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Planet

# Sierra Sentinel

The Greater  
Fort Worth  
Group of the  
Sierra Club  
AUGUST 2005

## Environmental strategy is more deception than it is conservation

By Brian O'Malley, Sierra Club

Over the last five years, the Bush administration has been very creative when communicating on the environment. Strategies include 1) "No Communication" (see Cheney Energy Task Force); 2) "Friday Night Lights," which

involves announcing controversial decisions on Friday afternoons; and 3) "Happy Sunny Spin," by using fun names like "Healthy Forests" and "Clear Skies" for policies that weaken environmental protections.

These strategies haven't been work-

ing lately, and the administration has decided it needs professional help. This week, the New York Times reported that the EPA's Office of Research and Development is hiring a public relations firm to fix up its image. The cost to taxpayers? About \$5 million over 5 years to, among other things, "provide research, writing and editing of Office of Research and Development articles for publications in scholarly journals and magazines."

Non-scientists editing and writing scientific research and articles? Sounds absurd. For the Bush administration though, it's standard procedure. Just last month, the New York Times reported that Philip Cooney, the now-former Chief of Staff for the White House Council on Environmental Quality, had edited several scientific reports on global warming to play down the links between greenhouse gas emissions and climate change.

Rather than waste millions of taxpayer dollars to doctor their image, here's a little public relations advice to EPA free of charge:

Tell America's oldest and dirtiest power plants to get with the times and use modern technology to clean up soot, smog, and mercury pollution.

Stop cutting deals with industrial agricultural companies and start protecting rural communities from factory farm pollution.

Quit stonewalling on global warming and instead be part of the solution.

Get America's environmental cops back on the beat and enforce the laws that protect our air, water, and land.

Americans know the difference between a fraud and the Real McCoy when it comes to matters of health and safety. If EPA wants the public to show it some love, fire the spin doctors and listen to the real doctors.

## GFWSC Conservation Notes

### Trinity river vision

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers has completed its Central City Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) for a City of Fort Worth proposal to rechannel the Trinity River north of downtown. The Trinity Uptown Project will replace the existing system of levees to offer greater flood control and provide a town lake to serve as the centerpiece for planned redevelopment of commercial property along north Main Street. The Corps held two hearings in July to gather public comment. Objections voiced included concern for the destruction of wildlife habitat on the lower sections of Marine and Lebow Creeks and the lack of definitive information on toxic waste which will be exposed during excavation.

After finalization of the EIS the Fort Worth City Council will determine the scope of the project, while actual construction start dates will be controlled by local and federal funding availability.

### Region C Water

Written comment will be accepted by the Region C Water Planning Group until 5 p.m., Sept. 9 on its 2006 Water Plan. The plan as it now stands calls for a combination of additional water from existing sources, increased conservation efforts, reuse, and construction of four new reservoirs. The plan may be viewed at [www.regioncwater.org](http://www.regioncwater.org), and comment may be mailed to James M. Parks, RCWPG Chairman/Administrator, NTMWD, P.O. Box 2408, Wylie, Texas 75098-2408 or via email [regionc@freese.com](mailto:regionc@freese.com).

## Fall fun and adventure in the Big Bend

Mark Nov. 9-13 on your calendar now and join us then for the Fort Worth Sierra Club's annual fall trip to Big Bend National Park.

Whether you're a rank amateur when

it comes to outdoor adventures or an experienced semi-pro, you're sure to find your niche in one of the several options always available on this trip.

Please see *SOMETHING*, Page 2

Update!  
Update!  
Update!

Greater Fort Worth Sierra Club chair Susan Haney will present a special program for the August meeting of the group. Unfortunately, she was on vacation as this issue of the Sentinel went to press and we were unable to confirm the exact subject matter. Her programs are always outstanding, however, and you can be sure this one will be just as good.

