, a former NPS manager, suggested that to park's managers, "commercial convenience matters more than protecting a public resource.

The Old Faithful viewshed is one of the most recognized assets in our national park system, but it is being managed with all the care of a strip mall." The Wyoming State Historic Preservation Office has filed a complaint with the NPS.

PEER is also concerned that the directors of the Park Service are not providing a coherent management plan to guide park managers. The NPS

does not know the total number of all towers currently in the parks, or their locations. No formal policy defines appropriate tower heights, configurations or placements for park superintendents.

Further, the parks have been negligent both in notifying the public and providing for public comment about new tower applications, as required by law. Towers in the Grand Canyon, Yosemite, and Everglades National Parks, Big Cypress and Mojave National Preserves, as well as Yellowstone, have gone up with no public notification or review.

Only one NPS unit, the George Washington Memorial Parkway in the Washington, D.C. metropolitan area, issued public notices.

"Under the Bush Administration, the Park Service leadership team is sacrificing scenery and serenity," PEER's Chas Offutt told BushGreenwatch.

"We're arguing for a sound, informed public policy that will uphold the scenic values of the parks, provide the solitude visitors expect, and guide park managers as they implement the law."

PEER has learned that of the 397 units of the National Park System, only one—the Golden Gate National Recreation Area—has adopted a cell tower management plan.

## Take Action

Sign the petition and pledge your support to remove the illegal construction of a 100-foot cell phone tower that overlooks Old Faithful in Yellowstone National Park through PEER's website: <http://ga3.org/ct/b7qx7kd1oBp2/>

## 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.

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.*

## May 17-20, Thursday-Sunday

Canoe a section of the Buffalo National River in central Arkansas on Friday and Saturday for a total distance of less than 20 miles on this national wild and scenic river. The canoe route goes from Woolen to Woolum to Tyler Bend for the first day, and Tyler Bend to the outfitter on the second day. Hiking options are available after canoeing on Saturday with a celebratory dinner at the Riverside Inn on Saturday night. This river is crystal clear and surrounded by beautiful cliffs and trees. Camp each night at Tyler Bend Park on the river which is located at the midpoint of the canoe trail. You must leave on Thursday afternoon due to the 7 hour drive to the campsite. Shuttle service and canoe rental must be arranged in advance by contacting the outfitter at 870-439-2888. The number of canoes available is very limited. The website is [www.gilbertsstore.com](http://www.gilbertsstore.com). No shuttles are provided by the canoe outfitter for personal craft. This trip is open to experienced canoeists and requires approval of trip leader. This is not a technical river, but there is a current and basic canoeing skills are needed. Leader: Marilyn Sumner (Turnage), 817-491-2382 (e-mail [marilynturnage@msn.com](mailto:marilynturnage@msn.com))

## May 22, Saturday

Hike the Canyon Ridge Trail at the Fort Worth Nature Center. Meet at 8 a.m. at the nature center on SH 199 west of Lake Worth. The hike is six miles, give or take, and will require about three hours. Dress appropriately and bring snacks and water (two quarts). Leader: Jim Walling, 817-444-4416.

## June 25-27, Friday-Sunday

Camp and water fun on South Llano River near Junction, Texas. This is a spring-fed river, flowing over limestone rocks with great scenery. If water is available, canoeing may be an option, but the river is still great for swimming, tubing or for just keeping cool. We will camp on Friday and Sat. nights at South Llano River State Park in the walk-in area camping area. You need to reserve your campsite immediately in advance by calling the Texas State Parks and Wildlife office at 512-389-8900 or visit their website for campsite reservations. The park is 250 miles from Ft. Worth via Hwy 377 and takes about 4-5 hours each way. Two good websites: [tpwd.state.tx](http://tpwd.state.tx) to access the South Llano River

SP site, and [Canoeman.com](http://Canoeman.com) for great information on the river. Contact Marilyn Turnage at 817-491-2382 or [marilynturnage@msn.com](mailto:marilynturnage@msn.com) to sign up and for outfitter info.

## Non-Sierra Club Outing

Sailing Evening(s) with Bob Liles on Lake Grapevine. Only 4 "sailors" per trip so first come first served. Dates and times in June and July subject to change with the weather, and Bob's discretion. First outing, Thursday evening June 3 (full moon). Other dates available depending on interest from our "sailors." Contact Bob Liles at [rgliles@worldnet.att.net](mailto:rgliles@worldnet.att.net) to sign up and for additional details and specifics.

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## Enforcing existing law would help CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

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downwind at increasing risk for health problems.

In addition, the Bush administration has proposed radical changes to the Clean Air Act that could allow polluters to emit twice the amount of soot and smog for a decade longer than if the current law were simply enforced.

And in a case currently before the Supreme Court, the Bush administration has joined bus and truck companies

in trying to block Southern California from replacing polluting buses and trucks with cleaner vehicles. Southern California has some of the worst air in the nation.

"The Bush administration could curb more air pollution faster by simply enforcing the law," added Mund. "Unfortunately, this administration is more interested in what sounds good than what actually works."

## Federal agency failing to protect public land

The federal government's biggest landholder is a little-known agency in the Interior Department called the Bureau of Land Management. The BLM manages a staggering 265 million acres, mostly in the West. A new report from a New Mexico-based environmental group has found that BLM is seriously failing to protect ecologically important areas within its domain. And under President Bush, the report finds, the problem has gotten worse.