# Coming Events

## August 17, Wednesday, 7 p.m.

Newsletter deadline. Submit articles, ads, letters, or other information in writing. Articles may be submitted by mail or email. B&W or color nature photos and electronic images (150 dpi or greater) will be accepted (prints returned if submitted with SASE). Photographs of

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## Greater Fort Worth Sierra Club

P.O. Box 1874, Burleson, TX 76097-1874

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

(Phone numbers below are Area Code 817 except as noted)

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Bicycling Dan Smith 410-2955 [fwsieran@aol.com](mailto:fwsieran@aol.com)

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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 environment and to use all lawful means to carry out these objectives.

# General Meeting

## Wednesday, August 17

7:00 Main Auditorium, Univ. of N. Texas Health Science Center, Camp Bowie at Montgomery (exit Montgomery off I-30, go north to Camp Bowie). Program notes on Pg. 1.

outings or other club activities encouraged. Identify subject of photo and state photographer's name. Do not write on the back of photos. Mail submissions to Newsletter Editor, P.O. Box 1874, Burleson, Texas 76097-1874, bring to the ExCom meeting, the general meeting, or email [jmoody166@mac.com](mailto:jmoody166@mac.com).

## August 26, Friday

Noon meeting for Sierrans unable to attend the evening general meeting. This group meets the last Friday of each month, 12 noon-1:00, at Local Color Art and Coffee, 208 W. Main St., Arlington. Bonnie Bowman will be

## Something for everyone is included in the options for November's Big Bend trip *CONTINUED FROM PG. 1*

"Join us for a long weekend in Big Bend National Park," said Todd Nichols, trip coordinator, in announcing details of this year's funfest in the Chihuahuan Desert.

"We'll be traveling again this year by van, leaving early Wednesday morning and arriving before sunset." Everyone will camp Wednesday night in the Basin Campground before parting company Thursday morning for the trip they signed up for.

Once again Mike Seal will lead a car camping (van-camping) trip from the Chisos Basin campground and James Moody will take the more adventurous folks onto the more remote hiking trails.

Mike will be hiking the length of the Lost Mine Trail, a stroll down the Window Trail, and head up to the top of the park to Emory Peak. Additionally, Mike will be visiting other trails around the park, such as Santa Elena Canyon, Mule Ears Trail and the Homer Wilson Ranch.

James is still amazed that he came back with the same number of people he started out with last year on a three-and-a-half day trek into one of the park's more remote areas.

"I'm not altogether sure I came back with exactly the same people I started

heading up this meeting.

## September 5, Monday

Newsletter folding party at Braum's, 6770 Bridge St. at 6:30 p.m. Call Steve Turner, 457-7131.

## September 6, Tuesday, 6:30 p.m.

Fort Worth Sierra Club ExCom Meeting, 6:30 p.m., at Spiral Diner, 1314 W. Magnolia. For more information, contact Susan Haney, 254-582-8228.

## September 6, Tuesday

Outings Meeting immediately following the ExCom meeting to plan new outings and reminisce about old trips. See location above. Contact Claudia Blalock, 817-924-6242.

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

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

out with," he admits, "but if you just go by the numbers, it all adds up to a very successful trip. Everyone was accounted for."

He's considering taking his group on the Marufa Vega Trail, one of the most scenic backpacking trips in the park and a trip he led on the very first Fort Worth Sierra Club Fall Trip to Big Bend. As of now, that's subject to change, though.

"I'll be leading a trip that's somewhere between a forced death march and the 100-yard nature trail that runs beside the Panther Junction Visitor Center," he said. "I'll know for certain next month and provide details for the *Sentinel*."

Additional trip details will be put on the group's webpage. The cost again will be \$160 per person. Send checks, payable to Fort Worth Sierra Club, to Todd Nichols, 200 Hibiscus Dr. Arlington, Texas 76018.

Please have registration submitted by Nov. 1.

## Support our printer

Alpha and Omega Printing and Graphics reduces our newsletter print cost by 10% of every job Fort Worth Group Sierra Club members refer to it.

No pets, firearms or radios are allowed on Sierra Club outings. All children (17 years or less) must be accompanied by a parent on any outing. All overnight trips require preregistration with the trip leader. A donation of \$5 per person to the Fort Worth Sierra Club is requested for all overnight trips.