BLM has a long history of opening its holdings to oil and gas drilling, mining, logging, and cattle grazing – often with disastrous results for the environment. Overall, the Forest Guardians report finds rampant illegal and unregulated ORV use; livestock grazing on 85 percent of the ACEC acreage; polluted streams; and scores of both active and abandoned oil and gas wells. In many

areas, however, BLM has created Areas of Critical Environmental Concern for management of ecologically or historically significant resources. But even on the ACECs, BLM is doing a poor job. One example is Utah's Warner Ridge/Fort Smith ACEC, designated to protect two endangered plant species and habitat for the sensitive spotted bat. According to the report, "Illegal ORV [off-road vehicle] use has gone on so long that BLM has in effect condoned it." Another example is the 10,000-acre Mescalero Sands ACEC in New Mexico, which is habitat for the vanishing lesser prairie chicken, a candidate for federal endangered species listing. The Mescalero Sands ACEC is a popular area for ORVs, and has 10 active oil and gas wells. An overwhelming 80 percent of the ACEC is allotted for livestock grazing.

# Coming Events

## May 11 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.

## May 19, 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

## General Meeting

Wednesday, May 19

**Program:** It's another surprise program which, simply put, just means that we hadn't received a confirmation by presstime. It's guaranteed to be entertaining, thought-provoking, or both, however, so don't miss it.

**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).

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).

## May 31, Monday

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

## May 19, 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.

# Sierra Magazine exposes terrorist link

An expose in the May/June issue of Sierra, the official magazine of the Sierra Club, reveals how a Denver-based mining company secretly paid off Al-Qaeda-linked terrorists under the auspices of "international security."

The story also shows how the Bush administration's Homeland Security and Justice Departments turned a blind eye when first informed that Denver-based Echo Bay Mining Co. paid millions of dollars to the international terrorist group Abu Sayaff and other terror groups in the Philippines in exchange for protection of its gold-mining operations.

However, shortly before the Sierra magazine investigation was reported on ABC's World News Tonight, the Justice Department reversed course and announced that it would open an investigation into Echo Bay's operations. Tipped off by the Sierra story, U.S. Reps. Edward J. Markey, D-Mass., and Mark Udall, D-Co., also issued letters calling for a congressional investigation into Echo Bay and the general practice of U.S. corporate support for international terrorism.

The Sierra magazine investigation, titled "The Cost of Doing Business," is the result of a two-month investigation by Marilyn Berlin Snell, a writer/editor at Sierra. Allan Laird, a project manager for an Echo Bay project located on the southern Philippine island of Mindano, brought the story to the Sierra Club because of its well-known opposition to mining operations.

While working for Echo Bay, Laird discovered a money trail that led

straight from the mining operation to the most violent terrorist organizations in the Philippines - two of which had direct links to Osama bin Laden's Al-Qaeda. Laird unsuccessfully urged Echo Bay executives to release information to U.S. government agencies concerning the company's knowledge of terror groups operating in the Philippines and their extortion of money from Echo Bay and other companies. Laird subsequently contacted the Departments of Justice and Homeland Security, which both declined to act on the information. At that point, Laird approached the Sierra Club's International Programs Director Stephen Mills, who shared the story with Sierra for further investigation.

"I came to the Sierra Club because I felt that they had principles and would listen, and that they would take action," Laird said.

In the Philippines, Echo Bay's mining operation sat in the middle of territory controlled by the New People's Army (NPA), the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF), and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) - all known terrorist organizations. The radical Islamic group Abu Sawyer was also active in the area, as was the Lost Command, a splinter group of the MILF and MNLF. The MILKF had direct links with Al Qaeda.

Internal company documents obtained by Laird show that Echo Bay was aware of terrorist entities in their project area from the outset. But the Philippines 1995 Mining Act made

investment in the country so attractive that these red flags were ignored. The Mining Act "streamlined" the environmental permitting process, allowed for 100 percent foreign ownership, gave tax holidays, allowed easy repatriation of all profits, and guaranteed against expropriation by the Philippine state. Mining corporations from around the world came to the Philippines after the Act's passage to take advantage of the extractive opportunities; it is estimated that corporate mining claims staked out 40 percent of the nation's land area. Some of these corporations even helped write the Act.

The Sierra Club is calling for immediate congressional investigations to determine whether this was an isolated incident confined to the operations of one company, or a standard practice for extractive industries. There are many other U.S. multinationals involved in natural resource extraction operations in politically unstable countries around the world.

"Americans have the right to know whether this was an isolated incident confined to the operations of one company, or if this is standard practice for extractive industries," Mills said. "Attorney General (John) Ashcroft should return to the 9-11 Commission to explain his failure to pursue this dangerous financial relationship with Al-Qaeda and other known terrorist groups. It makes you wonder if multinational polluters are exempt from the Patriot Act just because they are Bush campaign contributors."

**Letter to the editor**

# Another new member also concerned about proposed immigration stand of the Sierra Club, but disagrees with previous letter writer

Like Adam Stone-Dare, the author of last month's letter to the editor (April Crier), I am also a new member of the Sierra Club.

I too share a great love for the outdoors and a great concern for our environment. However, I strongly disagree with Mr. Stone-Dare's proposal for the Sierra Club to take a stand on immigration and population control.

While the Sierra Club is a national organization, we possess a global agenda. The members of the Sierra Club are "work(ing) together to protect our communities and the planet" (<http://www.sierraclub.org/>).

Whether people are born in the United States or immigrate, they are still part of the greater global population. Closing our borders to immigrants does not resolve the issue of environmental destruction.

Instead, immigration controls merely shift the environmental problems associated with population growth to other nations.

What better country than the United States to welcome immigrants by establishing a standard of balance between

humans and nature for the rest of the planet?

Tim Maschal

## Classified Advertisement

For Sale: Perception Dancer white-water kayak. Lightly used. \$375.00 Includes spray skirt, paddle, and extra flotation for bow and stern. Dan Smith: 817 410-2955; riverdogdan@aol.com

### Membership

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

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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.*