### October 14-16, Friday-Sunday

Canoe and camp at Caddo Lake. 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 Turnage, 817-491-2382, (email [marilynturnage@msn.com](mailto:marilynturnage@msn.com)).

### October 21-23, Friday-Sunday

Texas Sierra Celebration. This year is the 40th Anniversary of the Lone Star Chapter of the Sierra Club and we are celebrating with Sierrans across the

# Club Outings

state at Canyon of the Eagles Resort near Marble Falls ([www.canyonoftheeagles.com](http://www.canyonoftheeagles.com)) or 800-977-0081. Activities may include hikes and outings to see local Bald Eagles. Advance reservations will be necessary. Check the *Lone Star Sierran* summer issue for details or contact the Lone Star Chapter (512.477.1729).

### October 23-29, Sunday-Saturday

Top Of Texas Service Project – Guadalupe Mountains National Park. Newsletter editor James Moody leads this national trail maintenance service project in Texas' highest mountain range. Fall foliage is generally at its zenith at this time of the year in McKittrick Canyon, called by many the most beautiful spot in the state. Trail work is suited for anyone in reasonably good shape. Off day on Wednesday to explore the top of Texas (Guadalupe Peak) or some of its other wonders at lower elevations. Sign-up at the national Sierra Club website: [www.sierraclub.org/outings/](http://www.sierraclub.org/outings/). Then click on "sign up for a trip" and use trip number 05322A. For more information, contact Moody at 295-1623.

### November 9-13, Wednesday-Sunday

The Greater Fort Worth Sierra Club's annual trek to Big Bend National Park. Todd Nichols is again coordinating this popular trip that will provide options for virtually anyone. See article beginning on Page 1 for more details.

## Bike hikes? You bet

Any bicycle enthusiasts who would like to receive announcements about upcoming bike trips (both official Sierra Club trips and non-Sierra events), are requested to send Dan Smith their email address.

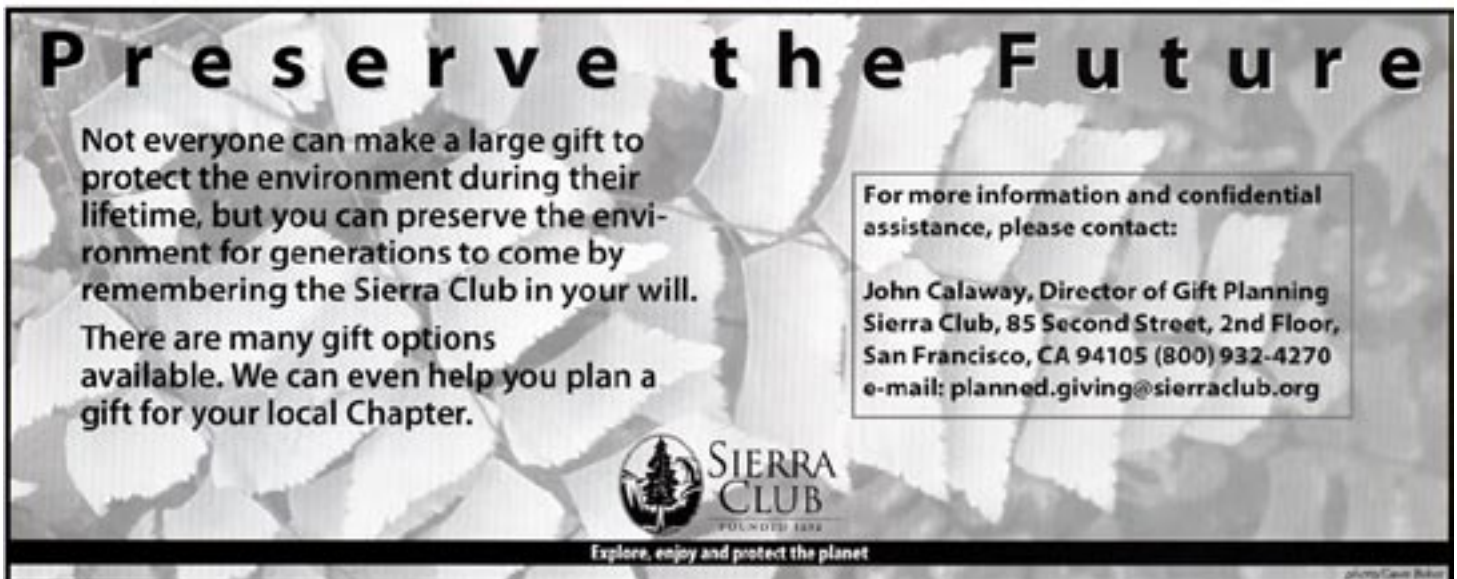
Please include in your message to Dan whether you have a road bike, hybrid, or mountain bike, so he can send you the appropriate announcements.

Being on the bicycle outings email list allows us to contact you about spur of the moment trips that did not get published in the newsletter. You will not be bombarded with emails. Seldom are there more than one per month. Dan's email address is: [fwsierra@aol.com](mailto:fwsierra@aol.com).

## Sierra Singles Events

Sept. 11, Sunday: Outdoor concert with Brave Combo in Lewisville. Watch for details on this DFW Sierra Singles gathering.

Sept. 12, Monday: DFW Sierra Singles dinner, 7 p.m. Regular monthly dinner. Location and host TBD.




**P r e s e r v e   t h e   F u t u r e**

Not everyone can make a large gift to protect the environment during their lifetime, but you can preserve the environment for generations to come by remembering the Sierra Club in your will.

There are many gift options available. We can even help you plan a gift for your local Chapter.

For more information and confidential assistance, please contact:

John Calaway, Director of Gift Planning  
Sierra Club, 85 Second Street, 2nd Floor,  
San Francisco, CA 94105 (800) 932-4270  
e-mail: [planned.giving@sierraclub.org](mailto:planned.giving@sierraclub.org)



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## Proposed Endangered Species Bill rescinds sound science

In addition to the dramatic crippling of the Endangered Species Act itself, Rep. Richard Pombo's proposed Threatened and Endangered Species Recovery Act of 2005 would do other harms as well.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has a nationwide policy to protect threatened species from unregulated taking. The Pombo bill would prohibit such protection; instead it would require the agency to issue separate regulations for each species, creating a bureaucratic nightmare for the Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS).

Moving beyond the nightmare into the realm of the irrational, the Pombo bill would also require that citizens supply the FWS with all data and studies used in petitions to get a species listed. It would further require the Service to duplicate and store all data and reports used in listing critical habitat decisions in every state in which the species exists. This would entail the duplication of millions of pages of information that no one has requested.

"This will keep Fish and Wildlife

Service biologists away from the field and chained to Xerox machines," Kieran Suckling, policy director of the Center for Biological Diversity, told BushGreenwatch.

The mind-numbing bureaucracy created by the Pombo bill is not the only way it affects sound science. Another provision contributes to the growing concern over the politicization of science.

The Endangered Species Act currently requires that all decisions be based on the "best available scientific and commercial information." Given the ever-improving nature of science and technology, the term "best" is deliberately left ambiguous in order to leave the decision up to the biologists who assess the health of species populations.

The Pombo bill ignores scientific advances, instead leaving the interpretation of "best" science to the discretion of the Secretary of Interior.

"This is a key issue because the ESA is the only law that says all decisions must be made with the best available

science, mandating that the question of what is 'best' should be up to the scientific community," said Suckling. "But Pombo's bill allows the Secretary of the Interior to develop her own definition and use it to ignore studies she feels are insignificant."

Michael Senatore, legislative counsel at Defenders of Wildlife, adds that such terminology could invite an increase in industry litigation, contradicting one of Pombo's stated reasons for rewriting the ESA, which was to limit unnecessary lawsuits.

"This is blatantly inconsiderate of the rhetoric that says there are too many lawsuits surrounding the ESA," Senatore told BushGreenwatch.

The Pombo bill opens virtually every stage of the endangered species listing process to litigation from industry, while essentially barring lawsuits from environmental groups. While it establishes an appeals process, which can be invoked by "any person that would be injured," it allows the Secretary of Interior to define who qualifies as an injured party.

The Greater Fort Worth Group of the Sierra Club